

INSPECTION REPORT

WELLSMEAD FIRST SCHOOL

Bletchley, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110327

Headteacher: Mrs S Megram

Interim Headteacher: Mrs A Noble

Reporting inspector: Mr G D Timms
21038

Dates of inspection: 17 - 20 June 2002

Inspection number: 196709

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 8 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hertford Place Bletchley Milton Keynes
Postcode:	MK3 7HE
Telephone number:	01908 378291
Fax number:	01908 375297
E-mail:	wellsmeadp@milton-keynes.gov.uk
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Dawn Stroud
Date of previous inspection:	9 - 13 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21038	Mr G D Timms	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Equal opportunities Foundation Stage Design and technology Physical education Science	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
16472	Mrs C Stormonth	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
20534	Mrs N Perry	Team inspector	Special educational needs Art and design English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18116	Mr C Taylor	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Mathematics Music	
2866	Mr R Battey	Team inspector	Geography History	

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wellsmead First School educates 257 boys and girls aged from four to eight, largely in single age, mixed ability classes. The very large majority of pupils are from white UK backgrounds; 19 pupils come from a range of other heritages, mostly Indian sub-continental. Fifteen pupils have English as an additional language but only a small number are at an early stage of learning English and the school receives a small amount of support from specialist staff. The eligibility of pupils for free school meals is low but hot meals are not provided in the local authority and this figure does not reflect the social backgrounds of pupils in the school accurately. Twenty-five pupils have special educational needs, mostly for learning difficulties. Only one pupil has a statement of special educational need. When they start school a majority of the children have well below average levels of attainment. Very few are above average and this picture of attainment on entry has an impact on pupils' learning throughout the school. The school has been managed recently by the assistant headteacher and a new appointment has been made for September.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective, with high quality teaching helping pupils to make at least good, and often very good progress in most subjects. Standards in writing have been recognised by the school as requiring substantial improvement. The leadership demonstrated by the interim headteacher is very good but there are areas of the management of the school that are in need of improvement. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of the teaching is very good and the teachers make an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and talented team
- Standards are above average in music and history throughout the school and in science, art and design and design and technology by the end of Year 3
- The leadership is strongly focused on raising standards and the staff have an excellent capacity to improve and make the school more successful in the future
- The provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good; the provision for their social and cultural development is good
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their work and relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are excellent
- Parents have very positive views of the work of the school and are pleased that their children are happy there

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, particularly handwriting and spelling
- Aspects of the management of the school, including monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning, delegation and the school improvement plan
- The provision for pupils with English as an additional language

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Since then the level of improvement in the quality of education, although disrupted by changes to the senior management and a very high staff turnover, has been good. The key issues raised by the last inspection have been addressed successfully. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved, although improvements in spelling have been less successful. The quality of the teaching has improved. Work on refining the monitoring of standards and the curriculum has been recently addressed and is still to have a significant impact on standards. In addition, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully and standards are rising. The provision of the new Foundation Stage curriculum has been well planned and is resulting in the youngest children making good progress.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	C	D	E	D
Writing	B	C	D	D
Mathematics	D	E	D	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Results over time have been inconsistent but the figures do not reflect accurately pupils' good and often very good achievement. Standards have risen since the last inspection, especially in mathematics. Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are broadly satisfactory and this represents good progress.

The evidence of work seen during the inspection confirms a picture of rising standards and very good progress. The current pupils at the end of Year 2 have standards in line with those expected in reading, mathematics, science, ICT, religious education, art and design, geography and physical education. Standards are above those expected in design and technology, history and music. There is a weakness in writing where standards are below those expected. This is especially evident in handwriting, spelling and opportunities for writing in other subjects, which the school has recognised as an issue to address. The Year 3 pupils have standards in line with those expected in reading, mathematics, ICT, religious education and geography. Standards are better than those expected in science, art and design, design and technology and history. In music standards are well above those expected, especially in singing. These standards have been achieved through very good quality teaching resulting in well-resourced and planned lessons.

The pupils with English as an additional language, and those from different ethnic minority backgrounds, make similar progress to their peers, although those at an early stage of learning the language do not make sufficient progress due to a lack of specialist support time and resources. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, especially where they have the support of a teaching assistant and appropriate activities. Good progress is supported by the individual education plans when teachers take appropriate account of them in planning lessons.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic about the activities provided for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There have been no exclusions recently. Behaviour in lessons is good and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning.
Personal development and relationships	Very good, overall. Relationships in the school are excellent and a major part of creating the very supportive, learning ethos. There are not enough opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has worked hard to improve attendance rates and these are now in line with the national average. Too many pupils

	arrive at school after lessons have started.
--	--

Pupils show a good level of responsibility when given the opportunity. For example, the school council members have a good role to play in assemblies.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Year 3
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of the teaching throughout the school is consistently very good. No teaching is unsatisfactory. The teaching in English and mathematics is at least good and often very good. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught and this results in the good progress made. The teachers and support staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons and that their needs are met. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, as is that of those with English as an additional language.

The strongest teaching is characterised by:

- teachers having a very good understanding of the needs of pupils of this age;
- very well planned and resourced lessons;
- excellent relationships with pupils;
- clear learning objectives, shared with pupils so they understand what they are learning.

The learning made by pupils, even in the best lessons, is hindered by their low level of attainment on entry to the school, their poor retention of learning, which requires teachers to continually consolidate and revise work, and, in a small number of cases, poor levels of attendance.

In a small minority of lessons teachers could improve by:

- more consistent marking of pupils' work, making clear what they have done well and what they need to do to improve;
- controlling pupils more firmly.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced and all statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. They receive support appropriate to their needs and the good teaching helps them make good progress over time.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory, overall, but those at an early stage of learning the language do not get sufficient support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is very good; for their social and cultural development it is good. Not enough is done to celebrate the home cultures of the diversity of pupils in the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school is a safe, caring and very supportive environment.

The school has a very good partnership with parents and this has a positive impact on learning, especially where the parents support their child's learning at home. There is a very active and effective parents' association and this makes a good contribution to the work of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good, overall. The interim headteacher provides very good leadership and the staff have a clear commitment to raising standards. However, the subject leaders' role is underdeveloped and the school development plan lacks sufficient detail.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. This has improved since the last inspection and the governors have worked hard to develop a firm structure to enable them to fulfil their strategic role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Recent very good work with a beacon school has enabled staff to track and analyse test results in much more detail although this has yet to have a real impact on the work of the school.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Grants are used appropriately and resources used well.

There are a good number of staff and teaching assistants for the demands of the curriculum. Resources are generally satisfactory with weaknesses in the provision of large toys and apparatus for the Foundation Stage. The library is also in need of improvement and the school plans to address this in the near future. The accommodation is good, well maintained and cared for. Subject coordinators do not have sufficient opportunities to monitor and evaluate the curriculum or the quality of the teaching and learning, and the governing body is not active enough in holding the school to account, although this has improved recently. When the new headteacher takes up the role she will find a very strong and firm commitment to raising standards and an excellent capacity to succeed in the future. The school applies the principles of best value to its work in a satisfactory manner.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or complaints. • The teaching is good and their children are making good progress. • The pupils' behaviour is good in the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They would like a greater range of out of school activities. • They do not feel the amount of homework is appropriate. • They do not all feel fully informed about how well their child is getting on.

The findings of the inspection support the parents' positive views. The school is in the process of reviewing the out of school activity provision. The school enriches the curriculum through a wide range of visits and visitors. Reports on children are very good and the staff are always available for parents to see, in addition to regular parents' evenings. The arrangements for homework are good and better than most schools of this size and type. This has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results of an early assessment of their skills and the evidence of the inspection show that when children enter the school most of them have levels of attainment well below those typically found nationally. They have underdeveloped communication, language and literacy skills and their personal, social and emotional development is also well below average. Their physical skills are closer to those expected for their age, but all other areas of learning are below the level expected. The very good teaching in the early years unit and the reception classes ensures that there is at least good progress and by the end of the reception year most are achieving the early learning goals expected of them, although a significant number are still below the level expected in the personal and social development and in their communication, language and literacy skills.
2. The evidence of the inspection is that standards are in line with those expected in reading and mathematics at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 3. Writing standards are below those expected. The national tests for Year 2 in 2001 showed a fall in standards in reading and writing over the previous year, although standards in mathematics rose slightly. Standards in reading were well below average, while in writing and mathematics they were below average. Some very good teaching since then has improved standards in reading and mathematics further but weaknesses remain in writing. When the results are compared to those found in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, standards were below average in reading and broadly in line with the average in writing and mathematics. The inspection evidence indicates that good and often very good progress is made, building on the poor levels of attainment on entry to the school.
3. The early indications from the latest national tests are that standards in Year 2 have continued to rise and will be broadly in line with the national average in reading and mathematics, although standards are still below those expected for their age in writing. Few pupils reach the higher levels and this reflects the lack of above average children entering the school. Achievement, by which we mean progress made over time, is often very good and at least good in English and mathematics. This is due largely to the very good quality of the teaching and to the successful introduction and adaptation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This very good achievement is consistent in all year groups.
4. In English, the school has recognised the need to address weaknesses in writing and in particular to try to increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level. Spelling and handwriting skills are at too low a level. Pupils are developing sound basic literacy skills. Phonic skills are improving but are still weak in the case of older pupils, hindering their ability to sound out new words. More able pupils read fluently and accurately. Speaking and listening skills vary, but there are weaknesses in listening in some classes. The school has already begun to address this, with good progress being made.
5. In mathematics, the standards in investigative and problem solving activities are weaker than those in number and shape, space and measure. Most pupils are confident calculating in a range of ways. Year 2 pupils can do calculations with numbers up to 100, while in Year 3 they confidently multiply using tens. Standards in science have improved rapidly and are now in line with those expected by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 3. Pupils have good knowledge of forces, especially the effect of magnets, and they know how shadows are produced and how they behave in different lights.
6. Standards are above expectations at the end of Year 2 in design and technology, history and music. By the end of Year 3 standards are higher than expected in art and design, design and technology, history and much higher than expected in music. The strengths in music include the very good singing, and in all of the subjects the high standards reflect the very good and enthusiastic teaching.

