

INSPECTION REPORT

BROOKMEAD SCHOOL

Leighton Buzzard

LEA area: Buckinghamshire CC

Unique reference number: 110518

Headteacher: Mr R Thomson

Reporting inspector: Paul Missin 19227

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 25th April 2002

Inspection number: 223384

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Ivinghoe Leighton Buzzard Beds
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Brookmead School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr P Sherrin
Date of previous inspection:	April 2000

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19227	Paul Missin	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology, art and design. Children in the Foundation Stage.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9446	Helen Griffiths	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?
20704	Terry Elston	Team inspector	Mathematics, design and technology, history. Special educational needs.	
23434	Marie Gibbon	Team inspector	English, music, religious education. English as an additional language.	
15917	Bob Cross	Team inspector	Science, geography, physical education. Equality of opportunity.	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

Brookmead School educates boys and girls aged from four to 11 years. There are currently 245 pupils on roll, 126 boys and 107 girls. At the time of the inspection 12 boys and 12 girls attended the Nursery part-time. The school is about the same size as most other schools of the same type. Three pupils have English as an additional language (1.2 per cent). This is low. None of these requires further specialist support and all gain full access to the National Curriculum. One pupil is from a Black heritage ethnic group. Forty-four pupils have special educational needs (18 per cent). This is broadly average. One pupil has a statement of special educational need, (0.4 per cent). This is below the national average. In the last school year, 12 pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of admission and 20 left other than at the usual time of transfer. This is high. One pupil is known to be eligible for free school meals (0.4 per cent). This is well below average. At the time of the inspection, 54 children were in the Foundation Stage. Twelve boys and twelve girls attend mornings only in the Nursery and 30 are taught in the Reception class. When they enter the Foundation Stage, most children are achieving standards that are average for their age. However, there is a wide spread of ability in each age group and wide variations between different years. The school was subject to a full OFSTED inspection in April 2000 when it was judged to have been underachieving. A monitoring visit by Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) took place in June 2001.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Brookmead School is a good and effective school. The good teaching across the school and the interesting and challenging curriculum provided enable the pupils to achieve well and to make good progress. The good leadership of the headteacher and senior staff, and the effective support provided by the governing body, have enabled the school to make good progress since the last OFSTED inspection. Pupils now achieve standards at seven and eleven which are above those found in most schools. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The good and very good teaching across the school enables pupils to achieve standards in English and mathematics that are well above average by the age of seven, and above average by the age of 11.
- The good leadership of the headteacher and the effective support provided by the governing body ensure that the school is now well focused on self improvement.
- The very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils and the very good quality of the relationships in the school support the strong sense of community and help to promote and sustain pupils' high achievement.
- The very good partnership with parents and the local community significantly helps the pupils to reach the standards they attain.
- The effective procedures for assessing what pupils know and can do enable the school to monitor closely the progress they make.
- The very good leadership of information and communication technology and the excellent resources available to teach it are used very well to enable pupils across the school to achieve above average standards in this subject.

What could be improved

- The standards achieved in music in Years 3 to 6 are too low.
- Pupils' speaking skills are not developed progressively, or to a sufficient depth, as they move through the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since it was last inspected in April 2000, the school has made good overall improvement. It is no longer underachieving. Good improvement has been made in addressing all the key issues identified. School development planning has been improved, and the work of teachers, senior managers and the governing body is now more focused on raising standards. The balance of the curriculum has been improved, literacy skills are now used well across most subjects and assessment data are used effectively. Job descriptions and the monitoring of teaching and learning have been improved, as has provision for pupils' cultural development. Since the last inspection, the quality of leadership in the school has been improved from satisfactory to good, and the several strengths noted in the quality of teaching have been maintained. These improvements have helped to raise the standards achieved. The good level of achievement in Years 1 and 2 has been at least maintained and overall standards in Years 3 to 6 have been improved. Taking into consideration the progress the school has already made and the good quality of the teaching and leadership, the school has a good potential to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	B	B	D
Mathematics	C	B	B	C
science	D	C	B	C

