

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **RIDGMONT LOWER SCHOOL**

Ridgmont, Bedfordshire

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109476

Headteacher: Ms K. Storey

Reporting inspector: Carole Green  
021526

Dates of inspection: 29<sup>th</sup> January 2001 – 1<sup>st</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 197356

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Lower
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Ridgmont Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK43 0TS
Telephone number:	01525 280236
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Carole Kirby
Date of previous inspection:	29 <sup>th</sup> September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
021526	Carole Green	Registered inspector	English Art & Design Design & Technology Geography History Physical Education Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it?  What should the school do to improve further?  The school's results and pupils' achievements.  How well are pupils taught?  How well is the school led and managed?
19578	Ted Worby	Lay inspector		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?
024658	Fiona Musters	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Information & Communication Technology Music Religious Education Foundation Stage Special Educational Needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Ridgmont Lower School, which dates from 1878, is a rural village school located on the edge of the Woburn Abbey Estate.

There are currently 68 pupils on roll. This number is likely to rise to 80 in the Summer term 2001. There are more boys than girls with a noticeable imbalance in the Key Stage 2 class. The school caters for pupils aged four to nine years, some of whom come from the village of Ridgmont itself and the nearby village of Brogborough. Pupils from Brogborough travel to and from school on a bus provided by the local authority. Fifty-seven per cent of pupils, however, come from outside the school's historical catchment area, including some who travel across the county border from Milton Keynes. The school has established a good reputation for supporting pupils with special educational needs and the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs (26 per cent), including those that hold a statement, is above the national average. There are a significantly high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the Key Stage 2 class. This shows a significant increase since the last inspection in 1997 when the percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs was ten per cent (below the national average). Pupils come from a wide social background and the majority have had some pre-school education before they join the reception class. The school's Baseline data shows that pupils' attainment on entry is low when compared with other schools in Bedfordshire. However, the percentage of pupils achieving the higher levels of attainment in Bedfordshire is higher than in the national picture. Levels of achievement for pupils when they enter the school are broadly average, and are similar to the average when compared to schools nationally.

The school has experienced a period of extensive change since the last inspection, including four headteachers within the last four years, and during this time many changes have also occurred within teaching and non-teaching staff. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2000.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Ridgmont Lower school has many strengths and some weaknesses. At the end of Key Stage 1, when pupils are seven, and when they leave school aged nine, they achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in spelling, however, are below average, as are standards in information communication technology at Key Stage 1. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good, but is good overall. The recently appointed headteacher has ensured that there are effective strategies in place to secure future improvement. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in reading at Key Stage 1 are above average.
- The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is very good; a positive climate for learning has been established.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress; they are well supported by all staff.
- The leadership of the current headteacher is very good. She has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and has drawn up an effective plan for further improvement in her short time in the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour in school are good.
- The school offers a wide range of learning opportunities, including French.
- The school provides well for pupils' moral and social development. The principles of right

and wrong are well established.

- Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good.
- Partnership with parents is a strength of the school. Parents feel welcomed and are kept well informed of their children's progress.

### **What could be improved**

- Standards in spelling throughout the school are below average. Pupils do not have a sufficient range of strategies to help them to attempt to spell words correctly.
- Standards in information and communication technology at Key Stage 1 are below average. Pupils are not yet confident in working with the recently acquired software.
- The governing body has, until recently, not been sufficiently involved in shaping the direction of the school or in monitoring the progress of the school since the last inspection. With the appointment of the new headteacher and chair of governors they have become better informed and are carrying out their role more effectively. This now needs to be consolidated.
- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the headteacher and subject leaders. This was a key issue at the last inspection.

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

The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has been subject to a number of significant changes, both in staffing and in the number of pupils on roll with special educational needs, since the last inspection. Although the school has successfully implemented the literacy and numeracy strategies to support the English and mathematics curriculum, it has not implemented schemes of work for all other subjects. The school recognises this omission and this is a priority in the current school improvement plan. Insufficient progress has been made in developing the roles of subject leaders. Again the school has identified this as an area for development, and plans are in place for subject leaders to become more involved in data analysis and in monitoring the teaching and learning within their subject, but it is too early to measure the impact of these initiatives. The school has successfully addressed the issue of improving resources for religious education and food technology. Overall the school has made unsatisfactory progress in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection in 1997.

The recent appointment of a very effective headteacher, however, has meant that realistic but challenging targets have been set for national test results and this, together with the determination of the newly formed governing body to improve its monitoring role, means that the school is soundly placed to improve.



## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				<b>Key</b>
	all schools			similar schools	
	Year 1988	Year 1999	Year 2000	Year 2000	
Reading	A	B	C	D	well above A average above B average average C below average D well below E average
Writing	C	A*	C	D	
Mathematics	A	A	B	D	

Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in 2000 were broadly the same as the national average in reading and writing. The proportion of pupils attaining higher levels was well above average in writing and above average in mathematics. When compared with schools with a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils attain above average standards in reading and average standards in writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in spelling and in information and communication technology are below average.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They enjoy coming to school, try hard and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils is good both in and out of classrooms.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. Pupils are polite and respectful. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good. More opportunities could be found for pupils to use their initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is good, above the national average. Pupils are generally punctual but a few regularly arrive late for school.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	satisfactory	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 teaching is good overall, and in Key Stage 2 it is very good. All teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory or better. Sixty per cent of teaching was good or better. The quality of teaching in the reception class is always satisfactory and in 40 per cent of lessons is good or very good. The teaching of English ranges between satisfactory and good at Key Stage 1 and is good at Key Stage 2. In mathematics the quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good in Key Stage 1 and is very good at Key Stage 2. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are often enthusiastic about their work and this promotes enjoyment and positive attitudes from their pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a rich and stimulating curriculum, for all of its pupils, that meets statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school has a higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the provision made for them is good. Pupils are well integrated in all classes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school promotes pupils' personal, social and health education well. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The principles of right and wrong are well established. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory overall. Western cultures are promoted well through music, art and literature, but the richness and variety of other cultures is under-represented.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils' health and well being. Good systems for evaluating pupils' performance and personal development have recently been introduced but are not as yet used consistently by all staff.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The recently appointed headteacher provides strong leadership for the school. She has quickly established positive relationships with the whole school community. The roles of other staff with management responsibilities are being developed.
How well the governors	Governors have until recently been ineffective, and have not been

fulfil their responsibilities	sufficiently involved in monitoring the school's work or in shaping its future direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has been very effective in identifying the school's current strengths and weaknesses, through the analysis of data and scrutiny of pupils' work but there has been very little monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall, but the school library is underused.

After a period of significant change, the school is more settled and has taken effective steps to ensure future improvement. The school improvement and development plan clearly identifies appropriate priorities. A close working relationship has been established between the chair of governors and the headteacher, and governors are better informed about how to carry out their role effectively. Staffing, resources and accommodation are adequate, although some of the accommodation for Year 1 pupils restricts their range of activities.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school.</li> <li>• Children behave well at school.</li> <li>• Children make good progress in their learning.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Staff at the school are very approachable.</li> <li>• Teaching in the school is good.</li> </ul>	None were raised.