7. The staff work hard to make the school inclusive. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum, are generally well supported and make good progress in line with their abilities. The learning of pupils with English as an additional language, and especially those at an early stage of learning English, make very good progress when they receive sufficient support. Teachers and teaching assistants make great efforts to provide an appropriate curriculum, teaching and support. Learning is however hindered by a lack of specialist support and resources in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. The attitudes and the behaviour are better than was found at the last inspection. The school is an inclusive and supportive community where relationships throughout are excellent. Pupils obviously enjoy school and parents are pleased that their children are happy and work hard.
9. Pupils in the early years unit and reception classes behave well and are developing confidence, independence and good social skills. They work well together, share ideas and resources and this was seen when children used role-play in the safari shop and café home corner. They listen and answer questions to the limit of their ability and are eager to please their teachers with their good efforts. In a knowledge and understanding of the world lesson pupils were very proud of their finished camouflaged tiger paintings.
10. Pupils elsewhere have very good attitudes to learning especially when they are very clear on what to do in lessons and are given the scope to get on and work hard. This was seen in an excellent history lesson when pupils constructed a chronological storyboard about the life of Grace Darling. Pupils were fully engrossed and worked non-stop until they had finished. A strong and noteworthy feature was the sharing of the pupils' good ideas to achieve the best results in lessons and pupils showing enjoyment in the success of others. In art, pupils are eager to share how they achieve rainy day effects in their collages, using various paper and plastic resources. Pupils really enjoy singing and the whole Year 1 group used lots of energy and enthusiasm to sing a medley of songs very well. Pupils were also seen practising for their school production and they all took part very enthusiastically.
11. Behaviour in the classroom and around the school is usually good. A small number of pupils are occasionally noisy and are not always fully focused in lessons but the majority behave well. Behaviour in the playground was usually good with a few boisterous moments when some boys, in particular, engaged in rough play but this was usually good-natured. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies is exemplary and they show reverence especially at prayer and reflection time. Lunchtimes are pleasant, sociable times in the dining hall. The rare occurrences of bullying are dealt with well when all the facts are known and followed up with parents. There have been no recent exclusions.
12. Relationships throughout the school are excellent and are based on mutual respect for all in a caring school community. Pupils' personal development is good and pupils are polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors. Pupils benefit from circle times and have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and respect each other's feelings and values. As pupils move up through the school, they become more responsible and show greater maturity and growing confidence.
13. Most pupils with special educational needs demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning and want to do well. They respond well to interventions and pay full attention to their teachers. Their relationships with each other, teachers and support staff are also good. Overall, behaviour throughout the school is good.
14. Pupils show how they use initiative when they automatically help to pack away equipment after lessons and after play. Older pupils ably demonstrate that they can take on responsibility especially when they act as cloakroom and library monitors, organise lunch box trolleys, look after the younger pupils in the playground and carry out a range of jobs cheerfully like providing the music in assembly. Year 3 pupils were being very responsible as they rehearsed for their

play "Death to the Minotaur." The school council representatives are an impressive group of pupils who take up suggestions for school improvement and carry out surveys to ascertain what pupils prefer. This was recently seen in the book survey when pupils asked for more sports and story books in the library and also when pupils decided which charity to support for their sponsored silence. A weakness in the provision for pupils' personal development is caused by teachers not providing enough opportunities to develop independence in learning.

15. Attendance for the last reporting year is satisfactory overall and is just below the national average. This is a big improvement on the previous year and reflects the impact of some good recent following up of absences. Authorised absence is attributable to genuine illness and some special extenuating circumstances but a large and significant proportion of absence is accounted for by holiday taking, which seriously disrupts pupils' education and hinders their learning. The level of unauthorised absence is well above the national level. Punctuality on arrival at school is satisfactory but a small number of pupils are persistently late.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching throughout the school is consistently very good and well above that normally found nationally. It has improved significantly since the last inspection when there was unsatisfactory teaching in parts of the school. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching. In the lessons observed, over 90 per cent of the teaching was good or better and over 40 per cent was very good or excellent. In addition, the scrutiny of pupils' work supports these findings showing very good progress and a range of strengths in the planning, marking and assessing of the work. These figures are a clear indication that the school has a very strong team of teachers who work very hard and plan together in year groups very effectively for the benefit of their pupils. The recent high turnover of staff has undoubtedly strengthened the quality of teaching throughout the school.
17. The very good teaching has an enormous impact on the good learning and the progress pupils make as they move through the school. The teachers have a very good understanding of the needs of the pupils in their classes and their subject knowledge and understanding is good in all subjects. This results in pupils acquiring good skills, knowledge and understanding in most subjects. However, their learning is somewhat slowed due to the low levels of learning they start school with, and the poor retention of learning which requires a lot of repetition to ensure the majority of the pupils have a good understanding. Most pupils only have satisfactory levels of concentration by the time they start Year 1, although the inspiring teaching raises their levels of interest and enthusiasm so that learning is good by the time they move on to the middle school.
18. The teaching of the children in the early years unit and reception classes is very good. Activities to promote communication, language and learning, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development are well organised and managed. All staff relate well to the children and they offer a secure but appropriately challenging environment. The very good teaching has a positive effect on children's learning and on the progress they make towards the Early Learning Goals they are expected to reach before they start Year 1. Children learn good working habits and grow in maturity during their time in the Foundation Stage.
19. The teaching of basic skills is very good overall. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been well introduced and are proving effective in raising standards, although this is yet to be reflected in standards of writing. The very good teaching has resulted in significant improvement to standards of reading, speaking and listening. Teachers plan the lessons well, with clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils, ensuring that they know what is expected of them and how their learning fits into the wider picture. Planning provides pupils with appropriate work that is accurately matched to their prior attainment. Teachers use different methods effectively for the purpose of the lesson. For example, after direct whole class teaching about shadows, pupils are given the opportunity to discuss in pairs what they know, and this encourages them to articulate their learning, thus consolidating their knowledge and understanding.
20. Where the teaching is only satisfactory, the planning is less effective and teachers are unsure of the exact structure of the lesson. In a very small number of lessons the management of the livelier

pupils is unsure and noise levels are too high. In several classes the day-to-day assessment and marking of pupils' work lacks consistency. There is very good marking and annotation of work in most classes and this enables pupils to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve further. However, at times the marking provides pupils and teachers with less information and too often is over generous with praise and misses important errors, such as those in the writing of key words.

21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Planned activities are mostly, but not always, matched to individual pupils' abilities and teachers' expectations are appropriately high. Resources, effectively differentiated in most classes, are appropriate to meet the curriculum provided. The school's developing strength in the structured teaching of phonics, which builds on previous learning, is benefiting pupils with special educational needs and enabling them to make further progress in line with their abilities in spelling, writing and reading. The school also maintains a special, mixed age class for underachieving pupils with full time support to meet their specific needs. The teaching in this class is very good and pupils have full access to the curriculum.
22. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is equally good and they make good progress. However, a number of the pupils at an early stage of acquiring English do not have sufficient time from specialist support staff to enable them to take as full a part in some lessons as they otherwise might. Teaching assistants also support these pupils well but too often they are included in a group of slower learners and this is inappropriate for their needs. However, the school is fully inclusive and works hard to ensure that all pupils have full access to all activities.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

23. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully meets requirements for the teaching of the National Curriculum and religious education. The national strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy have been successfully introduced and the school successfully enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural well being.
24. The school provides good learning opportunities for its pupils. The quality of the long term planning is satisfactory and teachers are supported in their work by policies and schemes of work which indicate what needs to be taught and when. However, many policies are significantly out of date and are in need of revision.
25. There are developing links between subjects so that learning in one subject consolidates previous learning in another. Literacy is promoted well across the curriculum and pupils are offered a wide range of opportunities to use their skills in reading, although opportunities in writing are insufficient. Pupils' mathematical skills are further developed through design and technology and science, for example, in the use of graphs and accurate measuring and recording.
26. The school does not provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which has brought criticism from parents, and the school is aware that this needs to be reviewed. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to take part in drama and musical activities, through role-play, such as in Year 3 history, and assemblies, which develop their confidence as performers and enhances their speaking skills.
27. The school offers all pupils equal access to the curriculum. Teachers generally plan well to take account of the range of ability in their classes and to ensure that all pupils access the curriculum according to their needs. However, the use of in-class support is not carefully enough planned across the school and full use is not always made of additional staff in whole class sessions. Although well supported by teachers and teaching assistants, pupils at an early stage of speaking English do not receive enough specialist teaching or have access to sufficient appropriate resources.

28. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum. They receive support appropriate to their identified needs, mainly within the classroom, and make evident progress in their learning. Other pupils who are identified as requiring support in their literacy skills have begun to make good use of the pilot Early Literacy Support sessions provided by the school, but this has not been in place for long enough to have any impact on standards. Pupils in National Curriculum classes, in line with good educational inclusion, are fully integrated and experience equality of opportunity in all aspects of school life as appropriate. No pupils are disapplied from the National Curriculum. Pupils with statements have full access to their entitlement and are fully included in lessons.
29. The school has well developed links with the community, which contribute to pupils' learning and appropriate use is made of the locality to extend pupils' experiences and knowledge, for example, visits to museums, a country park and the war memorial. Pupils' interest in learning is stimulated by a range of visits and visitors, such as the police and fire services and the school nurse and visits to the local middle and secondary schools.
30. The school has developed very fruitful links with partner institutions. For example, Year 3 pupils attend the middle school next door weekly to make use of the ICT suite. Close links such as these benefit pupils through contact with the older pupils and helps to ease pupils' transfer at eight. Links with a local pre-school playgroup are also very strong and promote a smooth start to school for the four-year-olds.
31. The school's provision for developing pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Although there is no structured programme, the school identifies essential areas across the curriculum and the subject is delivered mainly through 'circle time' activities, science and physical education. Due account is taken of ethnic diversity and religious traditions of other cultures, and sex education and drugs awareness are appropriately taught through the personal, health and social development curriculum and science lessons. Citizenship is developing well and the school has a flourishing school council that offers pupils membership on a termly basis. Pupils are given opportunities to discuss aspects of citizenship and the responsibility of each contributing to the good of all, for example, in discussions during religious education lessons, about feelings and actions which have a wider impact on others through reference to real life situations, such as the September 11th disaster in New York and the Great Fire of London.
32. The school provides very well for the spiritual development of its pupils. School assemblies provide good moments of quiet reflection, stimulated by stories told by the interim headteacher or visiting speakers. There are active opportunities for participation by the pupils. There are opportunities for spiritual development in lessons, when pupils have opportunities to build their self-confidence by giving performances or explanations to the rest of the class. For example, the youngest children demonstrate some genuine wonder when they find mini-beasts and the older pupils show a genuine delight when discovering the behaviour of shadows in a very good science lesson.
33. Pupils in the school clearly know right from wrong. Behaviour is generally good and there were few examples of bad behaviour seen. Teachers and other staff provide positive role models for their pupils and treat them with care and respect. Good behaviour is rewarded and celebrated effectively. Issues of bad behaviour are discussed in assemblies. There are opportunities for pupils to talk about anxieties they have. Action is taken to defuse potentially problematic situations before they happen, for example, by provision of games equipment for use at lunch times. Members of the school council also have very good opportunities to take responsibility for the behaviour of other children, such as in assemblies.
34. The quality of the provision for pupils' social development is good across the school. Pupils usually care for each other well and are happy to take responsibility. On the whole, they work and play together well. Relationships with teachers and other staff are very good. Behaviour in the playground was appropriate, with children playing together well. Lunchtime assistants looked after the children well, and deal with them in a positive manner. Good opportunities are provided in many lessons for pupils to work collaboratively in small groups or pairs.
35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The multi-cultural and multi-ethnic nature of