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

The table shows that in 2001 standards in Year 6 were above average in English, mathematics and science when compared with all schools, but average in mathematics and science and below average in English, when compared with similar schools. The school met its targets for attainment in English and mathematics in the tests in 2001, and is on course to meet the more challenging targets for 2002. Overall trends show a rate of improvement which exceeds that nationally. The findings of this inspection are that standards in English, including literacy, and in mathematics, including numeracy, and in science are above those found in most schools. Standards achieved in speaking are average. These improvements are the result of the effectiveness of the management of the school, the consistency of teaching and the enhanced quality of the curriculum. Standards in information and communication technology, history, geography and physical education are also above average. Standards in religious education, art and design and design and technology are average. Standards in music are below average. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to compose and appraise a sufficiently wide range of musical styles for higher standards to be reached.

In Years 1 and 2, pupils reach standards in mathematics and reading and writing that are well above average. Standards in science and the speaking element of English are above average. Standards are also above average in information and communication technology, religious education, history, geography, physical education and design and technology. Standards in music and art and design are average. Children in the Foundation Stage reach standards which are higher than those found in most schools in all areas of learning except in their creative development where standards are average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards relative to their achievement.

Overall, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. Most children enter the school achieving average standards and they make good progress in the Foundation Stage. This is continued into Years 1 and 2, and Years 3 to 6. Analysis of test data show that the present Year 6 pupils are making good progress from the results of the tests when they were seven.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are very good. Pupils listen attentively and are keen to do their best at all times.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is very good in lessons and when moving around the school. Pupils are open, friendly and very polite to visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils relate well to each other and the other adults in the school community. All staff and classroom helpers provide good role models for the pupils to copy.
Attendance	This is well above average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and punctuality is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	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 across the school is good, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In over half the lessons seen, teaching was good, and in a further one in six, it was very good or excellent. There were no significant variations in the quality of teaching across different year groups, but the highest proportion of good and very good teaching was found in Years 2 and 4. The quality of teaching of English, including literacy, and mathematics, including numeracy, is good across the school. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is good in all subjects, except art and design and music where it is satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6, teaching is also good in all subjects except religious education, art and design and design and technology where it is satisfactory. Teaching in music is unsatisfactory because not all elements of the subject are sufficiently addressed. The quality of pupils’ learning is also good. The main strengths in teaching across the school which impact positively on pupils’ learning are the way in which pupils are managed, the detailed planning and assessment procedures and the close and effective partnership between class teachers and teaching assistants. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Children in the Nursery are integrated effectively into the routines and expectations of the school. Children in the Reception class are introduced well to more formal English and mathematics teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Across the school, the needs of all pupils, including higher attaining pupils, are met well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets all statutory requirements. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good overall, but there is insufficient emphasis on extending children’s creative development. The school provides a sound range of extracurricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The good management of the provision and the effective, targeted support given by class teachers and teaching assistants enable pupils with special educational needs to achieve well and make good progress towards their individual targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	None of the three pupils who have English as an additional language requires specialist language support. They all have sufficient command of English to gain full access to the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good overall. Provision for pupils’ social and moral development is very good, and enables the school’s aims to be met well. Provision for pupils’ spiritual and cultural development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The headteacher and all staff make the care of pupils a high priority and it is achieved well. Procedures for assessing pupils’ attainment and progress are now good.

The school’s partnership with parents is very good. Parents are well informed about school activities and a good number volunteer to help in the classes. The school is very closely involved with the local community. These strengths add significantly to the effectiveness of the school’s work.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher's leadership of the school is good. It is sensitive and caring. The headteacher has managed the effects of the previous inspection very well and has maintained and improved the morale of the staff. He maintains a high profile within the school and is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior teachers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a good view of the school's work through its full meetings and the work of the several committees. The chair and other individual governors support the school, and use their individual expertise well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has taken effective action since the last inspection to secure important improvements. The OFSTED Action Plan was detailed and well formed. However, the subsequent school improvement plan has missed some opportunities to reinforce and emphasise the importance of raising standards. This has made it harder for the governing body to monitor and evaluate the school's progress.
The strategic use of resources	Overall, the school makes good use of its resources. The development and use of resources for information and communication technology have been very good. Good use is made of the funding provided for staff training and for the provision for pupils with special educational needs. When securing building improvements or when making major purchases, governors have a good understanding of value for money.