Inspectors generally endorse parents very positive views.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. At the time of the last inspection, in 1997, academic standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 1, and when pupils left the school at the end of Year 4, were judged to be above the national average.
2. National test results comparisons for 2000 need to be viewed with some caution as there are only 12 pupils in the cohort, and the percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is unusually low (0 per cent).
3. National test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000 indicate that standards in reading and writing are close to the national average, and in mathematics they are above the national average. When these results are compared to schools in a similar context, however, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are below average. Although the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels (level 3) is well above average in writing and science and above average in mathematics, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level 2 is close to the average in reading and writing, but well below average in mathematics and science.
4. The school's cohort size is small and therefore one would expect considerable variation from year to year. Trends over time in national test results for seven-year-olds from 1996 to 2000 indicate that standards in reading were high in 1996, but are now close to the national average. Standards in writing vary considerably from year to year, but were above average in 1996, were close to the national average in 1998, and after rising sharply in 1999 are now close to the national average again. In mathematics standards have been rising steadily from 1996 to 1999 but dropped slightly in 2000, bringing them close to the national average.
5. Attainment of pupils when they start school is average, although when compared with all Bedfordshire schools, attainment is below the county average. All children in the reception class make good progress towards the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematical, creative and physical development. A small group of children within the class already exceed these goals in language and literacy and mathematics and in information and communication technology skills. The majority of pupils are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning before they reach the end of the Foundation Stage at the end of their reception year.
6. Inspection evidence from lesson observations and scrutiny of pupils' work shows that seven-year-olds nearing the end of Key Stage 1 attain standards that are above average in reading and average in writing, mathematics and science. Standards in Year 4 are average in all aspects of English and in mathematics and science.
7. In English standards in pupils' work are average, apart from reading at the end of Key Stage 1 which is above average, and standards in spelling which are below average at both key stages. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate sound listening skills, and although pupils speak confidently teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to explain their reasoning and understanding, especially in mathematics and science lessons.

8. At Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in reading, they read fluently and with enthusiasm. In Key Stage 2 progress in reading is sound. Good teaching and the introduction of the literacy strategy have helped pupils to gain a range of skills to decode unknown texts. Standards in writing are average at both key stages, but pupils' progress is hampered by poor spelling strategies, where they do not use their phonic knowledge well and are too reliant on adults to support them in attempting to spell unknown words. At Key Stage 2 there are good opportunities for pupils to write for a range of purposes across other curriculum areas, but spelling skills remain weak.
9. In mathematics pupils attain average standards throughout the school. Teachers are particularly successful at teaching mental mathematics, so that by the age of seven pupils rapidly add and subtract numbers in their head accurately and calculate ten more or less than a given number. At Key Stage 2 pupils solve simple problems involving money, they represent and use data and apply their mathematical skills well in science lessons.
10. Pupils' attainment in science is average at both key stages. At Key Stage 1 they identify the different properties of materials, through investigation but when they are carrying out experiments they are not always encouraged to explain the reasons behind their predictions. By the time they reach Year 4 pupils are developing a wide scientific vocabulary and a good understanding of fair testing and of cause and effect.
11. Attainment in information communication technology is below average at Key Stage 1 and average at Key Stage 2. There has been a recent reorganisation of computers in Key Stage 1 classrooms and consequently pupils are at the early stages of learning about their current software. They use the mouse well, but are less confident in saving and retrieving their work. By Key Stage 2 pupils are more confident in their skills and can change a range of features, fonts, size, colour and rotation successfully to create effects and to present their mathematics work on shape. They share and exchange their ideas with others well and know how to save and retrieve their work.
12. Attainment in art and history is average at both key stages, attainment in music at Key Stage 2 is average and attainment in physical education at Key Stage 1 is above average. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in design and technology and geography at both key stages and in music at Key Stage 1. The school's provision for religious education is satisfactory and pupils' achievements meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus.
13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the appropriate targets that are set for them. The school ensures that they have equal access to the curriculum. Their support and guidance is well managed by the special educational needs coordinator and their teachers, and care is taken to match work to their needs. Appropriate records of progress are kept and targets in their individual education plans are detailed and specific.
14. The school recognises the need to raise standards and has set appropriate end of Key Stage 1 targets for the current Year 2 pupils and for pupils who will reach the end of Key Stage 1 in 2002. Targets are based on detailed analysis of current attainment and are likely to be reached by both cohorts of pupils. Improving standards in spelling and the quality of teaching in mathematics and information technology are identified as priorities in the school improvement plan, but as yet it is too early to judge the impact of these measures in raising standards.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. Pupils' attitudes and values are good and this is a strength of the school. High expectations on the part of the headteacher and staff ensure that behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. The school has recently reviewed its behaviour policy and has established a very effective 'reward culture'. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school. Parent's responses to the inspection questionnaire indicate that the vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. Inspection evidence indicates that this is due to the very good relationships they form in school with other pupils and staff, and a strong feeling of belonging to the school community. Pupils feel secure in the knowledge that home and school work together for a common purpose. Teachers and other staff speak politely and courteously to pupils and the vast majority respond to this positively by being polite and respectful in turn. The school has continued to maintain the high standards evident in the last inspection report.
16. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff are good. In lessons pupils generally work hard and concentrate well. They are keen to answer questions and listen attentively to their teachers. When required, they cooperate well in groups and make good progress. There are, however, rare occasions when pupils begin to lose concentration when activities are too lengthy.
17. Pupils take responsibility around the school in a number of ways but this could be further enhanced to allow them to display more initiative to support their personal development.
18. At break times pupils play happily together and show good awareness of the needs of others. There were no incidents of bullying observed during the inspection. There is a clear policy in place which ensures that staff know what to do if bullying occurs. Pupils clearly enjoy their break times and return to lessons refreshed and ready to learn.
19. Attendance at the school remains good and above the national average. There are very few instances of unauthorised absence because the school is very keen to ensure that the reasons for all absences are known. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and lessons start promptly. They are generally punctual but more could be done to ensure that the number of late arrivals is minimised. The school regularly analyses attendance data and has a good partnership with the educational welfare service to follow up any persistent or worrying absences. There are no fixed term or permanent exclusions.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

20. The quality of teaching is broadly similar to that found in the last inspection, in that all teaching is satisfactory or better. The strongest teaching is at Key Stage 2 where eighty-three per cent of lessons are good or better and half are very good. This is a strength of the school. In the Foundation Stage the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and at Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching is good.
21. Five lessons were observed in the Foundation Stage where forty per cent of teaching is good or better and the remainder is satisfactory. At Key Stage 1 where Year 1 and 2 pupils are taught by three part-time teachers, at different times during the week, nine lessons were observed and in just over half the quality of teaching was good.
22. There are some common features to the most successful teaching throughout the school. Teachers are often enthusiastic about their work and this promotes

enjoyment and positive attitudes from their pupils. Where activities are carefully planned they build successfully on pupils' previous learning and often link well with other curriculum areas. This helps pupils to make sense and recognise connections in their learning. Teachers praise pupils' good efforts and this raises pupils' self-esteem and confidence and encourages them to work harder. Teachers have established positive relationships with their pupils, and the management of pupils' behaviour is generally good. Where teachers clearly state their high expectations, both of pupils' behaviour and what they can achieve, this prompts pupils to make good progress in their learning.