the area is celebrated to a limited extent. This is demonstrated in a variety of cultural activities such as assemblies about Diwali, Hanukkah and Eid as well as Christian festivals. However, the school does not make full use of the cultural diversity of pupils within the school and more needs to be done to recognise pupils' home cultures. Pupils are prepared for life in a multicultural society satisfactorily. Music is used very effectively. Singing forms a significant part in the life of the school, with the children learning gospel songs such as "Who built the Ark" and "Move with the Spirit." In assemblies and lessons, music is used for listening as well as singing. At the time of the inspection, the modern music of Karl Jenkins was being used. The children make up compositions to go with stories they have learned. The children make visits to places of cultural interest, including local museums. Overall, the provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school takes good care of pupils and this helps to improve the effectiveness of the teaching and learning. Staff know their pupils very well and pupils are confident in their approaches to their teachers and other adults in the school and this helps pupils to feel happy and secure. The school has a good range of procedures to encourage good attendance, good behaviour, good work habits and to safeguard pupils' welfare.
37. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance have improved recently and are good. There is a first day response to absence and this gives a strong message to parents about their legal obligations to ensure their children attend school. Administration staff are insufficiently trained in the use of the software for monitoring attendance to enable closer scrutiny of individuals and to look at the overall picture of attendance. In the meantime, manual registers have been reintroduced and are enabling the school to get the best out of two systems for monitoring attendance. There is clear evidence of improvement in some of the pupils with poor attendance and punctuality and this has improved the attendance rate to national average levels. This is commendable.
38. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. Right from the start, pupils are given very good guidance on how to behave and conform to daily routines. Behaviour management is consistently positive and focuses on good behaviour as examples for others to follow. Pupils are very familiar with the school and class rules and there is reference to them when pupils stray. Expectations for behaviour are high and pupils usually behave well. Pupils confirmed that they value being recognised in the "golden book." The procedures for eliminating any oppressive behaviour are also very good. When any bullying is reported it is investigated and action taken in a joint approach with parents to stop it.
39. The designated person for child protection is absent and another trained person is temporarily taking her place to meet the statutory requirements. Staff have recently been reminded of the procedures for child protection and the general arrangements are satisfactory. When pupils are sick or injured they receive a high level of care and attention in a well-equipped medical room. All pupils' medical conditions are well known and catered for. There are plenty of qualified staff who can administer first aid and very good record keeping which shows a low accident frequency. The welfare arrangements for are very good. The school has some good systems for carrying out all the routine health and safety checking and risk assessments and there are no issues of concern.
40. Much of the monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal, promoted by teachers who know pupils very well and sustain very positive relationships with them. Teachers show a high level of support and commitment to pupils and give them good advice for improving attitudes, social skills and encourage a good work ethic and good quality of school life.
41. In the early years and reception classes the teaching and non-teaching staff make regular and appropriate assessments of children's learning. Specific activities are made the focus for assessments and these are then transferred to individual records. These build into an effective record of the children's progress through the Foundation Stage and towards the expected early

learning goals. Examples of work illustrating successful learning are kept and form the basis for the records of achievement which pupils keep as they move through the school.

42. There is evidence of some good liaison between class teachers and support staff regarding pupils with special educational needs and some effective record keeping, but this is not consistent across the school. All pupils with identified difficulties have full access to appropriate levels of care, dependent on their need. The school engages with external agencies effectively, as appropriate to the individual needs of pupils. There are very good links with nearby middle and secondary schools. Monitoring of attendance takes place in line with that for all pupils.
43. In English, mathematics and science the assessment of pupils' learning is good. Portfolios of work illustrating agreed levels assist teachers in assessing progress and providing work appropriate for taking pupils' learning further. In some of the non-core subjects there are also portfolios of work but these are not consistently produced and there is little evidence of any accurate assessment of how well pupils are learning the appropriate skills. Throughout the school, teachers assess their lessons and note what went well and what was less successful. These assessments are used in planning future lessons. The tests undertaken by pupils are carried out appropriately and the school marks these fairly in line with the guidance given. Not enough work has been done yet to analyse results to identify where there might be weaknesses that can be addressed through the teaching. However, the recent development of a computer system, undertaken with the valuable support of a teacher from a local beacon school, has resulted in the creation of very good opportunities to track pupils' progress and analyse results on a group or individual basis in future.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The school has a good partnership with parents and this has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents' views of the school are mostly positive. They are supportive and are generally very satisfied with the education provided and other aspects of the school. Parents are particularly pleased that their children like school so much, are making good progress and are expected to work hard. They also appreciate how approachable the school is when there are questions or issues.
45. Parents' responses to the questionnaire revealed that they have some disagreement about three aspects of the school's work; the range of extra-curricular activities, the work that pupils are expected to do at home and the quality of information the school provides about how children are getting on. The inspection investigated these misgivings and found that pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons for a first school. The provision of these activities is being reviewed with the intention of further improvement. The type and amount of work that pupils are expected to do at home is better than that given by other schools of this size and type. The quality of information parents receive about their children's progress is very good. Parents have termly formal consultation opportunities to discuss their children's work and set new targets for learning. Staff also make themselves available at the end of each day to informally discuss any more immediate issues. Parents were seen taking advantage of this opportunity during the inspection. The quality of school reports is very good. Parents are provided with a great deal of detailed information about their children's performance over the past year. New targets are set and parents are given some very specific individualised advice on how they can help their children at home. The school tries to work closely with parents and is always keen to explore ways to improve this.
46. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The induction arrangements are good and children are able to settle quickly. The school has very good links with the pre-school nursery and receives very good information about pupils before they start school. Parents are given good information including a full and well-written prospectus and a governors' annual report to parents. The regular friendly school newsletter and notice boards also keep parents fully in touch with all other news and information. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good. Homework is regularly given and forms an important part of learning particularly for English and mathematics. Parents' views are surveyed to raise issues and to

gauge opinions about school. Parents' views are taken seriously and provide fresh and interesting ideas and influence improvements. For example, the school arranged to have a whole school curriculum notice board and each year group issues curriculum leaflets about what is going to be covered in the term ahead in response to requests from parents.

47. The school has developed strong links with many parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are kept fully informed and appropriately involved with their children's learning and progress. Parents are involved with reviews of their children's individual education plans, are very appreciative of their contacts with the school and value the level of involvement as partners in their children's learning.

48. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory and has strengths and weaknesses. The main strength is the dedicated small group of parents who do a great deal. They volunteer to help in school and up to six parents regularly help each week and they are deployed effectively to support learning. The 'Friends' of the school is an active and hardworking group raising funds and provides the school with a busy social life. Funds have paid for the attractive window blinds, carpeting, new staging in the hall and subsidises school trips. Parents provided a "workforce" weekend when the courtyard was transformed to a very attractive quiet area with plenty of potential for high quality learning. There are invitations to parents to come to school for sharing assemblies, sports activities, productions and special meetings and events. The weakness in parents' involvement in school is that despite the school's best efforts to invite parents to school, some parents are reluctant to be involved. Meetings are not well attended and the school has to be inventive to try and encourage parents to come.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management of the school have undergone significant changes over the last two years. Two different headteachers have held the post and at present the school is being led by the deputy headteacher who is acting as interim headteacher. Despite the changes, the leadership demonstrated by the interim headteacher and her key staff is very good. The staff have worked very hard to ensure that the provision for the pupils is consistently effective and that very good progress is made. Teachers and support staff form a very strong and effective team and the school has an excellent commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed.
50. The management of the school is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses in the organisation of the subject coordination, due to changes in staffing and the lack of sufficient time for staff to carry out their subject leadership role. This results in some subjects, especially the non-core, not being fully monitored for their success or to identify any areas needing improvement. A further result is some inconsistency, for example, in the quality of marking and in the systems for assessing and recording progress. A number of teachers are responsible for subjects on a temporary basis. More time and training is needed, together with a full review of teachers' responsibilities, to create an effective cycle for the management and review of the teaching and learning in all subjects. There is no one with overall responsibility for managing the provision for English as an additional language and this has resulted in this aspect of the school's work having a low profile, less one-to-one teacher or support assistant time than is required, especially with younger children, and a lack of appropriate resources for these pupils.
51. The tracking of pupils' progress and monitoring of test results has been recently developed and is now providing information at a good level. This has yet to be translated into effective action taken to raise standards. Recent very good work with a local beacon school has resulted in a much higher level of information being available to the school. Analysis of results over time is providing a clear picture of the very good progress made by many pupils, and the continued analysis of this information will enable the school to see how well individuals or different groups of pupils are achieving.
52. The governing body has developed its work since the last inspection and plays a satisfactory part in shaping the direction of the school. Governors are very supportive of the school and are committed to preserving its place in the local community. They have a growing understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the chair is very effective in ensuring communication within the governing body is effective, through a regular newsletter. A good committee structure has been developed with appropriate terms of reference and this is an important improvement. This enables the work of the governors to be carried out more efficiently and for meetings to be more productive. All statutory duties are carried out effectively. Some governors visit the school but this does not happen in a planned and regular enough way to ensure that they fully hold the school to account.
53. The school's system for monitoring and evaluating teaching is unsatisfactory and the school has recognised this and plans to develop the role of subject coordinators more fully. The performance management policy is appropriate and has been implemented, although recent changes to senior

management have delayed further work. When the new headteacher takes up post, the school will be well placed to continue the policy and link this to the necessary developments in the subject management. Targets set for teachers will need to reflect the needs of the subjects and other aspects of the school that they manage.