The school's accommodation is attractive and well used. The outside facilities, the number of specialist rooms, the space and resources in the Nursery and the swimming pool are all important strengths. The school has a good number of well qualified teachers and teaching assistants. The overall level of resourcing in the school is good. In information and communication technology, it is excellent. All these strengths enhance the school's learning environment and greatly assist pupils to make progress.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils achieve good standards. • Behaviour is good and the school promotes positive attitudes and values. • Homework is organised well. • The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant concerns made by parents.

The findings of the inspection support the positive views that parents expressed about the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. By the end of the Reception year, most children achieve standards that are above those expected for their age in all the areas of learning except in their creative development, where attainment is average. At the last inspection, children were judged to have been making good progress in all areas of learning. This has been maintained. Most of the children in the Reception class have achieved the Early Learning Goals and are successfully working within the National Curriculum, especially in mathematics and English. Children follow a curriculum which is matched to National Curriculum requirements. This is appropriate for the age and development of most children in the current class. The good standards achieved in English and mathematics are supported well by the careful setting of relevant achievement targets. Other strengths are in aspects of children's personal, social and emotional development where younger children are very sensitively and effectively introduced to the school's expectations in the Nursery and the emphasis which is currently being put on children's understanding and appreciation of living creatures. This supports their knowledge and understanding of the world well. However, children do not have regular access to a sufficiently wide range of creative materials for them to reach higher standards in this area of their learning.

2. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, pupils achieved standards that were well above the average of all schools in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in writing and above average in reading and mathematics. The assessments made by teachers in science were above those expected in all schools and the same as those in similar schools. The trends in standards since 1997 showed some variation in attainment but, generally, standards have been above and well above average. Girls performed less well than boys did in the last three years although this was not evident in the inspection. Great care should be taken in using the published data at this school because the small year groups make the analysis of trends statistically unreliable.

3. The findings of this inspection are that, in Year 2, pupils achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are well above average. Standards achieved in speaking and listening, science, information and communication technology, religious education, history, geography, physical education and design and technology are above average. Standards achieved in art and design and music are average. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in the standards achieved in all aspects of English, science and religious education and very good improvement in mathematics. These standards have improved as a result of the strong teaching and by the more rigorous monitoring of teaching and effective target setting that has been adopted in English, mathematics and science. Also since the last inspection, the above average standards in information and communication technology, physical education, geography and history have been maintained as have the satisfactory standards in music and art and design.

4. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001, pupils achieved standards that were above the average of all schools in English, mathematics and science. However, when compared with similar schools, standards were average in mathematics and science but below average in English. Trends since 1997 show significant fluctuations in the scores achieved from average and below in 1998 to above and average in 2000. The school met its targets for the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 and above in English and mathematics in the 2001 national tests, and it is on course to achieve the more challenging targets set for 2002.

5. The findings of this inspection are that the current Year 6 pupils are attaining standards in English, mathematics and science that are above average. Standards in speaking and listening are average. This is because the school's programme for developing these skills is only partially effective and the regular and systematic development and assessment of speaking and listening skills has not been achieved. Standards in information and communication technology, history, geography and physical education are also above average. Standards in religious education, art and design and design and

technology are average. Standards in music are below average. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities for composing and appraising music or listening to a sufficiently wide range of music of different styles. Since the last inspection, standards have been improved in all subjects except art and design, design and technology and religious education where average standards have been maintained and in music where standards have fallen. Standards have improved as a result of more detailed curriculum planning and more effective co-ordination of subjects.