23. At Key Stage 2 where teaching is often very good and where there is a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, a positive climate for learning and enquiry has been successfully established.
24. The teacher clearly explains to pupils what they are going to learn and, through careful questioning, cues in quickly to any misunderstandings that pupils may have, and ensures that pupils know what they have to do. Small logical steps are built into activities to ensure that pupils, especially those with special educational needs, work at a good pace and make good progress. Questions are well targeted to individual pupils so that the teacher is continuously assessing what they know and understand.
25. Teaching in all classes is less successful where teachers miss opportunities to ask pupils to explain their reasoning or thinking. For example, in the mental mathematics part of a numeracy lesson in Key Stage 2, pupils respond well to the challenge of finding an unknown number by asking relevant questions such as "is it a multiple of ten?" but when pupils finally give the correct answer the teacher fails to ask the pupils to explain how they worked it out. Consequently, pupils do not always have the strategies to solve problems and are too dependent on adult support. There was a similar example in a Year 2 literacy lesson where the teacher was successfully encouraging pupils to predict what might happen next in a story, but then missed the opportunity to ask them to explain the reasons for their predictions so that they become more proficient at studying text in depth. There are also a few occasions in both key stages when lessons are over long and pupils lose concentration because they are too tired or because they have lost interest, and as a result progress in learning is too slow.
26. In Key Stage 1 the pattern of teaching is complex, because pupils are taught by more than one teacher, during the week and are separated into year groups each morning for literacy and mathematics lessons. The quality of teaching between classes and subjects varies between satisfactory and good. There is, at times, insufficient liaison between teachers to ensure continuity in pupils' learning and understanding.
27. The teaching of Year 1 pupils is less successful when work is not sufficiently matched to pupils' needs and the expectations of what pupils, especially the more able, may achieve is too low. The cramped conditions for this class, in the school library, also restricts the range of activities that are available to support their learning. Although teachers define clearly in their planning what it is they want pupils to learn, there are times in the Year 2 class when the planned activities do not support the intended learning outcome and consequently progress is slow. For example, in a science lesson when the purpose of the lesson was for pupils to find out which materials could best be used to make a boat, pupils spent too much time drawing and designing their boat and not enough time in investigating the properties of the available materials. There are also times in the Year 2 class when learning support assistants and other classroom helpers are not sufficiently well briefed. Consequently opportunities are lost to fully support and extend pupils' learning.

28. The quality of teaching in literacy ranges between satisfactory and good at Key Stage 1 and is good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and are successful at choosing stimulating texts for shared reading. Phonics is well taught, especially in Year 2 and this leads to the above average standards in reading. Teachers have been less successful at introducing consistent strategies that enable pupils to use their phonic knowledge confidently when attempting to spell unknown words.
29. Teachers make effective use of the numeracy strategy, and are particularly successful at teaching mental mathematics. There are variations in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1, ranging from satisfactory to good. Where explanations of tasks to be completed are not sufficiently clear pupils lack confidence, and make a slow start. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is very good. The teacher's clear explanations and high expectations ensures that all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, are making good progress.
29. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and very good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 1, although planned activities are appropriate, there is insufficient emphasis on scientific enquiry and teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunity to fully explain the reasoning behind their predictions. Lessons at Key Stage 2, although long, are well managed and the teacher's good subject knowledge ensures that pupils are learning to use scientific terms appropriately.
31. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers plan the small steps of learning well and set clear and measurable targets for future development. Learning support assistants offer good support to pupils and are aware of the needs for pupils to increasingly develop skills of independence.
32. Although teachers know their pupils well and recent procedures have been introduced to regularly assess pupils' learning and progress, they are not, as yet, being used consistently across the school. Consequently, activities are not always well matched to pupils' abilities and occasionally expectations of higher-attaining pupils are too low.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

33. The school provides a rich and stimulating curriculum for all its pupils. For children in the reception class, the curriculum is correctly based on the six areas of learning within the Foundation Stage. Children receive a good range of activities, which contribute to their physical, intellectual and personal development. For older pupils, in Key Stages 1 and 2, the National Curriculum and all its statutory subjects are taught and given an appropriate emphasis. Teachers plan the curriculum around half-termly topics, with a central theme, which enables pupils to understand the links between subjects.
34. Lessons are planned appropriately, but the schemes of work for longer term planning for all subjects is not in place. This was identified as a key area for development at the time of the last inspection and, although staff recognise this, it has not yet been completed. There is an intention to develop schemes of work and to include some aspects of nationally available published material. This is identified as a priority in the school improvement plan.
35. Effective use is made of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to promote satisfactory standards in most aspects of English and mathematics. Teachers are particularly successful at developing pupils' reading skills, especially at Key Stage 1,



where they are above average.

36. The curriculum is supplemented with a good range of activities. There are clubs for pupils to attend at lunchtime such as gardening, board games, dance and soccer. Music tuition is offered for piano, violin and woodwind instruments. In addition, Year 2 pupils are given lessons for the recorder and ocarina. French is taught to pupils in Year 2 and at Key Stage 2, swimming lessons are given to all Year 3 and 4 pupils. In their final year, pupils have opportunities to meet with other local children of a similar age, to share a range of stimulating mathematics activities. An adventure long weekend, which includes two school days, is planned for Year 4 pupils at a centre in Shropshire. This offers good opportunities for furthering pupils' personal and social and physical development, but attendance is currently based on the ability of parents to pay and therefore this does not allow equal access of opportunity for all pupils.
37. The school makes good use of the Church, the local community and local museums for furthering pupils' understanding in religious education, history and geography.
38. A strength of the school is the promotion of personal, social and health education through well planned lessons for pupils of all ages. They learn about healthy eating and are aware of the impact of exercise on their bodies. The school makes good use of national and local resources such as 'Jump Rope for Heart' and the 'Life Bus' to extend pupils' learning. All staff work well to create a school community, which encourages pupils to recognise one another's strengths and to celebrate success and unique characteristics.
39. The provision for moral development is good. The principles of right and wrong are well established and pupils are aware of the school's system for rewards. They respect the differences between people and personal and school property. Teachers help pupils to establish good patterns of behaviour and to work and play together in harmony. They expect pupils to listen to each other's point of view and to be aware of how their behaviour may affect others within the class. There are good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for resources and carrying out tasks, such as preparing for assemblies. There are fewer opportunities for pupils to take initiative.
40. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactorily promoted. Daily acts of worship enable pupils to have time for reflection and prayer. The visits to the school by the local vicar reinforce the links with the Church and contribute to the spiritual development. Western cultures are very well promoted through the varied musical activities, art and sport but, as was found at the last inspection, the richness and variety of other cultures is under-represented in the life and work of the school.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

41. The school takes good care of its pupils' health and well-being. All staff know individual pupils well, recognise their needs and respond well to them. They work very hard to give pupils personal support and to ensure that there is consistent and fair management of pupils' behaviour. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection.
42. There are very effective practices to ensure that pupils' medical needs are known, that good links with health and behavioural specialists are maintained and that contact with pupils' homes can be made quickly. All members of staff are familiar with Child Protection procedures and the headteacher has had recent and detailed training on this subject. Very effective procedures ensure that incidents of challenging behaviour are dealt with quickly and firmly. Systems for recording all aspects of pupils'

behaviour, from disruptive to praiseworthy, are very comprehensive.