54. Overall, the school's priorities are appropriate and have recognised the weakness evident in subject management. The school improvement plan contains planning for raising standards in literacy and numeracy, improving assessment and the work of subject coordinators, together with developing the work of governors. However, the plan is a summary of what needs to be done and does not contain sufficient detail to show how improvements are to be made, how much they will cost and how the success of any developments will be assessed.
55. The leadership and management of special educational needs are currently without a coordinator. However, the newly appointed headteacher will take over the role in September. Previous coordination of special needs has offered strong leadership and clear direction and this is demonstrated by the quality of procedures and accompanying paperwork. All statutory requirements are fully met. However, the policy is badly out of date and needs revising in the light of the revised code of practice. The register for special educational needs takes due account of the new code and appropriately identifies pupils requiring further support for their learning. However, there is a significant lack of detail included in the register. It does not include National Curriculum levels, the pupils' main difficulty, gender, ethnicity and the date pupils are placed on the register. All pupils on the register of special needs have appropriate individual education plans with a range of specific learning targets identified. These are regularly reviewed with class teachers, support staff, pupils and parents termly or as required.
56. The management and use of resources, including funding, are satisfactory. The governing body is beginning to undertake more forward-looking strategies for dealing with the budget and are careful in the way they plan for changes in the school. The school has regular access to financial statements and plans on the basis of these. It takes advice from a number of sources and follows local guidelines to ensure that the principle of best value is applied consistently. At the time of the inspection, the school had a larger than average contingency reserve, with the appropriate intention of using this to re-develop the library and computer resources.
57. The quality of day-to-day administration is good. It supports the smooth running of the school and the efficient office staff provide the interim headteacher with effective support. The staff use the new technology appropriately as management tools but have not been fully trained in some of the packages they have to use, and lack confidence with them. Funds that are provided for specific purposes, such as supporting special educational needs, are used appropriately for the required tasks.
58. There are sufficient suitably qualified staff employed in the school and they are a strong and enthusiastic team. There is a good match of expertise and personal interest to the subject responsibilities teachers manage. The arrangements for the induction of new staff are good and staff confirmed how well supported they felt as they settled into their posts. Staff are undertaking training aligned to their own and the school's development plans and the benefits are evident in subjects like information and communication technology where standards have risen as a direct result of relevant training.
59. There are enough learning support staff for effectively helping pupils with special education needs and the Foundation Stage. Support staff have, however, had little opportunity to be part of the performance management system. They rely on the teachers they support for information on how well they are performing and get few chances to take part in training. They play an important role in the teaching and learning especially when they are well briefed. However, in some lessons they spent long periods with little to do. Day-to-day administration is good. It is effective enabling the interim headteacher to focus her energy on more appropriate areas of management. The caretaker also makes a good contribution to the smooth running of the school.
60. The school accommodation is good. Most classrooms are spacious and have access to areas outside the main classroom area for small group teaching and practical activities. Display is a

strong feature celebrating pupils' work and making the school a bright and attractive learning environment. The school grounds are small but are well used for science and physical education learning. The school building is well maintained for its age. Resources are generally good particularly in the core subjects and in history, geography and music and are at least satisfactory in most other subjects. The school continually upgrades computer hardware equipment that is adequate but the software range is narrow. Religious education resources have recently improved with the addition of some new books on the main faiths. There are however, insufficient artefacts to illustrate aspects of the main faiths and enhance learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The school has worked hard since the last inspection, through very significant changes to the senior management, to raise standards and improve the education offered to pupils. To continue this work, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

(1) Raise standards of writing by: **

- improving spelling and handwriting skills;
- providing more planned opportunities to for extended writing in subjects other than English;
- implementing the planned improvements to the library and ICT resources and accommodation;
- developing more rigorous, individual target setting.

(Paragraphs 3, 4, 70 - 82)

(2) Improve the management of the school by:

- reviewing the provision of responsibilities and provide more opportunities for subject coordinators to manage their subjects; **
- introduce an effective system to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning;
- extending the role of the governing body in holding the school to account and using the available information to monitor outcomes and compare with other schools;
- updating the subject policies and developing a systematic cycle of review and development for all policies and schemes; **
- improving the quality and practicality of the school improvement plan.

(Paragraphs 50 - 55, 82, 89, 96, 103, 110, 115, 120, 125,138)

(3) Improve the management of and the provision for pupils with English as an additional language by:

- appointing a member of staff to manage this aspect of the school's work;
- extending the availability of specialist support for pupils at an early stage of learning English;
- improving the resources available for these pupils;
- doing more to celebrate the home cultures of pupils in the school.

(Paragraphs 22, 50, 63)

** These issues have already been identified by the school as areas for improvement.

In addition to the above key issues the governing body should consider making the following minor issues part of their action plan:

- Improving the consistency of the marking of pupils' work; (Paragraphs 20, 95)
- Improving the resources for Foundation Stage pupils for use outdoors; (Paragraphs 63, 68)
- Providing training as necessary for the teaching staff, governing body and administration staff in the range of software now available for their use in monitoring the budget, attendance and assessment details. (Paragraphs 56 - 58)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	20	26	3	0	0	0
Percentage	6	38	50	6	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	267
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	21

Special educational needs	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	25

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.7
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	34	29	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	28	29	32
	Girls	24	25	25
	Total	52	54	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (84)	86 (94)	90 (84)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	31	30
	Girls	25	24	24
	Total	55	55	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (84)	87 (80)	86 (86)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	7
Pakistani	3
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	177
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y3

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	210

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	550,944
Total expenditure	521,712
Expenditure per pupil	1,933
Balance brought forward from previous year	19,885

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	286
Number of questionnaires returned	80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	68	29	2	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	46	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	56	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	41	21	5	2
The teaching is good.	54	40	4	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	48	14	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	29	5	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	49	4	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	41	18	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	39	49	5	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	45	8	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	5	40	22	19	14

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. Children in the Foundation Stage are taught in one early years unit for the younger pupils and two reception classes. This system changes from next term due to alterations to the local authorities admissions procedures and the school will only take pupils who start in September each year. Since the previous inspection, when the provision was found to be very good, the school has had a number of staffing changes and these have only recently resulted in a settled team of staff working together in the Foundation Stage. During the unsettled period of staffing developments slowed and aspects of the provision suffered but the present staffing is providing a very good level of teaching and learning again. Displays in the reception rooms are very good and help create an imaginative and inspiring learning environment. The early years unit, although providing good accommodation for the age group, is not attractive. Displays are too few and lacking in quality.
63. Initial assessments of children when they start at the school, together with observations and other inspection evidence, support the view that the attainment on entry to the school of most pupils is well below that found nationally, and very few of the children begin school with above average skills in most areas of learning. Teaching in the early years unit and in the reception classes is very good overall and is resulting in the children making very good progress before they start in Year 1. The Foundation Stage is well managed and the curriculum planning is good. The teaching assistants and nursery nurse provide good support for teachers and for those pupils with special educational needs. Those children at the early stages of learning English do not receive enough specialist support for them to make sufficiently good progress. There are insufficient large wheeled toys and outdoor climbing equipment available for the numbers of children.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. The teaching is very good in the early years unit and in the reception classes. This area of learning has a high profile in the school and this ensures the children make good progress, although the majority will not achieve all of the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The staff have a very sharp awareness of the needs of the children and the majority of the activities set up for them have focused opportunities to develop their personal and social skills. On a number of occasions children are expected to share, to take turns and to help each other. The start to the day provides a good opportunity for children to settle happily into school. The staff have very positive and effective relationships with children. During most activities the children get on well together. For example, one group worked well to build a 'city' from large building blocks. They showed real pride in their work. However, there are still times when they work individually and do not have very good skills in cooperating and collaborating. Children have learned the routines of the school well and despite occasional examples of more immature behaviour, behaviour is largely good. They are encouraged to be independent at times such as snack time. For example, they have freedom to make choices about some activities and can select when they take their break and they have to clear up and wash up afterwards. This work in the early years unit is built on effectively in reception by, for example, the opportunity for children to take a bear home for one night to look after and to write a diary about his adventures.

Communication, language and literacy

65. The teaching in this area of learning is very good in the early years unit and in the reception classes. This results in good progress after children entering the school with well below average skills. By the end of the Foundation Stage many pupils achieve the expected early learning goals although a significant number are still below the level expected when they start in Year 1. The teachers adapt and plan lessons based on the National Literacy Strategy well, making it appropriate for the ages of their children. Many of them know what an author and an illustrator is and they enjoy making their own books using their developing writing skills. Reception pupils learned to write some Chinese characters during their New Year celebrations. Role-play activities help develop children's speaking and listening skills. In reception, a safari park shop provided

buying and selling language development as well as consolidating counting skills. In the early years unit staff are flexible enough to change the purpose of the role-play area on a daily basis if it is not proving a useful activity. Very good language skills were seen being used after a redundant shop area was turned into a building site, complete with hard hats. Teachers also encourage this well. For example, when giving the task of searching for mini-beasts, the teacher asked children to be prepared to say a sentence to the others about what they had found at the end of the lesson, thus making her expectations very clear to them. Children listen to stories well, join in parts they know and make predictions about rhyming endings.