6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well according to their own abilities and make good progress towards their individual targets. Parents are pleased with the standards they attain. Pupils improve their reading and number skills systematically, with good support in classes from teachers and learning assistants. The effectiveness of this support is illustrated by these pupils' standards by Year 6, which is at, or close to, national standards in both English and mathematics.

7. Pupils across the school, including the more able, now achieve well. This is a significant improvement since the findings of the last inspection in 2000 which judged that the school was underachieving. This has been achieved as a result of a well focused drive to raise standards, particularly in Years 3 to 6 while continuing to maintain the strengths in Years 1 and 2. Pupils now make good progress throughout the school. Data showing the standards achieved in the tests for seven-year-olds taken by the current Year 6 group indicated that they are also on course to make good progress by the time they leave.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Throughout the school, attitudes and behaviour are very good. Pupils' attitudes to learning were good or better in more than 80 per cent of lessons seen during the inspection. This is similar to the finding of the last inspection. Nearly all parents who responded to the questionnaire or attended the meeting felt that behaviour was good and that the school helped their children to become mature and responsible. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and they are eager to take part in extracurricular activities. They enjoy coming to school and punctuality is very good. Pupils concentrate very well and are well motivated. Where teachers have high expectations, pupils respond very well: for example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, they felt confident to take risks and attempt answers because the teacher valued their contributions. In some lessons, however, pupils are reluctant to speak at any length. Most are willing to make contributions to discussions when given the opportunity. They listen very well to others, co-operate very well and take pride in their work. Some pupils have good research skills. For example, in a Year 3 history lesson, pupils were examining the role of portraiture under Elizabeth I.

9. Behaviour is consistently very good in lessons, assemblies and around the school. There was one fixed-term exclusion last year. Pupils move around the school purposefully and line up in an orderly fashion. They know the school and class rules well and value praise from others. They are open, friendly and very polite to visitors. If bullying occurs, parents and pupils feel confident that it will be dealt with effectively and fairly. Older pupils mix very well with younger ones and boys and girls mix well together. Praise from adults is highly valued. For example, in a celebration assembly, pupils who had been awarded a red badge explained to the rest of the school the reason for the award and were clearly very proud of their achievements. Behaviour in assemblies is excellent. Children from the Nursery gave a presentation of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' with confidence, while older pupils paid them very good attention. Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils are kind to one another and listen well to others' opinions. Teachers offer very good examples of courtesy, respect and fairness.

10. Pupils willingly undertake responsibility and there are many good opportunities for them to do so. Older pupils have a variety of tasks, such as helping in assemblies and playing games with younger pupils. All pupils have responsibilities within the classroom. There is no school council.

11. Children in the Foundation Stage show good attitudes to school and their work. The way that the newest children in the Nursery are effectively introduced to school routines is very impressive. They enjoy coming to school and taking part in the several activities planned for them. Older children in the Reception class respond well to the further challenges that are provided there. They organise their work, look after and use a wider range of resources and respond well to their learning targets. Across the Foundation Stage, children care well for each other and spontaneously help and support one another when required. They share in whole class responsibilities as they undertake class duties such as giving out equipment and as they willingly help to clear and tidy their desks and the classroom.

12. Strengths in the attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils have been continued since the last OFSTED inspection and were confirmed by the HMI monitoring visit in June 2001.

13. Attendance is well above average and there was no unauthorised absence last year. Registration takes place promptly and ensures an efficient start to sessions. Punctuality is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching across the school is good, and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. The important strengths in teaching quality which were evident at the last OFSTED inspection and in the HMI report of June 2001 have been maintained. The current teaching profile is very similar to the one described at the last inspection. However, an important aspect of the quality of teaching is the focus now placed on raising standards. This has been reflected in the way in which the school has been able to maintain the strengths in Years 1 and 2 and improve the overall standards in Years 3 to 6. At the last inspection, shortcomings in teachers' planning for the different levels of ability in their classes were noted and the monitoring of teaching and learning which was not sufficiently rigorous. Both these issues have been addressed well.