43. The procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory, which includes regular contact with parents to verify the reasons for a pupil's absence, and to encourage their regular attendance at school, although more could be done to tackle the problem of regular lateness by a few pupils.
44. Procedures for ensuring pupils' health and safety are very detailed and ably supplemented by regular audits by the governors' health and safety committee. No concerns of health or safety were witnessed during the inspection. A member of staff has completed specialist first aid training and is competent to administer specialist medical procedures for pupils. There are appropriate arrangements in place for dispensing medication and all accidents are carefully recorded. The promotion of healthy living and the awareness of potential hazards in lessons, such as cooking or science, creates a strong sense of the importance of health and safety of pupils.
45. Circle Time, when pupils are encouraged to discuss together, is used very effectively to enable pupils to take responsibility for their actions and to reflect on issues that concern them and others. The school's merit systems work very well to draw together and underpin the school's efforts to monitor, promote and support the development of pupils, both academically and personally.
46. The school uses a number of assessment techniques for measuring individual progress in spelling and mental mathematics, and makes good use of optional end of year test material for older pupils. Targets for progress in English and mathematics are set and updated termly. There is inconsistency, however, within the school as to how teachers share the targets, both with parents and children.
47. The school has recently introduced a system of weekly lesson evaluation, and identification of the next small steps in learning for individuals and groups. At the present time there are some inconsistencies between staff in the quality of these assessments. It is most effective in Key Stage 2 and in the Foundation Stage (reception class). Some learning support assistants make observation notes which contribute to the pupils' records. Pupils with special educational needs have clear individual educational plans which are reviewed every half term. These plans include assessments of the pupil's progress in meeting targets.
48. Children in the reception class are carefully introduced to the school through a programme of visits. The school has very strong links with other local schools in the area and particularly with the middle school to which the pupils transfer. A good programme of visits and activities for pupils in their final year at the school ensure that they are well prepared socially and intellectually for the next stage of their education.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

49. The school's partnership with parents continues to be a particular strength of the school. Parents fully support the aims and values of the school and consider it provides a very caring environment and has the interests of their children very much at heart. When their children start school in the reception class parents feel welcomed. An open afternoon visit is arranged for all new children and their parents before children start school. The school has some plans to review the induction programme for new children in the near future. Books from school and occasional

activities are taken home so that learning at school may be shared with parents.

50. The headteacher and staff constantly make themselves available to discuss matters with parents on a daily basis so that parents feel welcome in school. Parents find it easy to approach the staff with complaints or concerns and are confident that these are dealt with adequately and urgently. The school provides formal consultation evenings twice a year, coupled with a more informal open evening in the summer term when parents can view their children's work and meet new teachers. These are greatly appreciated by parents. Parents do occasionally help in school and their assistance and willingness is valued by all the staff.
51. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress in a variety of ways. In addition to the formal and informal parent/teacher meetings, parents receive a very informative and hand-written annual report about their children's progress which they can discuss with class teachers. Parents are also well informed about the school before their children are admitted as the result of a very good school brochure.
52. A very active and enthusiastic Parent Teacher Association holds a large number of successful fundraising and social events. It contributes greatly to the work of the school and raises substantial amounts of money which are prudently spent, under the direction of the headteacher, on resources to enhance the quality of pupils' education. Parents and governors regularly work together on projects to help the school, the most recent being the enhancement of the environmental area and generally tidying the site.
53. Good arrangements are made to review the individual education plans for pupils with statements and special educational needs, and these are discussed thoroughly with parents.
54. Comments by a small minority of parents that there was an insufficient range of activities outside lessons has prompted the headteacher to restructure the dance, football and games clubs to lunchtime activities, thus allowing more children to participate.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

55. The school has undergone a number of significant changes in staffing since the last inspection in 1997, including two permanent and one temporary headteacher. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, last September, the school is more settled and significant steps have been taken to ensure future improvements.
56. The headteacher has been very effective, in a short span of time, in identifying the school's current strengths and weaknesses, through the careful analysis of data and the monitoring of pupils' work. The school's improvement plan reflects her vision and insight as to how to move the school forward. Its priorities are clearly linked to raising standards in pupils' performance and the quality of teaching and learning.
57. The headteacher's leadership is a strength of the school. She has quickly established positive relationships with the whole school community and has gained the respect and loyalty of staff, governors and parents. Staff work together well and have good informal methods for exchanging information and ideas. They ensure that the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum and meets its aim to provide a secure environment for all pupils, especially those with special educational needs. The school has sound procedures for the induction of new teaching staff in line with national requirements. Teachers new to the school are well supported by their colleagues.

58. A current weakness in the school is that teachers are not sufficiently involved in data analysis, or in monitoring and evaluating the standards pupils achieve. There has been very little monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning within lessons and where it has taken place it has lacked rigour. There is no recorded evidence of the outcome from monitoring or any indication as to how teaching and learning might improve as a result of it. The school recognises that this was identified as an area for improvement from the last inspection and has recently ensured that this is a priority in the current school improvement plan. The recent introduction of an action plan for each curriculum area, which helps to identify areas for improvement, should support subject leaders in developing this area of their work. There are plans in place for subject leaders to have access to training on how to successfully monitor their curriculum area and the headteacher has also drawn up a programme for further monitoring of teaching linked to performance management.
59. As well as considerable changes in staffing since the last inspection the governing body has also undergone significant change. Until the appointment of the current chair of governors in October, the governing body had not been sufficiently involved in shaping the direction of the school or in knowing the school well enough to have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, it has not carried out its monitoring role effectively and has not been able to ensure that all the key issues from the last inspection have been appropriately addressed. The current chair of governors, however, has quickly established a positive working relationship with the headteacher and has ensured that an effective committee structure is in place to support governors in carrying out their statutory duties. The unaddressed key issues from the last inspection are included as priorities in the current school improvement plan. Governors are aware of the need to monitor the effectiveness of their decisions and the current school improvement plan identifies ways in which their effectiveness will be improved. Governors are beginning to feel better informed about the work of the school and are keen to take a more active role in developing a strategic view of how to ensure further improvement. Many are taking part in governor training to support them in this role.
60. Some governors have recently been involved in the performance management of the headteacher and appropriate targets have been set. The introduction of performance management for all teaching staff is included in the school improvement plan and a performance management policy has been adopted by staff and the governing body.
61. The school manages its budget well and spending is carefully linked to those priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The governors' finance committee meets regularly to monitor spending. A recent auditor's report found the school's internal control systems to be satisfactory with some reservations. It was critical of the governing body in that it had failed to fully minute its decisions about budget virement and amendments. This has now been rectified. Other recommendations for improvement are being addressed through the governors' action plan. Day-to-day finance and administration is good. The school is well supported by a very efficient school secretary who's care and commitment makes a positive contribution to the smooth day to day running of the school. The headteacher and governors are aware of best value principles and they are beginning to compare the school's performance with national benchmarks, and to consider its maintenance and development costs.
62. Good use is made of specific grants. The grant for supporting pupils with special educational needs, for instance, is well spent on staffing and is supplemented by the school's main budget. This supports the good progress that pupils with special educational needs make.