Mathematical development

66. The teaching is very good and the children make good progress, resulting in the majority achieving the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year. The National Numeracy Strategy is used appropriately and adapted sensibly for the needs of the pupils. The children in the early years unit meet a range of counting and matching activities and a lot of their play-based learning is building an effective foundation for their future work. They enjoy learning 'big words' such as symmetrical when discussing their science work. In reception, children can count confidently to 10 and are learning to count and order numbers to 20. They clearly enjoy the work as is illustrated by one pupil who showed real excitement at making the same number twice in a dice throwing game. Less able pupils to count with numbers to 10 and are still at an early stage of learning to write numerals accurately. Higher attaining pupils are at the early stages of learning to count and order numbers over 20. Children have a sound understanding of the properties of common two-dimensional shapes, but are less secure in their understanding of three-dimensional shapes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. The teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is very good and the children make good progress so that the majority reach the expected early learning goals by the end of the reception year. During the inspection the children were studying mini-beasts through a very good range of activities. These included first hand experience of looking for creatures in the outdoor area and this was supplemented effectively by staff providing other resources for children to find and describe. Children can name and describe a range of insects and other creatures, such as bees, ladybirds, ants and snails. To practise their writing skills children made their own books about mini-beasts. In other work they find out about camouflage and how it works for animals such as tigers. Children learn about other cultures through activities such as studying the Chinese New Year and through the teacher using Urdu to call the register, to which all pupils could answer. Reception children have opportunities to use a floor robot and to program it to move forwards and backwards. This work has a very good link to literacy through the story of 'Rosie's Walk'. They use design software to create a town plan on the computer and click and drag pictures using the mouse when sequencing events, such as the dressing of a teddy bear.

Physical development

68. The teaching is good and the children make good progress so that the majority attain the expected levels of attainment at the end of the reception year. In gymnastic lessons, they learn to use basic apparatus correctly and safely, and to carry mats and benches. They move confidently on and over the apparatus and teacher assessment points towards a good growth in the confidence they have gained since starting at the school. Children devise some imaginative ways of travelling over benches and boxes. Older pupils have good throwing and catching skills and these were very effectively extended in one excellent lesson in reception which resulted in very good progress. Children's balancing skills are good by the age of five and the older ones are able to check their heartbeat during exercise to see how it has altered. In the classroom many activities are set up to help develop pupils' physical skills in using tools such as scissors and crayons, which they do with growing control. Outdoor play gives the youngest children the chance to use large play apparatus, wheeled toys and sand and water, although there are insufficient resources for this aspect of their work. In lessons, good opportunities are provided for the use of modelling materials. For example, in one activity good spiders were made with playdough and straws.

Creative development

69. The teaching is very good and children make good progress so that the majority have satisfactory standards in the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Throughout the Foundation Stage the children have many opportunities to learn and sing traditional songs and rhymes, including some with actions. For example, in reception children sing a range of counting songs, including one Chinese song that has been learned as part of the Chinese New Year celebrations and helps recognise and celebrate the home culture of a boy in the class. As part of the Chinese celebrations children made good puppets and performed with them before the rest of the school. Good links with literacy are made through songs such as those that practice the 'ch' sound. In art activities children make animal pictures based on camouflage, using strips of paper over their carefully drawn animals. Displays showed some imaginative work, such as the papier-mâché eggs from which fantasy creatures are supposed to have hatched. Paintings on display show a good use of colour and of paint. There are many examples of collage work involving imaginative cutting and sticking, such as that done to create good animal masks.

ENGLISH

70. Standards in the 2001 national tests for Year 2 were well below the national average in reading and below average in writing. When compared with school, with pupils from similar backgrounds standards in reading and writing are below average. Very few pupils attained levels higher than the national average. However, the evidence of the inspection shows that standards in reading in Years 2 and 3 are now broadly in line with those expected nationally and there is little difference between the performances of boys and girls.
71. Pupils enter Year 1 with a significant number performing below national expectations in language and literacy. The very good progress made by pupils in reception is built on effectively in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of English is a developing strength and pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, are making good progress in their learning, particularly in Years 1 and 2. However, this is not yet having sufficient impact on attainment, particularly at the higher levels as the present high quality teaching is not yet reflected in the standards.
72. Standards of writing seen in lessons and in books are broadly in line with the national average at the end of Year 2, but there is limited evidence of pupils performing above national standards. More able pupils write interesting stories, some using good, descriptive language and appropriate grammar and punctuation. Less able pupils write simple sentences, using a logical format and some use of basic punctuation. Many low attaining pupils, including some with special educational needs, write simple sentences, some using capital letters and full stops. The school's analysis of results has rightly identified writing as a key focus for development and there is good evidence of pupils making progress as a result of strategies being applied, although the impact on attainment remains limited. Opportunities for extended writing are being well developed, especially in Year 2. This is not yet practiced across all year groups to take appropriate account of pupils' developmental stages as well as individual pupils' abilities.
73. The school has effective strategies for teaching basic literacy skills to all pupils. The National Literacy Strategy, with some adaptations to meet the needs of identified school priorities, has been implemented successfully and is beginning to contribute to raising standards due to the improvements in the teaching. This is particularly evident throughout Years 1 and 2 where the teaching of shared and guided reading, along with well-structured word and sentence level work, ensures that pupils make progress as a result of good learning experiences. The teaching of writing now places greater emphasis on sequencing, beginnings, middles and endings of stories and supports pupils' recognition of the components of each section. This approach is having a positive effect on pupils' confidence in their writing as well as providing a sound structure for their learning. Other initiatives, such as a phonic scheme and an early literacy programme, have also been introduced and these will build on existing strategies by providing regular and systematic support to develop pupils' literacy skills.

74. Many pupils were heard read during the inspection in all year groups and in a range of contexts. All showed an understanding of the basic concepts of print. Many pupils enjoy reading, but this is not always the case. Few pupils were able to name and talk about other books they have read or name other authors. Significant numbers of pupils in all year groups have some difficulties with their reading; many still experience problems reading irregular words and, although they know the initial letter sounds, they rarely use blends to tackle an unfamiliar word or look for familiar strands within words, as taught by their teachers. More able pupils read accurately, fluently and expressively, generally taking note of punctuation. The school's effective use of drama and performance contributes to this and needs to be further developed across the school to boost the confidence and skills of weaker readers. Less able readers talk about their books and a few can retell the story, if they are familiar with the text. A good number of pupils predict and offer opinions about the story although very few offer alternatives to the story line. When pupils cannot read a word, they turn to the picture for clues, or more often to the listener. This is because strategies for accessing difficult words have been insufficiently well developed in the past and the lack of consistently effective phonics teaching over time has restricted pupils' progress in reading, and this has had a negative impact on their writing.
75. All pupils have book bags which contain their books and reading records which, although basic in detail, are well maintained, up to date and show that many pupils do read regularly. Comments written in reading records are not sufficiently evaluative and contain insufficient advice about what pupils can do to improve. The school has devised some excellent guidance for parents on how they can support their children's reading and there is some very good practice for helping pupils whose parents do not work in partnership with the school and their children on improving reading. There is particularly good guidance on developing comprehension skills for pupils who have become more fluent readers. The school library is small but is nevertheless well used by class teachers, although the quality and range of books is very limited and does not include books about other cultures and societies or dual language books. When pupils do not return books for an extended period this situation becomes worse. The school is aware of this and already has plans to develop the library.
76. Standards in speaking and listening are improving but they are not yet consistently in line with national expectations. Some pupils have very well developed speaking skills; they use interesting language, can form complex sentences well and make themselves understood. A significant number of pupils lack confidence in speaking; they are not yet using a wider vocabulary and are not able to explain their ideas clearly. Listening skills are less well developed. The school has identified this as an area for development and is already taking steps to improve pupils' skills. The introduction of talking books is supporting the development of pupils' listening skills well and there is good evidence of some teachers planning effective collaborative or paired activities, using interactive teaching frequently as part of their repertoire and circle time activities are being effectively applied by some teachers. However, these are not yet consistent across the school.
77. Spelling is still a weakness and the lack of regular, effective phonics teaching in the past has held back pupils' spelling skills from developing beyond basic levels. This further affects standards in writing and is preventing more able pupils from attaining in line with their abilities. Good strategies for developing spelling have been adopted, including well designed spelling homework lists, and, although these are not yet fully embedded in the school's practice, they are contributing to some improvement. There is insufficient emphasis on systems to help pupils find or check the spelling of words needed for their writing, and no school wide strategy for developing pupils' independent learning skills. Although some comprehensive word lists are displayed on walls in classrooms there was no evidence of teachers referring to them. Subject or topic specific word lists are insufficiently developed in all areas of the curriculum and are not graded carefully enough to take account of pupils' ages and development as part of a whole school approach. Teachers do not use them consistently enough in their teaching to make it clear that pupils are expected to use them in their writing. Expectations of what pupils must spell correctly and consistently in their writing are not high enough throughout the school.
78. Presentation of work is generally good and in some classes very good. The quality of handwriting seen in lessons and in books varies from good to unsatisfactory and in many cases is preventing more pupils from attaining higher levels. Insufficient numbers of pupils are using consistently well-

formed letters and a neat cursive style of writing as part of a whole school approach to handwriting. Teachers are not modelling a consistent style of handwriting effectively. There are good links across the curriculum and teachers are maximising these opportunities to extend pupils' learning; for example, writing is being increasingly used in other subjects such as history, geography and religious education and this is contributing well to improving pupils' confidence and skills. Speaking and listening is used well in all subjects. ICT is effectively applied in English lessons although this is not yet consistent in all classes. Resources for English are now good and are well matched to support delivery of the curriculum. The quality of reading resources has been significantly improved, however, teachers need to collaborate carefully to ensure that sufficient copies of texts are available where parallel classes are using the same resources.