15. Several of the overall strengths in teaching identified at the last inspection have been at least maintained and some have been improved. A significant strength in the quality of teaching that directly influences pupils' learning is the positive way that pupils are managed. Relationships within all the classrooms are very good. Teachers treat pupils sensitively and respectfully and show this in the way that their contributions to class discussion are always valued. This approach was seen very well in an art lesson to pupils in Year 6 who were beginning pencil sketches of people showing different movements. Several were encouraged very sensitively to do their best and the self-esteem of several pupils was significantly raised. Teachers provide challenging activities and interesting resources in their lessons. The result is that pupils are well motivated and are keen to learn and to do their best. Some shortcomings in teaching identified at the last inspection have been addressed well. Teachers' lesson planning is now detailed and full. Plans make clear reference to the activities provided for the different levels of ability of pupils in the class and this means that the needs of all pupils, including the more able, are now fully met. The lack of urgency in some pupils noted at the last inspection is no longer evident. Teachers often give small time-targets during a lesson which focuses pupils' attention very well. Work has been done since the last inspection in improving the consistency of teachers' approach to marking. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work shows that this has been addressed soundly, but minor inconsistencies remain. Homework is used well across the school to support and extend the curriculum.

16. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good. In the lessons observed, most of the teaching was good, with some very good and some satisfactory features. Seven lessons were observed at this stage, one was very good, five were good and one was satisfactory. The strengths identified by the last OFSTED inspection have been maintained. Teachers' planning is still detailed and thorough. Activities in the Nursery are organised according to the Early Learning Goals and the work of the Reception class is more closely related to National Curriculum criteria which reflects the ability of most in the class. Planning in the Reception class is particularly clear, with relevant learning objectives and suitable activities which are well matched to the different levels of ability in the class. Teachers introduce appropriately interesting and challenging activities to secure and maintain

children's interest. An important strength in teaching across this stage is the positive way in which children are handled and managed. They are treated sensitively and their work and their contributions are valued. As a result, children feel welcomed, relaxed and ready to learn. This improves the quality of their learning. Also the effective co-operation between class teachers and teaching assistants supports their work well and adds to the quality of children's learning.

17. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection, 13 lessons were observed in these year groups. One was excellent, three were very good, seven were good and two were satisfactory. The teaching of Year 2 pupils is particularly strong with nearly six out of ten lessons being very good or better. The last inspection also noted the very good features of much of the teaching in Years 1 and 2. Teaching and pupils' learning are good in all subjects, except in art and design and music where they are satisfactory. A literacy lesson to older pupils, who were considering a text and task which centred on the likely effect on a dog if its favourite basket was taken away, illustrated several features of good and very good teaching. The reading of the shared text was introduced very well and pupils were given clear instructions to help them improve the accuracy and expression of their reading. This was handled very expertly by the teacher and showed a very good understanding of how pupils read. Pupils were then asked to write their own accounts of what the dog might have felt. This was introduced effectively and all the pupils were enthused and very willing to write for themselves. The lesson ended with an effective whole class discussion which showed that pupils had made good gains in reading confidently and in the quality of their writing.

18. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is also good. During the inspection, 36 lessons were observed. One was excellent, three were very good, 19 were good and 13 were satisfactory. This is broadly similar to the findings of the previous inspection. There were no significant variations in the quality of teaching in the different year groups across the school, except that the proportion of very good and better teaching was highest in Year 4 and lowest in Year 3. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all subjects except in religious education, art and design and design and technology where it is satisfactory. It is unsatisfactory in music because pupils do not have sufficient opportunities for composing and appraising in order for them to reach average standards. A numeracy lesson to pupils in Year 4 illustrated several features of very good and excellent teaching. The whole lesson was taught at a brisk pace, ensuring that activities were introduced quickly and effectively so that pupils were fully engaged and involved in the lesson throughout. The use of an overhead projector ensured that the oral starter to the lesson was clearly understood and easy to follow. The main activity dealing with collecting and analysing data from an eye colour survey was managed very well, and emphasis rightly placed on interpreting the results rather than simply colouring in the graphs that were produced. Very good extension work was provided for some higher attaining pupils. The result was that pupils' understanding of doubling and trebling numbers, tallying and bar graphs was extended and developed to a level well above that expected for their age.

19. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, and has a positive impact on their learning, particularly of reading and number skills. Teachers' planning is well focused on pupils' needs, and the targets on pupils' individual plans are clear and realistic. Nearly all support takes place within the class, and this means that pupils are included in all school activities. This represents good improvement on the findings of the last inspection, when excessive withdrawal of pupils meant that they missed valuable interaction with other pupils. Teaching assistants work closely with teachers to support pupils, and this enables them to learn alongside other groups and contribute fully to whole class discussions.

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

20. Curricular provision in Years 1 to 6 is good. The requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus are fully met and all pupils receive a very broad and relevant experience which promotes their learning well. This represents good improvement compared with the findings of the

school's last inspection which had reviewing the structure of the curriculum and developing literacy skills in other subjects as one of the key issues for action. Particular shortcomings identified by the inspection in April 2000 were too much basic literacy at the expense of using these skills in other subjects, insufficient time allocated to some subjects, no control technology in information and communication technology, inconsistencies in the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and weaknesses in progression in the pupils' learning. These shortcomings no longer apply. The time spent on literacy and numeracy is still high but these skills are now applied well in most other subjects and there are many links between different subjects. The 'fun afternoons' run by the school have involved the pupils in selecting two activities from a varied list including origami, caring for a dog and photography. These afternoons add further breadth and interest to the curriculum. Two art afternoons are planned for the summer term. The governors have a good overview of curricular provision.

21. Sixteen per cent of the parents who responded to the pre inspection questionnaire were, at least to some extent, dissatisfied with the school's provision for extracurricular activities and a further ten per cent were unable to comment on the quality of this provision. The findings of the inspection are that provision for extracurricular activities is satisfactory with some good features. Extracurricular clubs include a computer club, choir, recorders, mathematics and a range of sporting activities. The school also takes part in competitive sports fixtures with other schools with some success. The curriculum is also enriched by educational visits, including two residential trips, a visit to a theatre and Pitstone Green Farm Museum. Visitors to the school include Egyptian Dancers, a 'Viking' and a grandmother who talked about her memories of the village. However, the support that visitors give to enhancing the curriculum is not as well developed as it is in most schools.

22. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The approach in the Nursery is caring and supportive and ensures that children are introduced well to the school's routines and expectations and are soon ready to continue their formal learning. The curriculum, which is based on the Early Learning Goals, is interesting, challenging and practically based. The current topic of minibeasts is well planned and resourced. When they transfer to the Reception class, the curriculum is planned and organised more closely to National Curriculum work. This is appropriate for the current children, as many, especially in English and mathematics, are already working securely within National Curriculum requirements. The planned approach to literacy and numeracy is based on the recommended formats for Year 1 pupils and this helps to ensure that children are extended as far as possible and that the needs of the higher attaining pupils are met well. However, in some areas, especially aspects of pupils' creative development, insufficient opportunities are given to a sufficiently wide and rich curriculum. Parents appreciate the close links established between the Nursery and the pre-school group which most children attend. Children, teachers and pre-school leaders exchange visits and consultations take place over the respective curricula.

23. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, and fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The school has responded positively to criticisms in the last inspection, when pupils were taken out of lessons too often for them to have a balanced curriculum, and now the support in the class means that these pupils are included in all activities. Pupils' individual targets are well thought out, and they are reviewed regularly. Their targets include goals for literacy, numeracy and behaviour. The needs of the pupil with a statement of special educational needs are met well, and the annual review provides a good focus for further improvement.