63. The school is adequately staffed with teachers whose experience and expertise meet the needs of the primary curriculum. An additional member of staff has been appointed for the current academic year with the use of the government's grant to reduce class sizes. This enables pupils in Year 1 and 2 to be taught separately each morning. These same pupils are taught by another part-time teacher and the headteacher at different times during the week. Although separating the year groups makes for smaller group teaching, there is insufficient liaison, at times, between teachers, and the most able pupils in the Year 1 group are not always sufficiently challenged. Year 1 pupils are taught for part of each day in the school library, which is rather cramped and restricts the range of activities the pupils can engage in. It also restricts the use of the school library for other pupils.
64. The accommodation is adequate for teaching all subjects and governors have agreed a rolling programme for redecoration in the school improvement plan. Parent and governor working parties have been set up to improve the outdoor accommodation, including the improvement of the wild life area.
65. Resources are generally adequate to serve most subjects, although some of the reading books that pupils take home are old and in poor repair.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

66. In order to further improve the quality of education provided the staff and governors should now:
  - (1) Improve standards in spelling throughout the school by ensuring that:
    - pupils are consistently taught effective strategies to tackle spelling unknown words;
    - pupils are more confident and less reliant on adult support in their spelling. (paragraphs 8,14, 28, 77, 78, 82, 94)
  - (2) Improve standards in information and communication technology at Key Stage I by ensuring that:
    - pupils become more confident in using the available software, and use the full range of software;
    - pupils become more proficient in solving difficulties when they arise and are less reliant on adult support. (paragraphs 11,14,114)
  - (3) Increase the effectiveness of the governing body by ensuring that:
    - governors are fully informed of the work of the school;
    - governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
    - governors take a central role in determining areas for improvement and development;
    - appropriate procedures are in place for governors to monitor the effectiveness of their decisions and of the school's action plan. (para 59)

- (4) Increase opportunities for the effective monitoring of teaching and learning by the headteacher and subject leaders.  
(paragraphs 58, 86, 92, 99, 105, 109, 112 )

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

### ***Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection***

Number of lessons observed

20
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

24
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### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0%	20%	40%	40%	0%	0 %	0%

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR–Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		68
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR–Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		18

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.3
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000			12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (86)	84 (100)	92 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (100)	83 (100)	84% (87)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Where there are less than ten boys and ten girls taking Standard Assessment Tests, the Department for Education and Employment recognises that the confidentiality of individual pupils' attainment may be breached by publication of results.

**Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	

**Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		



Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	54
Any other minority ethnic group	

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9
Average class size	22.7

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	63

Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	187634
Total expenditure	172980
Expenditure per pupil	2472
Balance brought forward from previous year	-6511
Balance carried forward to next year	8143

### **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

#### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out

76

Number of questionnaires returned

32

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	31	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	38	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	44	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	50	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	75	25	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	41	9	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	78	22	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	59	38	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	53	44	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	72	28	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	41	41	13	3	0

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

No serious issues.

## 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

67. Children in the reception class are making good progress. Children are first admitted to school in the term after their fourth birthday. Eight pupils had started school three

weeks prior to the inspection, and 15 pupils began their reception year last September. There are two pupils with statements of special educational needs.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

68. Children play and work together well. They readily take turns at speaking and sharing equipment and respect one another's views. Many show very good levels of independence and manage to dress and undress without the help of an adult. They enjoy their time at school and confidently engage in a broad range of activities. Their behaviour is good and they concentrate well when completing tasks set for them.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

69. Children enjoy books and stories and many have made a good start with reading books with simple sentences. They are acquiring a growing vocabulary which they use well. For example, in their drama lesson, they describe their movements, "when we were butterflies we were flapping our wings". They readily take on roles of animals and people in their play and enjoy experimenting with words. Many children know the names of letters of the alphabet and the sounds they represent in spoken language. Some of the older pupils are able to identify words that start with the same sound. They are learning the early skills of writing by making shopping lists and can trace and copy adult writing well.

### **Mathematical development**

70. Reciting numbers and recognising numerals to ten are skills that the many of the children have gained. A few recognise and can write numbers up to 20 and confidently count backward from ten. In practical measuring activities children identify patterns and use accurately words such as bigger, smaller and longer. They know that measuring is usually made in a straight line. In their dramatic shopping activities, they recognise the value of coins.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

71. Children make good progress in using computers. They are familiar with the programmes they use. They draw screen pictures using a variety of colours and tools, which they select confidently. They use the mouse with accuracy and pick up, drag and drop pictures across the screen. They know that computers have many purposes in school, at home and in the work place.
72. They are finding out about how objects, such as kites and hot air balloons, move in the air and know about foods which help them to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They can name and select a range of ingredients for a health giving drink and with the help of an adult prepare food for eating.

### **Physical development**

73. Children move with confidence, control and good imagination. They know all the safety rules when lessons are taken in the hall and apply them well. They have a very good awareness of space around themselves and others. They know that moving around quickly makes the heart beat faster. Examples of work on the computer, and

craft work displayed on the walls, shows that pupils have good levels of control when using small tools, for example, scissors, glue sticks and paintbrushes.

### **Creative development**

74. There were few opportunities during the week to observe children in creative activities. However, the classroom walls are decorated with an abundance of children's work which incorporate the use of paint, different papers and recycled materials. These examples show that children have good manipulative skills and can express themselves through exploring colour, texture and shape.
75. The quality of teaching in the reception class is always satisfactory and in 40 per cent of the lessons observed it was good or very good. Planning and overall provision for all the six areas of learning is good. The teacher and the new learning support assistant provide a wide range of activities which help children to develop skills and knowledge and a positive attitude to learning. The teacher, through close observation, knows the children well, and listens carefully to their responses. Lessons and activities are thoroughly evaluated so that the next stages of learning can be carefully planned. Very good provision is made for children's personal social and emotional development in circle time activities. This has a positive impact on children's behaviour and their attitudes to learning.