79. The teaching of English is good and often very good. Pupils are well motivated by their teachers and clearly enjoy their literacy lessons. Many pupils are becoming increasingly confident and enthusiastic learners as a result of the good teaching they receive, and make good progress in their learning. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and show a good understanding of teaching reading, writing and spelling. Lesson delivery is confident, maintains good pace and teachers have high expectations of pupils. Positive reinforcement and praise are used well by teachers and relationships between pupils and with other adults are good. This is particularly evident where teachers have planned opportunities for paired or collaborative work or use interactive teaching, for example, during extended writing sessions where pupils are encouraged to speak to their partner whilst planning their writing or to read their work out loud for comment. Most pupils share well, listen to each other and work collaboratively in lessons, although this is not always the case. A few pupils have not been taught good listening skills consistently and lack self-control. Where this happens teachers occasionally allow the focus of the lesson to be diverted from the plan by inappropriate discussion, ongoing chatter or lack of attention.
80. Teachers plan in year groups to ensure consistency, the sharing of resources and support for each other. Planning is generally good although there is less evidence that teachers are evaluating their plans regularly. Ongoing monitoring of planning has been restricted as a result of staffing changes and the lack of continued development of the subject coordinator's role. Assessment is not yet being used sufficiently rigorously to identify specific individual targets for improvement or track individual pupils' progress across the school. Although pupils have individual targets these also lack rigour and any notion of expectation and they are not high enough profile in lessons to make ensure that progress is being made; for example, targets are displayed in narrow corridors to classrooms, away from the learning environment and at a height that does not allow pupils of this age to see them. When asked, pupils were not able to discuss their targets with any degree of certainty. Informal assessment by teachers is helping pupils to be clear about how to improve their work. Teachers in some classes make very good use of pupils' self assessment at the end of lessons to indicate whether pupils themselves consider that they have understood or met the lesson's objectives. Although marking remains variable between classes, some teachers are increasingly using marking effectively as an extension of their teaching, for example, with questions, praise, supportive comments and suggestions for improvement. Where this is happening there is evidence of a developing dialogue with pupils which supports their learning effectively and helps them understand what they need to do to improve. This needs to be further developed so that all pupils can benefit from this strategy and there will be a need to monitor how pupils are using this support so that teachers are not repeating the same comments over time.
81. The work of teaching assistants is mainly effective in helping pupils access the curriculum. There is a need for the school to plan more effectively how support is to be used to best effect, for example during whole class sessions where the use of support in some lessons was unsatisfactory and did not provide good value. Liaison with support staff is satisfactory and sometimes good and there is evidence of some record keeping but this is not consistent in all classes. There is evidence that some teachers are using homework sensitively and effectively to support pupils' learning, whilst taking account of the age of the pupils. A range of homework is set and this is well used by some pupils as an extension of their learning. However, some teachers are not making sufficient reference to homework during lessons and this does not reinforce its importance as part of pupils' learning. There is good evidence in Years 1 and 2 of developing links with parents as partners in their children's learning.

82. The recently appointed English co-ordinator is enthusiastic and a very able practitioner and although relatively new to the post is making a difference to the teaching of English. The school is very aware of issues that require attention and already has plans to address some of them. When the new co-ordinator's action plan is in place it will provide clearly identified priorities with actions to guide and pace progress and provide clear direction for staff. The interim headteacher has a clear vision of where the school needs to be and how to achieve this.

MATHEMATICS

83. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment is broadly in line with the national average for pupils by the end of Year 2. When they enter the school, the attainment of pupils is well below the average for their age. However, after good progress in the Foundation Stage the majority are broadly in line with the standard expected. The National Curriculum tests showed attainment for 2001 to be slightly below average, but the level of attainment for the current cohort suggests results should be at least in line. The pupils in Year 2 calculate with numbers up to 100. They tell the time, measure the weight of objects and know the names of common two-dimensional shapes. In Year 1 they undertake calculations using three numbers such as $16-1+10$.
84. By the end of Year 3, inspection evidence shows that attainment is also in line with the national average, and the early indications from this year's optional test results are that they may even be slightly above average; this represents good progress. Pupils divide with remainders and accurately explain the strategies they are using. They have learned the names and properties of common two-dimensional shapes and know the points of a compass and simple coordinate positions. Results show there to be more high attaining boys, particularly in Year 3. This was not due to any difference in teaching, but due to the spread of ability between boys and girls in the classes.
85. Since the last inspection, overall standards have remained the same even though their attainment on entry has fallen from below average to well below average. The school has done well to maintain the previous standards and this is partly related to improvements in the teaching and the curriculum offered to pupils due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy.
86. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. Good progress is evident during the year and between year groups. Learning in Years 1 and 2 was good in all the lessons seen, except for one class comprising entirely of lower attaining and special needs pupils, who, even though the teaching was good, found learning difficult. Some pupils in this class were not sure about which way round to write their numbers, and could not tell the difference between 60 and 16. In Year 3, learning in all lessons seen was very good overall. Pupils in Year 3 know about multiples of 10 and calculate mentally multiplication sums such as 5×40 and 4×30 . When classroom assistants are available, the lower attaining pupils are well supported, and achieve well. Pupils with English as an additional language made good progress in the lessons seen. No difference was noted in the progress of boys or girls in lessons. In addition to work with number, pupils learn to work with time, measurement and learn about shapes. Some data handling is undertaken; pupils collect data in tally charts and use this to make pictograms or bar charts.

The teaching ranges from good to very good across the school. The teachers have good subject knowledge and have integrated the National Numeracy Strategy well into their teaching. They have a good knowledge of their pupils' abilities and plan work suited to them. They have good relationships with their pupils and use appropriate teaching strategies. Pupils are encouraged by the teachers to explain and demonstrate their mathematical strategies to the rest of the class and this helps consolidate their learning. Teachers assess pupils' work effectively and use their assessments to help plan future work. Pupils undertake the statutory tests in Year 2 and work is assessed in other years by the use of tests associated with the scheme of work, as well as by teacher assessment. Where classroom assistants or other helpers are used, they are well briefed to support their groups. ICT is used to good effect in many lessons. In most lessons, the pace is exciting and pupils were well motivated.

87. Pupils' attitudes are generally good, although in one lesson they were restless and noisy. In classes where pace of the lessons is good the pupils' interest is well maintained. On the whole, they enjoy lessons and sustain concentration well. Good behaviour is generally maintained throughout lessons, even where there are pupils with behavioural difficulties. There is a general absence of bad behaviour in lessons because the teachers know their pupils well and make an effort to keep them interested. Some pupils have difficulty presenting work well because of poor writing skills. Children with special needs and English as an additional language were generally well supported in their work both by teachers and by classroom assistants. In general, pupils with special needs or who were lower attaining did similar work to the rest of the class, but at a simpler level.
88. The subject has an enthusiastic coordinator who has only been in the post for a short time. She has had appropriate training and all the teachers in the school have been trained to deliver the National Numeracy Strategy. Teaching and pupils' work have been monitored by the coordinator and senior management. The coordinator has audited the range of resources available and ensured there are sufficient for the needs of all classes; however, she has no budget for development of the subject. There are some resources for teaching mathematics with ICT but these are insufficient for the needs of the teachers. There were no books seen in the library suitable for research in the subject.

SCIENCE

89. Standards are broadly in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and good by the end of Year 3. This is an improvement on the teacher assessments made in 2001 and is also an improvement since the last inspection. In addition, the progress being made by pupils is now good, when their results are compared to their attainment on entry, which is below that expected, and this is a better picture than was found at the last inspection. The pupils have a consistently sound knowledge across all aspects of the curriculum. The early indications from assessments made this year show that almost all pupils reach the expected level and that progress is very good.
90. The teacher assessments in 2001 showed that very few pupils reached the higher levels. This is still to be fully addressed but the very good teaching is now ensuring that all groups of pupils are making similar progress. The pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, are fully integrated into lessons and, especially when they receive extra support from teaching assistants, they are making very good progress, equal to that of their peers.
91. In Year 1, pupils have a sound understanding of how pushing and pulling are forces and how we use these forces to move things. They know much of the key vocabulary to describe the forces and that many objects use more than one force. They understand that the angle of a surface affects how easy it is for an object to be pushed or pulled. They describe the properties of materials and carry out investigations into waterproof materials or the use of magnets. In Year 2, the work on forces is taken further through a range of activities to test out the forces. Pupils know that they use the two forces to alter the shape of malleable materials such as 'playdough'. They describe how different containers are opened and how clothing is fastened. From the topic on materials, pupils describe how materials can change by, for example, melting chocolate. They define liquid and gas as concepts and set up simple circuits.
92. Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of light sources. They explain how the sun is a source of light while the moon only reflects light. They have a good knowledge of terms such as 'opaque' and 'translucent'. During the present topic they are learning how shadows behave and how to use shadows in, for example, making puppets. Less able pupils also reach a good level of attainment in this work, largely through their enthusiasm and interest, and also through the good support they receive. Pupils know that some foods are better for them than others. They can set up tests to show what plants need for good growing conditions and how capillary action works. They use good numeracy skills in measuring growth.

93. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are very good. The less able Year 3 pupils demonstrate particularly enthusiastic response to the teaching about shadows. In one very good lesson they showed real excitement as they investigate how the shadows behave, with one pupil commenting unprompted on how much she was enjoying the work. In all lessons, pupils have very good opportunities to work collaboratively and in small groups. They are well behaved and treat the resources provided with respect and care. Pupils' work is well presented, neatly stored and tidy.
94. The teaching is very good overall, and at least good in all lessons seen. The scrutiny of pupils' work supports this, although the marking of work is inconsistent. Where it is very good, as it usually is in Years 1 and 2, work is well annotated and the pupils are told what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. However, in some cases marking is less informative and some misspelt key words are not corrected. Teachers and teaching assistants provide very good support, especially for the lower attaining pupils and those with English as an additional language, are well supported enabling them to take a full part in the lessons. The lessons are very well planned and resourced with a combination of commercial and teacher made activities. Displays of work in classrooms are very good; they are often interactive and require pupils to respond to them. For example, in Year 1 very good displays of materials gives pupils the opportunity to handle a range of objects and to match them to the correct 'material monster'. Teachers' planning contains very clear learning objectives and these are shared with pupils at the start of lessons leaving them in no doubt as to what is expected of them and what they are going to learn. There are some good, effective cross-curricular links. For example, in one physical education lesson Year 2 pupils experimented with small games apparatus to see what they pushed and what they pulled. In one good Year 1 lesson, a good story was used to illustrate the use of pushing and pulling and this provided a good literacy link.
95. The subject coordinator has only had the responsibility for a temporary period. Although she has done a good job during this time, there is a need to review the management of the subject to ensure better monitoring of the teaching and learning. Time has been provided for the coordinator to monitor the teaching and learning. There is a good portfolio of examples of pupils' work and this gives teachers a sound illustration of the standards needed to reach different levels. Targets are set in the reports to parents but these are not followed up sufficiently and a better system for monitoring the progress made against the targets is needed.