24. The school has a good range of strategies for teaching literacy across the school and across the curriculum. Literacy is taught daily and teachers' planning has a good regard for the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. The school also provides additional support programmes in Years 2 to 6. The Additional Literacy Support and the Early Literacy Support programmes are effective in helping pupils secure their basic skills. The school has a carefully planned programme which identifies useful opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. In subjects such as

science, younger pupils develop their awareness of how to write giving clear information in their descriptions of how plants grow; older pupils develop their skills of writing from different points of view in their accounts of the water cycle as a drop of rain water. Examples of their work are collated by the school into useful records, which can support teachers' planning in the future and the monitoring of pupils' progress in writing.

25. The school's provision for numeracy is good. Teachers are confident about teaching the three-part lesson and pupils make good progress to attain above average standards in numeracy by Year 6. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in other subjects, measuring in design and technology, for example, using spreadsheets in information and communication technology and organising data into graphs in science.

26. Pupils receive good equality of opportunity. This is an improvement on the findings of the school's last inspection which reported shortcomings in equality of opportunity in that pupils were too frequently withdrawn from lessons and did not cover the same ground as their peers. That inspection also reported underachievement by boys but this was not observed during this inspection. The school has an effective commitment to the inclusion of all pupils and a draft policy is in the process of development for discussion next term.

27. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection where overall provision was judged to have been satisfactory. There is no overall policy.

28. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. This was also the judgement at the last inspection. There is a daily act of worship, which follows planned themes and complies with statutory requirements. It includes a short time for prayer and reflection. In the assembly for the Reception year and Years 1 and 2 about Noah's Ark, pupils were provided with good opportunities to reflect on selfishness and in a whole school assembly led by Nursery children, pupils showed a real appreciation of the wonders of nature. Satisfactory opportunities are created for the raising of pupils' spiritual awareness across the curriculum. For example, children in the Nursery gain a sense of the wonder in the natural world as they watch tadpoles developing and observe their large land snail. Also, in a Year 2 science lesson, pupils were excited by their work on forces. A local minister visits the school regularly, but there are few links with the parish church.

29. The school provides well for pupils' moral development and very well for their social development. This has developed further the strengths identified at the last inspection. The behaviour policy and practice clearly reflect the school's aims. 'Circle time' and assemblies make a good contribution. There are many good opportunities in lessons for pupils to learn to work co-operatively on problems. Pupils are encouraged to take on responsibilities, particularly older pupils helping with younger ones at play time and lunch times. The House system makes a good contribution to pupils' social development. The school regularly raises good sums for charities. These are nominated by pupils who have to make a presentation to the school and submit to a vote. Pupils in both key stages go on residential visits. These help pupils to develop their social skills away from their homes.

30. Provision for cultural development, which was unsatisfactory and a key issue at the last inspection, is now satisfactory. Visits now support pupils' cultural development well. The school uses the local area imaginatively as a resource for history and geography. An International Day was held recently after a half term of preparation, which involved the whole school, parents and visitors and looked at ways of life in different countries. Religious education lessons make a good contribution to pupils' understanding of other ways of life. Former pupils who have gone overseas maintain e-mail contact. Good use is made of the local Multicultural Centre. However, the development of insights into the diversity of cultures within the United Kingdom is still the weaker element of pupils' cultural development.

31. There is no formal policy for pupils' personal, health, social and citizenship education, although a policy is under preparation. Much is done through 'circle' time and assemblies. Sex education is given through science lessons and by the school nurse. Local police visit regularly with a planned programme on a variety of topics.

32. The school has very good links with the local community. Sponsorship was obtained from a local firm for the printing of the prospectus and many local companies have given materials and equipment for the new science room and information and communication technology suite. Local companies give donations to school funds. The school and its grounds are used by many local organisations. The school takes part in local events, such as the village fete and annual maypole dancing, and contributes to the village magazine.

33. The school has good links with schools in the other phases of pupils' education. Through reciprocal visits of staff and pupils, the school ensures that good contacts are maintained with playgroups whose pupils transfer to the school Nursery. At the end of Year 6, the school ensures that pupils have opportunities to visit the schools to which they transfer and that appropriate transfer of documentation takes place. The school makes good use of opportunities to meet with other schools in the area to consult with colleagues and to ensure consistency of standards in the subjects in national tests. The school also has good links with teacher training institutions and has benefited from the opportunities to support newly qualified teachers.