### **ENGLISH**

76. Overall, the standards attained in English by most pupils at seven years of age (at the end of Key Stage 1) and in Year 4, when they leave the school, are average. Results in the 2000 end of Key Stage 1 national tests show that standards in reading, when compared to all schools, were close to the national average. Standards in writing when compared to all schools were below average, apart from the higher-attaining pupils where standards were well above average. When these results are compared with similar schools, the standards achieved in reading and writing are below average, although the results for the most able pupils in writing are well above average. These results and comparisons have to be treated with some caution as the cohort is relatively small (12 pupils).
77. The standards seen in pupils' work during the inspection are generally average, although standards in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 are above average, and standards in spelling throughout the school are not high enough. Standards in English are not as high as they were at the previous inspection when they were above average, but it should be noted that the percentage of pupils with special educational needs has risen from ten per cent at the previous inspection, well below the national average, to nearly 26 per cent currently, which is above the national average.
78. The school recognises the need to raise standards, especially in spelling, and this is identified as a priority in the school improvement plan. Challenging targets, based on knowledge of individuals, have been set to raise standards in reading and writing, especially for the less able pupils.
79. Pupils at both key stages generally demonstrate sound listening skills. They listen well to each other and respond positively to their teacher's questions and instructions. Although pupils speak confidently there are insufficient opportunities in all classes to extend their range of speaking skills. Teachers miss opportunities to encourage pupils to explain their predictions in English and science lessons and to give reasons or justify their answers when carrying out mathematical calculations.

80. At Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in reading. By the end of the key stage standards are above average. Pupils recognise many key words and use their knowledge of initial letter sounds well, when prompted, to decode unknown words. Higher-attaining pupils read an unseen text confidently and when discussing what they have read are able to retell the plot and talk about their favourite characters confidently. They know how to find information from non-fiction books using the contents and index. Pupils are generally enthusiastic about their reading and are well supported by parents who regularly hear them read at home. Some of the texts that are available to pupils from reading schemes are rather stilted and do not support them in reading for meaning.
81. Standards in reading at Key Stage 2 are average. As a result of the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy most pupils are confident in reading a range of texts accurately, using a range of strategies to decode unknown words. Higher-attaining pupils are very enthusiastic about reading and are keen to discuss what they have read and explain their preferences for different types of fiction. Although average and less able pupils make sound progress with reading, they are reluctant to offer their views when discussing a text or to talk about their favourite books and authors. All pupils use their knowledge of the alphabet well to locate information from non-fiction texts. Pupils have recently learned about finding books in the school non-fiction library using the Dewey system, but have very little opportunity to put these newly learned skills to use. This is partly due to the distance between their mobile classroom and the library, but also because access to the library is limited as the area is currently used every morning as a classroom for Year 1 pupils.
82. Standards in writing across the school are average, but pupils' progress in writing is hampered by weak spelling skills. Although teachers provide opportunities to encourage pupils to tackle more extended pieces of writing in both Year 1 and 2 classes, pupils lack confidence in using their growing phonic knowledge and are over reliant on adults to support their spelling. This slows the pace at which they work. Adults supporting pupils are not always consistent in their expectations of how pupils should attempt the spelling of unknown words and this is confusing for pupils. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately. The more able are beginning to use other parts of speech together with more adventurous vocabulary in their writing. They are also beginning to use some of the grammatical structures they have learned through the literacy strategy well and include alliteration and ellipses in their writing.
83. At Key Stage 2 standards in writing are average and pupils write for a wide range of purposes including some good poetry writing. Work is often well linked to other curriculum areas, especially history. Pupils write at length, selecting words well to develop their ideas, but their writing is not always well organised. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to plan, redraft and improve their work; spelling as in Key Stage 1 is often inaccurate.
84. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good at Key Stage 1 and is good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and are enthusiastic about literature and this in turn supports pupils' positive attitudes.
85. Where teaching is good there are high expectations of what pupils will achieve. As, for example, in a Year 2 class where the teacher made clear how much writing pupils should complete before the end of the lesson. This prompted pupils to give of their best and they were justifiably pleased with their efforts. The teacher also boosted their self-confidence by reading extracts from their writing to demonstrate good use of

adjectives. In Key Stage 2 lessons challenging questions are well targeted to pupils of differing abilities and the teacher constantly checks pupils understanding as they read from a shared text. This ensures that pupils remain on task and aids their concentration. Teachers choose texts carefully, often linking them to other areas of work. For example, the Year 2 class were reading a 'Chinese Fairy Tale' after learning about and celebrating the Chinese New Year. Work is generally planned well to build on previous learning. In Key Stage 1 where classes are taught by more than one teacher, however, there are not always sufficient links between lessons to consolidate and extend pupils' skills and understanding. Although all teachers indicate in their planning what it is they want pupils to learn, this is not always shared with the class and occasionally, in the Year 2 class, planned activities do not support the area of identified learning. In the Year 1 class higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged, when reading and discussing a shared text.

86. The headteacher is currently the subject leader for English, and since her appointment in September she has monitored teaching in all classes and regularly monitors planning, but there is no recorded evidence of the results of her monitoring or the impact it may have on raising the quality of teaching in the future. The headteacher has also monitored samples of pupils' work. As a result she has identified the need to raise standards in spelling to support pupils' writing, and to improve library skills and facilities. An appropriate action plan is included in the School Improvement Plan to ensure these improvements take place.

## **MATHEMATICS**

87. At the last inspection results in mathematics tests were judged to be good because the school results compared favourably against the national averages. In this inspection additional data is available so that it is possible to compare results against pupils of similar backgrounds. The results of tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that pupil attainment is close to the national average, but when compared with schools in a similar context the school's results are well below the average. The proportion of pupils who did better than expected and achieved level 3 is above both the national average and that for similar schools. Taking the mathematics results over the previous three years the school results have been above the national average. National standards have risen in the last two years and the school's results for 2000 are now closer to the national average than in previous years.
88. Pupils attain average standards throughout the school. For example, by the age of seven, pupils rapidly add and subtract numbers in their heads and calculate ten more or less than a given number. They read and write numbers up to 100 accurately, and show they have a good understanding of place value by successfully calculating some missing numbers horizontally and vertically from a given point within 100 square, and they estimate the position of a number on a line which has the start and finish numeral. They know how to represent sums of money over 100 pennies using the pound sign and a decimal point, and they can add up coins accurately. Pupils recognise and label the corners and sides of shapes confidently.
89. By the time they leave the school at the age of nine, pupils successfully solve simple problems involving money. They represent and use data well in a block graph, and can make some comparison of objects in weight in grammes and kilograms using decimal format. They know the difference between edges, vertices and faces of shapes. They also understand and accurately use a variety of mathematical terms such as plus and add and can apply them to mathematical calculations using two and four digit numbers. They know some facts about triangular and square based pyramids and can apply this knowledge confidently when making three-dimensional models of these shapes. In science lessons pupils are able to use their mathematics skills well to measure the time taken to filter liquids. Pupils record their work neatly.