ART AND DESIGN

96. Three lessons of art were seen during the inspection, in Years 1 and 3. Judgements are based on these, work displayed in classrooms and around the school and discussion with pupils and the co-ordinator. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and who have English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning. Standards of work overall are generally in line with expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 3, with some better, and are consistent with the good teaching seen in lessons.
97. The school has adopted a new scheme of work for art, which follows national guidelines. Nevertheless there is good emphasis on art throughout the school and pupils use their artistic skills frequently, including in other subjects, and this is contributing to standards overall.
98. Discussions with pupils indicate that they are enthusiastic, work hard and enjoy their art lessons. Displays around the school and in classrooms are delightful and show some good examples of the range of techniques and materials used. Work is colourful and bright and shows enthusiasm for the subject. The range and quality of work displayed is consistent with good teaching and demonstrates the school's commitment to developing pupils' creative skills.
99. By the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment is at the level expected, particularly in drawing and painting, although observational drawing is less well developed and represented. Throughout Years 1 and 2 pupils use a variety of media and are given plenty of opportunities to make choices. They use a range of techniques appropriate to their age; for example, weaving in wool on card showing effective use of shades of blue and lilac and paper sculptures where Year 1 pupils investigated how they could bend, fold, curl and twist paper and use the outcomes in a design.

Although the school does not have access to a kiln, effective use is made of clay and Year 1 pupils have designed and made some lovely tiles decorated with paint and clear glaze, depicting underwater creatures and scenes. Pupils are encouraged to experiment with various materials; for example, in science they created monsters made from paper, plastic and woodwork. There are limited examples of ICT being used to support pupils' learning in art but Year 1 made appropriate use of a software package to develop their design skills to draw and paint pictures of the seaside.

100. Artwork in Year 3 mainly centres on topic work. With the exception of observational drawing skills, pupils' work generally demonstrates developing competence in colour mixing and matching in a range of media and overall they make good progress. Further opportunities are created for pupils to use colour, explore pattern and imagination and to respond to examples of art in the world around them such as work based on African masks, Minoan patterns and fresco paintings where some pupils' use of paint is particularly good. Pupils' basic skills in using clay are further developed by, for example, making clay pots and tiles using Greek patterns. They continue to use their sound design and painting skills by making Cretan pots and chalices, which make good use of black gold and silver. Pupils also have opportunities to extend their own sketches and paintings from a range of starting points, for example the work using pictures of well-known faces from magazines. Work in the style of other artists is not yet developed to include a wide range of non-western art to fully represent the cultural diversity of the school's population. Pupils use drawing and other skills confidently to illustrate work in other areas of the curriculum.
101. The teaching is good. Pupils' work and the lessons observed indicate that teachers have a sound understanding of the subject. They generally make effective use of art to enhance pupils' learning experiences in other areas of the curriculum, specifically in English, history, religious education and science. Marking and dating of work in sketchbooks is not consistent and opportunities for teachers to use sketchbooks as a tool for assessing pupils' progress over time are lost. The use of drawing books is helping pupils to understand the importance of planning and experimentation, although all teachers do not use these consistently as proper sketchbooks; they currently contain a range of other work, which diminishes the book's value specifically as a sketchbook for art and design.
102. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, although the co-ordinator has not monitored teaching and learning or planning. Plans to carry out regular, consistent and rigorous assessment of attainment, which will enable the school to evaluate pupils' progress, have not been developed. Resources for art are very good and are well stored and maintained. Staff are enthusiastic, share ideas and seek advice and support from each other. The policy, which is very limited and out of date, needs urgent updating to take account of developments in the subject. The co-ordinator has appropriate expertise in art and is aware of areas requiring further development, such as observational drawing, work on critical studies, use of ICT and working in the style of other artists world wide, including non-western artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards demonstrated by pupils at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 3, are above those normally expected for their ages. This represents a good level of improvement since the last inspection. The pupils, including those with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language, are given full access to the National Curriculum and they make good progress in their learning.
104. A major strength of the subject is the opportunities teachers provide for evaluating and investigating real life objects and artefacts. For example, in two good Year 1 lessons pupils worked collaboratively to study illustrations of commercial playground equipment. They discussed the materials used for different purposes and gave reasons for their preferences when asked whether they would like such equipment in their playground. They understand the idea of safety and why some materials are more suitable than others. This good discussion and cooperative working then led to a good opportunity to design their own ideal playgrounds.

105. In Year 3, pupils investigated a range of packaging, taking the cartons and boxes apart to work out how they had been put together, and how many pieces of card had been used. They carry out this investigation well, counting the number of rectangles and working out how the card is folded. This work is very effectively followed up with the task of creating a box in the shape of a cube or pyramid. The majority of the pupils understand the concept of made objects needing to be 'fit for purpose'.
106. Displays of earlier work show that Year 1 pupils have designed and made some good houses, based on well known fairy tales. In Year 2 pupils designed and made good moving vehicles. These had sound axles and moving wheels and designs were altered during the making process and evaluated afterwards. Different designs showed awareness of the needs of different purposes, such as fire engines or tanks. In Year 3 pupils know terms such as compressed and inflated. They know how a pneumatic system works and have created moving monsters and party blowers that use the power of air in different ways. This work has good cross curricular links with their work in science, history and literacy.
107. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. When the teacher first explained the way a carton was created and folded they showed genuine interest and excitement. They work enthusiastically and share resources and discuss their work with their partners or in small groups. They make the most of opportunities to reflect on what they like or don't like about objects. The teaching offers good opportunities for speaking and listening development through discussion in groups or in front of the whole class but most pupils are not very articulate.
108. The quality of teaching is very good. In one very good lesson in Year 3 the teacher organised the resources very effectively and ensured the pupils were given sufficient time to investigate before moving on to making. She made very good teaching points during the activities and kept pupils on task and a good pace to the lesson by telling them how long they had for different tasks. Relationships between the pupils cooperating on tasks, and between the teacher and the pupils are very good. Learning objectives are shared with pupils and this helps them understand exactly what is expected of them and how this fits into the pattern of learning. Pupils with special needs are well supported by other adults enabling them to take a full part in the lessons.
109. The subject leadership is under developed and the policy and scheme of work are in need of review and updating. There have been no opportunities for the coordinator to monitor the teaching or planning and there is no budget allocated for the subject. However, the teachers are more aware of the needs of the curriculum than was the case at the last inspection, and the very good teaching has ensured that standards have risen. In particular, there are better opportunities for pupils to have practical experiences. The assessment of improvements in pupils' skills is under developed.

GEOGRAPHY

110. During the inspection it was not possible to see any lessons in this subject due to the school's timetable. However, discussions with pupils and an extensive scrutiny of work show the pupils achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 3, when they leave the school.
111. Pupils across the school are given a good range of opportunities to explore local geography through visits into the local community where they take notes and photographs of what they see and map the routes they have used. Good links are made to other subjects such as English, history and science and social issues are thoroughly discussed. For example, in Year 1 pupils when studying the seasons and the types of weather are encouraged to match the clothes they would wear to the weather and what they would do in their leisure time related to the environment. Pupils in Year 2 in making maps of their playground come up with ideas as to how it could be improved and draw their route from home to school discussing what they would see on the way and why buildings and locality varies. Pupils in Year 3 have written letters describing holiday places around the world and successfully relate their work to name the place on a map of the world, describing well its main features.

112. The pupils' learning and achievement are supported well when they have opportunities for first hand investigations. For example, pupils in Year 1 after a visit of a road safety officer drew and painted posters on road safety relating these to the local environment and the features of the roads in their locality. Pupils in Year 2 in studying the sea and its physical and environmental features apply well their English skills when they write imaginative poetry about a stormy sea and life under the sea. They express an awareness of localities beyond their own with clear views on how the environment is influenced by people. Pupils in Year 3 have made an extensive range of relevant studies contrasting their own area of Bletchley with Olney, examining very well the contrast of the physical and human features of the two localities. They give clear thoughtful explanations for the location and the similar and different characteristics. Good use is made of maps and the pupils interpret well the keys and symbols, labelling on maps accurately the main towns and cities and places of the world.
113. Even though no first hand teaching was seen it was obvious from the high quality of previously completed work that the subject is taught well with a good and relevant interpretation of the National Curriculum. In discussion with pupils it is clear that their learning has been very well consolidated. They describe what they have done with an accurate clarity and a good understanding. They show good levels of enthusiasm and motivation for their work and proudly discuss what they have done.
114. The subject co-ordinator, due to her full-time teaching commitment has not yet had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the teaching of the subject across the school. The school has no effective procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress.

HISTORY

115. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained at above average levels across the school. This picture is largely due to the overall good standards of teaching and the wide range of opportunities pupils have to role-play historical events through drama, supported by a wide range of visits to museums.
116. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have developed well their knowledge and understanding of the lives of people from the past. For example, when learning about the life of Grace Darling, pupils relate very well to their previous studies of life in Victorian times and the differences between now and then. They explained with clarity and understanding, that life would be much harder then because there was no electricity and the role of women in society was much different to that at present. They were enthralled to learn about her life as a daughter of a lighthouse keeper who, with her father, rowed through a storm to the wreck saving nine lives. The planning of lessons is effectively developed by teachers planning together across the year groups, according to the adopted scheme of work. This lesson on the life of Grace Darling was taught to a mixed Year 2, and a Year 1 and 2 class with a high number of pupils having special educational needs. The excellent teaching seen in the Year 1 and 2 class and the good teaching in the other Year 2 class, and the shared planning, across the two classes, supported very well the pupils' learning and above average levels of attainment. Discussion with pupils and samples of previous work show that pupils have a good understanding of their recent studies on the plague and Great Fire of London, the differences between schools today and in Victorian times. They show an understanding of chronology by recognising that past time can be divided into periods with similarities and differences between them, and use knowingly relevant terms and dates.
117. By Year 3, when the pupils leave the school, they show a good factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of history of Britain and other countries. Displays demonstrate good evidence of a wide and relevant range of studies on Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. Discussion with pupils illustrates that they have above average level of attainment and knowledge when they articulate, very clearly, the life styles of the people at the time, contrasting it well with life to-day. In a seen lesson about the Battle of Thermopylae, pupils working in pairs showed a good understanding of the social and moral issues of war and conflict and what life would be like in 480BC when the war was fought.