90. Teachers make effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy. They are particularly successful at teaching mental mathematics. Planning is clear and detailed and shows what children of different abilities and ages are expected to learn. Teaching assistants offer good support to pupils with special educational needs, adapting activities quickly to maintain their confidence and to ensure they make good progress. There are variations in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1. While it is satisfactory and sometimes good there are some shortcomings which should be addressed. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to explain their reasoning for their calculations. In Year 1 teachers' explanations are not always clear enough for pupils to begin their tasks with complete confidence and the more able pupils are not always given sufficient challenge in their tasks. At Key Stage 2 the teaching is very good. Particular strengths are the high expectations and good explanations so that pupils understand how to go about the task and know what they are expected to learn from it.
91. At both key stages pupils show an interest and enjoyment in their mathematics and most pupils, when challenged, approach their work with energy and confidence. They listen carefully to instructions and settle to work quickly. When required they work well together and share resources cooperatively.
92. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and a review of resources have been capably led by the knowledgeable coordinator. At the last inspection there were no procedures to monitor the provision and teaching of the mathematics curriculum. The school has made little progress in meeting this shortcoming. The school has plans to monitor more closely the standards achieved by examining pupils' work on a regular basis. However, the staff are insufficiently aware of the need to raise the standards and of the variations in quality of teaching throughout the school.

## SCIENCE

93. Results of teacher assessment in 2000 show that the percentage of seven-year-olds reaching the expected levels in science is below the national average and below that of similar schools. This is a change from the standards in science at the last inspection when it was judged to be 'above the national expectations'. The percentage of more able pupils, who attain higher level (level 3), is higher than the national average and that for similar schools.
94. Observations of lessons, and a review of pupils' work, indicates that pupils achieve standards which are average at both key stages. In Key Stage 1 pupils identify the properties of materials, for example, plastic, air, and liquid. A few pupils are able to give some explanations for the way in which materials behave; "tomato sauce pours slowly because it is thick". Younger pupils sort materials accurately into those that float and those that sink, but when they are required to write about their findings they make slow progress because of their lack of confidence in spelling and their dependence on adult help. The work in books is not as tidy as it should be, in contrast to the work in other subjects such as mathematics.
95. In Key Stage 2 pupils use words related to their science work accurately. For example, evaporate, solid, liquid and filtration. They draw a diagram using arrows and labels appropriately. They understand how to carry out a fair test with the clear guidance of the teacher. They know that some changes are irreversible, for example, putting toothpaste from a toothbrush back into the tube. They also notice changes over a period of time and can give some valid reasons for the differences they have observed. Older pupils are developing a good understanding of cause and effect and draw logical conclusions from their work.

96. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. Lessons of exploration and experimentation are well managed, particularly when the whole class is involved in listening and talking together. Activities are matched to pupils' abilities but objectives are not always entirely clear to the pupils and therefore a good pace and progress of learning is not sustained. Learning support assistants are not always given enough information on the ways in which learning can be extended. For example, when pupils are asked to predict they are not further challenged to give their reasons.
97. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is very good. All parts of a long lesson are well planned, managing to ensure that the attention of pupils is maintained and that their learning is maximised. Pupils are taught to use scientific words to describe what they notice in their experiments and they are encouraged to use them systematically in their written work. Pupils are expected to predict outcomes and know the value of making discoveries even though they may not entirely be anticipated. The teacher gives very clear instructions on what to do and explanations for the reasons why things happen. Demonstrations are used to good effect and help to ensure that pupils use equipment with care.
98. Pupils enjoy their science lessons and are enthusiastic about finding the outcomes of their explorations. They enjoy experimenting with new words and concentrate and persevere even when the learning is challenging. They work well together in small groups and in pairs and share ideas and equipment.
99. The newly appointed science coordinator has recently attended an in-service course outlining the role and tasks of a science coordinator. She is aware that current levels of monitoring are insufficient. Although teachers' planning is analysed to ensure subject coverage, there is currently no scheme of work, and there is a lack of evaluation of how well the subject is taught, and the standards pupils achieve.

## **ART AND DESIGN TECHNOLOGY**

100. Standards in art at the last inspection were judged to be above average at both key stages. No lessons were observed during the inspection, but from scrutiny of displays around the school and of pupils' current individual work, standards are average at both key stages. There is not the range of work in art that was seen at the last inspection.
101. Pupils make sound progress in learning to draw and paint to represent simple ideas. They are introduced to different materials through which to explore colour and texture, for example paint and oil pastels. Much of the work on display is linked to the work of famous artists. For example, in studying the work of Paul Klee, pupils at Key Stage 1 use paint carefully and explore different shades of brown. Pupils in Year 2 have sketchbooks, which are not used frequently and are mostly used for design. Artwork is often linked well to other curriculum areas. In Key Stage 1 pupils have carefully sketched houses in their village linked to their topic on homes, and at Key Stage 2 painting and pastel work is appropriately linked to their science topic on space.
102. There is currently no scheme of work for art. Although different aspects of the art curriculum are planned into the school's two-year topic cycle, this does not ensure that pupils are taught a careful progression of skills. The recently appointed subject



leader has plans to review the policy for art and to ensure that a scheme of work is put in place. Resources are satisfactory and are supplemented by a loan collection of artefacts linked to plan topics.

103. No lessons in design technology were observed during the inspection and there was too little evidence available to make a judgement on the standards pupils' attain. Standards at the last inspection were judged to be above national expectations. From the brief medium term plans available at Key Stage 1 it was intended that work for the current half term would be linked to the topic of homes. There is no scheme of work to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered or to ensure that skills are progressively taught.
104. At Key Stage 2 there was evidence that pupils had been designing and making a range of packages for different purposes. These were attractively displayed. Most of their designs are sufficiently detailed and indicate the materials needed to make the finished product. Pupils were successful in assembling packages from their designs, but there was little evidence of them evaluating their designs or products or indicating how they might be further improved.
105. The subject leader has only recently been given this responsibility and as yet does not have a clear view of the standards pupils attain or the quality of teaching in this subject. Design and technology is a priority in the current school improvement plan. Time has been made available for the subject leader to carry out a full audit of resources, and to monitor teaching and learning in all classes.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

106. No teaching in geography was observed during the inspection and from the limited evidence available no judgement could be made on the standards that pupils attain. At the last inspection standards in geography were judged to be satisfactory at both key stages.
107. Teachers use sections of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authorities schemes of work for their medium and short-term planning to support their topic based approach. This ensures that all aspects of the geography curriculum are covered. During Key Stage 1 pupils investigate their local area and study a contrasting location in Mexico.
108. In Key Stage 2 pupils study world resources, including methods of producing electricity, and begin to consider the potential dangers of pollution in their local environment. Year 3 and 4 pupils have drafted some letters of protest to the local press and designed their own posters, successfully promoting the importance of protecting the environment. They also show a good understanding of how decisions about places and the environment affect the future quality of people's lives.
109. The geography coordinator has held this responsibility since September 2000. One of her main responsibilities is to liaise with feeder schools to ensure continuity and progression in Key Stage 2. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor work in geography across the school but plans are in hand to review samples of pupils' work, and to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations. These are included as priorities in the school improvement plan. Resources are sound, and good use is made of the school's grounds and the local environment.