118. Overall, the quality of teaching seen was good. Teachers develop the pupils' skills of deduction and teach them how to distinguish primary and secondary source material such as, for example, historical artefacts as opposed to books and Internet research. The good achievements of the pupils by the end of Year 2, and the very good achievements by the end of Year 3, are largely due to the extensive range of opportunities pupils have to visit local museums and the very good collection of artefacts the school has gathered due to the excellent input of the subject coordinator. Frequent visits are made to local museums and the British Museum in London. This input, and the overall good teaching and sometimes excellent teaching together with the relevant links to other subjects such as geography and social, moral and cultural aspects, does much to heighten the pupils' awareness of the subject. They respond with high levels of awareness, enthusiasm and motivation. Pupils with special educational needs, and English as an additional language achieve well through careful planning by the class teacher and the support of learning support assistants.
119. The National Curriculum is fully covered but, due to her full-time teaching commitment, the coordinator has insufficient time to monitor and evaluate the teaching of the subject across the school. Due to the exciting and relevant range of historical artefacts she has collected, resources are good. However, there are insufficient textbooks for pupils to research independently and collaboratively, both in class and in the school library. The school does not have procedures to assess and record pupils' progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

120. Standards throughout the school are broadly in line with those expected nationally. By the end of Year 2, pupils write and correct short passages using a word processor and use a computer to create pictures. They mix pictures and text on the computer. By the end of Year 3, they edit longer pieces of text, choosing the style of appearance of their text by selecting fonts and size. They find information from a CD-ROM or the Internet. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have had opportunities to program and control a simple robot. At the time of the last inspection, standards in the subject were unsatisfactory. They have improved due to better teaching and improved resources. However, there are still areas where the subject has weaknesses and opportunities to use computers are missed. There are no opportunities to use computers to control or model external events. The computers are used effectively to support learning in other subjects such as mathematics and English but again some opportunities to do this are missed.
121. The school has no computer suite so teachers demonstrate skills on the machines in their classes and then let the pupils practise later in lesson time. The teaching is good or very good in Years 1 and 2. No lessons were seen with pupils in Year 3, so no secure judgement can be made of teaching. The teachers know their pupils well and have good relationships with them. Their planning is good, and the work fits with the needs of the pupils. The teachers are generally confident with using a range of applications on the computers. When pupils are working on the computers in other subject lessons, the teachers monitor and support them effectively.
122. Across the school, pupils' learning is good or very good. However, not all pupils have sufficient time using computers to develop their skills effectively, although the improvement in the number of computers available recently has provided more opportunities for access. The pupils in Year 3 have recently had the opportunity to use the computer suite in the local middle school on a regular basis. This is evident in the improvement of skills developed with a limited range of applications.
123. Pupils have no anxieties about using the technology. In Years 1 and 2, children were seen learning how to enter data into the computer to draw graphs. In Year 2, they learn how to create and change pictures on the computer. Pupils in Year 3 could explain clearly how to save, load and print work, and how to deal with the computer when it crashes. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, learn at the same rate as the other pupils, although there is no evidence of ICT being used specifically to support their needs. Pupils' attitudes to the use of computers are good across the school. Their behaviour is good and they treat the equipment with appropriate respect. They sustain concentration, listen to

their teachers and then get on with their work. They obviously enjoy opportunities to use the technology and get benefit from it.

124. The current coordinator is passing on the role to another teacher who has been shadowing her for two terms; she had no job description to cover the responsibilities of the post. She has been well supported by the headteacher and governors in the past but has not yet had the chance to monitor work or lessons. She does not have a budget for development of the subject. Training has also been available for other teachers in the school. The subject policy and scheme of work are outdated and in need of review. Computers and other technology are used well in other subjects. For example, in mathematics the pupils had used the technology for handling data and creating graphs. They had also used a robot to learn about distance and angles. In English, they used the computers to help read stories and learn spellings, and they have good opportunities to listen to recorded stories using listening centres and headphones. In music, CD and tape players are used regularly for listening. The absence of a formal assessment system means that the school does not have a clear picture of pupils' development.

MUSIC

125. Standards of attainment in music by the end of Year 2 are above expectations and by the end of Year 3 standards they are well above the expected level. Pupils know about musical elements such as pitch, volume and speed, and compose sounds to accompany a story to a particular theme with clear structure. They play in rhythm on percussion instruments and a melody in time on a tuned instrument. A major strength is the standard of singing. Children sing with energy, enthusiasm and expression, the vast majority in tune. Pupils in Year 3 sing in two parts and are not afraid of undertaking solo singing in front of the rest of the class. The standards among older pupils have shown a good level of improvement since the last inspection, even though they were above national expectations at that time.
126. The teaching of music is very good or better in all lessons. The teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, plan appropriate activities and manage the lessons well. The teachers' subject knowledge is good, they know how to enthuse their pupils and ensure they participate in the music sessions effectively. In singing lessons, teachers work well together to get the best from the children.
127. Pupils' attitudes to music are very good. They enjoy listening to music and making it when they have the opportunity. In the lessons seen, they behaved very well, sustained interest and put a great deal of effort into creating musical compositions. They work well in groups to make these compositions. In one class, some pupils had made their own instruments at home and brought them in to accompany a piece of music. They help with the distribution and collection of musical instruments, and treat them carefully. Pupils' learning of music is good or better across the school. They have a good knowledge of musical concepts and terms. They know a range of songs and most can sing in tune.
128. The music coordinator is enthusiastic and coordinates the subject well. The subject policy and scheme of work are both due for revision. The range of resources is good but there is no budget to help develop this further. Work in classes and teachers' planning have not been monitored and there is no formal scheme for assessment. There are opportunities for children to undertake performances in school but there were no opportunities seen for pupils to play instruments in assembly. Instrumental tuition has been offered to pupils but is not currently undertaken. Good use is made of music in the school for listening and for cultural development, with a range of musical styles being played in assembly. The school has a good range of hardware for listening and recording music but the range of recorded music available is limited and there is not enough from different cultures. The school has some computer software to develop musical skills, but this had not been used, and there were no examples of the library being used to develop the subject. Concerts by professional musicians are put on in the school for the pupils' benefit.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

129. Standards at the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with those expected for pupils of this age, which appears to represent a decline in standards since the last inspection. There is less photographic evidence than there was then on which to base judgements. As it was not possible to observe any lessons in Year 3, no judgement about standards can be made. During the inspection lessons in games and gymnastics were observed. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school and this includes those with English as an additional language or those who have special educational needs.
130. All lessons begin with an appropriate warm up session and pupils have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies. A number of times they were asked to feel their heartbeats before and after exercise to illustrate the differences in speed. In Year 1, pupils have sound dribbling skills using small balls, their hands and bats. They use care and precision in their movements. The skills are built on and extended to include trapping the ball and to working in pairs. In Year 2 pupils have sound gymnastic skills. They move in a variety of ways and complete sequences with a balance, although their balancing skills are less well developed. In a games lesson they show that they understand the forces they have been working on in science by working out how to move their small games apparatus by pushing and pulling. They can throw and catch beanbags and small balls at an appropriate level and during one good lesson they learn to pass the ball in a basketball style. Many of the pupils with special educational needs have underdeveloped skills and lack appropriate coordination in their throwing and catching.
131. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good. They work hard on activities and cooperate and collaborate well when required. They are happy to show their work to others as, for example, when selected by teachers to illustrate a particular teaching point. When carrying benches and mats they show a good awareness of others and do so safely and sensibly.
132. The quality of teaching is consistently good in all lessons. During the inspection, the level of noise from a nearby building site hindered lessons outdoors. However, the teachers' good relationships with pupils and the children's good levels of behaviour meant that their learning was not disrupted too seriously. During lessons teachers monitor pupils' work carefully and provide support appropriately where it is needed. Teachers model activities well, making their expectations clear to pupils. Whether working outside or in the hall, the teachers make good any points about safety. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to make important teaching points about, for example, starting and finishing movements or the need for stillness in a balance. The needs of those with special educational needs are considered in planning. For example, in one good lesson the planning made note of one pupils' individual education plan that included the target 'improve the following of instructions'. Lessons often have good pace; for example, one teacher ensured that pupils knew exactly how long they had to practise skills. Sufficient time is given for practising without the lesson becoming unfocused and pupils getting off task through boredom.
133. The school uses a commercial scheme of work to ensure full curriculum coverage in gymnastics and games. External coaches work in the school for occasional brief sessions, teaching skills in hockey or football, but there are no regular after school sports clubs. There is an appropriate policy that contains a good set of aims for the subject. The planning of lessons is not monitored or reviewed and there have been no opportunities for the subject coordinator to monitor and support teaching and learning in other classes. Resources are satisfactory but there is no budget attached to the subject, enabling regular audits and reviews of resources to be undertaken. There is no regular assessment or recording of pupils' progress in developing their skills. An annual sports day gives all pupils the opportunity to take part in a range of competitive activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. One lesson was observed during the inspection and some work was available to be inspected but there was too little evidence to make secure judgements about the standards of attainment or the overall quality of teaching.

135. Religious education topics from the agreed syllabus are generally taught in a systematic way to each class with some variation in line with class topics. Pupils learn about aspects of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism and there is evidence of work on festivals, such as Christmas, Diwali and Hanukkah. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, learn about the natural world. This work includes stories about Noah's Ark and Jonah and the Whale and these provide a link with their topic on water. Year 3 pupils read and discuss the stories of Jesus through the New Testament.
136. Pupils have a growing awareness of the variety of religious beliefs and school assemblies and other discussions take good account of this. Discussions with pupils indicate clearly that they are fully aware of the range of beliefs and faiths of other pupils within the school community and in the world around them. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject. Resources are generally adequate to support pupils' learning, but the stock of supporting library books and the selection of religious artefacts are both limited in number and range. Resources are appropriately stored and well cared for and very well used by staff.
137. The very recently appointed co-ordinator is waiting for the expected revised Locally Agreed Syllabus and is aware that the school needs to revise its current policy, which is very out of date, in line with this. In the meantime staff are continuing to use an amalgam of the existing agreed syllabus and national guidance. Procedures for regular monitoring of the curriculum and how it is taught are insufficiently well developed.