## **HISTORY**

110. One history lesson was observed in Key Stage 1 and pupils' work was scrutinised.

Standards at Key Stage 1 are average, and were similar at the last inspection. Linked to their current topic on homes pupils in the Key Stage 1 class compare modern day housework to what it would have been like 100 years ago. Very good resources are available for pupils to experience some household chores at first hand, and to compare Victorian equipment with their modern day equivalent. Pupils are very keen to handle the artefacts and enjoy explaining the differences between then and now. There are also a good range of historical photographs of the local village and this supports pupils' understanding of how things were in the past. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teacher has sound subject knowledge and encourages pupils to consider what life might have been like in a Victorian household. Pupils are keen to give their opinions but are not encouraged to fully explain their views.

111. At Key Stage 2 pupils have been studying World War 2. Good opportunities are found for writing for different purposes during this study, including letters from evacuees. Pupils show a good understanding of what it would be like to be a child in those times. They are beginning to make links between the main events of World War 2 and changes in society.
112. The subject coordinator's role is underdeveloped. She has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through scrutinising pupils' work or by carrying out lesson observations. Resources are good and good use is made of the local environment including museums.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

113. No direct teaching of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection. However, observations of pupils at work, a review of teachers' planning and samples of work at Key Stage 2, indicate that at the end of Key Stage 1 attainment is lower than expected, but by Year 4 attainment reaches age related expectations.
114. Children in the Foundation Stage (reception class) make a good start in their information and communication technology skills and use the computers with confidence. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use the mouse accurately to pick up, drag and drop images on the screen but are generally not confident in saving and retrieving work. They are at the early stages of learning about their current software and are easily disheartened by the problems they encounter. They have few strategies for solving their difficulties. This lack of confidence may in part be due to a recent reorganisation and redistribution of computers within the school.
115. In Key Stage 2 pupils confidently demonstrate a new found skill of typing a sequence of instructions to create a range of drawn mathematical shapes. They successfully change a range of features, fonts, size, colour and rotation to create effects and to present their mathematics work on shape. They share and exchange their ideas well with others and know how to save and retrieve their work. They confidently follow straightforward lines of enquiry when using adventure programmes. Pupils set the recording equipment to play for assemblies.
116. Teachers' planning is appropriately matched to the aspects of the curriculum which need to be taught. Pupils are encouraged to keep a record of their use of computers with a simple tick list. Assessment of pupils' work is good at Key Stage 2 and there is a useful scrapbook of pupils' past work which demonstrates their wide range of skills. Again, at Key Stage 2, information and communication technology is well used in mathematics, English and art and pupils have sought information which supports their science lessons on Space and Earth.

117. Computers are in use in all classes and pupils have access to a programmable toy for specific lessons. There is a suitable range of well-chosen software. The school has recently received national funding to increase the number of computers in classrooms and to access Internet facilities. There are plans for all staff to access training in the coming summer term.
118. There are two members of staff coordinating information and communication technology but the intention is that the post will be gradually coordinated by one teacher, after training has been completed. There are identified tasks within the school improvement plan to develop the way in which the subject is taught and a coordinated system for recording pupils' progress.

## **MUSIC**

119. One lesson at Key Stage 2 was seen during the inspection. Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils sing a two-part song though the balance of singing parts and musical expression has yet to be developed. Using claves they copy tapped rhythmic patterns with a reasonable accuracy and are beginning to respond to building up sequences of tapped and clapped rhythms with the guidance of their teacher. They know that good posture, standing up straight and smiling, can have a positive effect on their singing. They sing in tune and listen well. They respond well to the closing bars of music, slowing down and reducing the volume in time to the accompaniment.
120. Assemblies contribute to all pupils' musical skills, understanding and enjoyment. Children sing in tune and with good expression.
121. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Lessons are well prepared with clear objectives and have a good structure with well identified sections building towards a whole class performance and appraisal of their singing. The teacher quickly adapts small aspects of her teaching in response to the learning. For example, when a child is having difficulty in accurately copying a tapped rhythm she says, "If you put words such as fish and chips to the pattern it can help." The teacher has good musical knowledge and her enthusiasm is passed to the pupils. As a result they enjoy their lesson and try hard.
122. The school has a good range of musical resources. The school organises recorder and ocarina lessons for Year 2 and Key Stage 2 pupils. In addition peripatetic music teachers visit the school to give lessons in violin, woodwind and piano. Parents pay for these lessons. The music curriculum is also enhanced by a number of local music activities. The older children have sung with other neighbouring schools to celebrate the millennium and joined a Bedfordshire school choir of 500 voices. The music coordinator is aware of the need to review the school's current programmes of work and where necessary to include new, nationally published material.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

123. Only one physical education lesson was observed during the inspection. This was a dance lesson at Key Stage 1 where attainment is above average. This is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1 was judged to be average. Routines have been well established and pupils thoroughly enjoy repeating a series of movements from previous lessons. The teacher's enthusiasm, energy and sound subject knowledge encourages all pupils to give of their best. All pupils move gracefully and with expression, especially the boys. Staff are very sensitive to a pupil with special educational needs who is encouraged to

work independently but they ensure that physical support is given when needed. Consequently he takes part with great enthusiasm. The quality of teaching is good. There is an appropriate emphasis on the quality of movement and good use of a range of music to evoke different moods. Pupils are encouraged to work in pairs and small groups and to evolve their own patterns of movement. The pace of the lesson was good but it was over-long especially for the youngest Year 1 pupils, and there were insufficient opportunities for pupils to evaluate and improve their work.

124. All pupils are following a published scheme of work. This ensures that all pupils have access to the full physical education curriculum, including swimming at Key Stage 2. The school also provides other opportunities for pupils to take part in sporting activities through extra-curricular activities. The school's own scheme, based largely on that devised by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority, is due to be written by the subject coordinator within the next 12 months. The subject is well resourced.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

125. Only one lesson, in Key Stage 1, was observed during the inspection. This evidence was supplemented by an examination of teachers' planning. The school's provision for religious education is satisfactory. Planning of lessons meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers' understanding of the subject is sound. The programme of school assemblies makes a satisfactory contribution to the school's religious education curriculum.
126. In the one lesson observed teaching was good. The teacher translated the Christian principle of 'Love thy Neighbour as Thyself' in a way in which pupils could understand and link to their everyday lives. As a consequence pupils listed the ways in which they might welcome a new classmate or show friendliness to others at home and at school. The resources used to illustrate the lesson objectives were appropriate but there were too many for one lesson and as a result the opportunities for deeper reflection were too limited.
127. Pupils behave well in their lesson, taking turns to speak and listening to one another. They recall well the previous lessons in the term and become animated when they remember some of the small details of the local vicar's visit.
128. At Key Stage 2 pupils are currently studying Judaism; its rites, rituals and sacred writings, in accordance with the Bedfordshire agreed syllabus.
129. At the last inspection the school was found to have insufficient resources and since then the staff have made arrangements with other local schools to establish a set of shared resources. The school has recently purchased a number of video resources so the pupils may observe aspects of the six major world religions. The school has made satisfactory progress on this key issue since the last inspection.