34. The school is successful in its aim of providing equality of opportunity for all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity, faith, ability or special educational needs. This is evident in all of its activities, including teaching. Teachers ensure that work is appropriately planned to meet the needs of individuals and that all pupils contribute in lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school is a caring community, which has effective procedures for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its pupils. This finding is similar to that of the last inspection.

36. Local Education Authority guidelines on child protection have been adopted. The headteacher, who is the designated person, has been trained, but the deputy headteacher has not and so there is no responsible person in the headteacher's absence. All staff are trained at the beginning of the school year. Links with outside agencies are good. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions are also good. All staff have been trained in first aid and accident procedures are well understood. Risk assessments and fire drills are carried out regularly. The level of supervision at playtimes is good, as is security.

37. Procedures for supporting pupils' personal development are good. The positive behaviour policy and procedures are good and are clearly understood by pupils and staff. Class rules are discussed and agreed at the beginning of each school year. Class teachers award stickers for good work, effort and acts of kindness. Each week, pupils from each class are awarded a red badge in special assemblies and these are valued by pupils, as are the headteacher's certificates. Gold badges are also awarded for outstanding contributions.

38. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good. Teachers know their pupils well and all staff share the headteacher's friendly and supportive approach. All teachers maintain good classroom records on pupils' personal progress. Annual reports contain good monitoring of personal development by teachers and pupils make their own self-monitoring contributions.

39. The care and welfare procedures for children in the Foundation Stage are effective. Teachers and their assistants work hard to ensure that children's entry to school is as smooth as possible and those new to the Nursery are integrated quickly and effectively into the school's routines. Procedures for assessing and monitoring children's achievements in the Nursery and the Reception class are good. Detailed assessments are carried out when children enter the school using a set of commercial tests.

This provides useful information on the areas of strength and weakness in each year group and allows comparisons to be made with children's attainment nationally. These data are used well to inform the learning targets which are set for children in the Reception class. Regular assessments are made in the Nursery of children's attainment against the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. These are used to ensure that children have met these targets before they proceed to work in the National Curriculum. The class teacher and teaching assistants make and record comments on children's successes or difficulties as they work. These are collated and used to plan further work if required. Reports are made on children as they transfer from the Nursery to the Reception class. In the Reception class, the useful learning targets which are set for all children in literacy, mathematics and science, enable the school to measure and track the progress children are making.

40. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well. Pupils' contributions are valued highly, and their achievements are well recognised. There are good procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' needs are quickly identified when they enter the school, and the support provided means they make good progress. The school keeps good records of pupils' progress in relation to their targets. There is good liaison with outside agencies, including specialist teachers provided by the Local Education Authority.

41. The school's procedures for assessing the pupils' academic progress are good in Years 1 to 6 as is its use of this information to guide curricular planning and to monitor and support pupils' progress. This judgement represents a good improvement compared with the findings of the school's inspection in 2000. That inspection resulted in a key issue for action of 'to make better use of assessments of pupils' attainment to consistently plan work that is matched to the needs of pupils at different levels of attainment in each class'. The way in which standards have risen in English, mathematics and science since 2000 shows clearly how well assessment information has been used to match work to the individual needs of pupils. In these subjects, comprehensive and very effective assessment procedures have been developed. These procedures include careful analysis of national test results, the test papers, optional test papers and statistical data to identify and address areas of weakness and the production of progress charts and predicted levels of attainment for individual pupils. Challenging targets for achievement in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests are also set based on this assessment information. Work takes place both in the school and in conjunction with other schools to ensure that the assessment of pupils' work at National Curriculum levels is accurate. In addition, all staff have had particular training in the content and attainment levels of the national test papers. In the 2000 inspection, shortcomings in both the analysis of data and the accuracy of assessment were noted.

42. Pupils are fully involved in the assessment of their work and in their targets for improvement. Their English, mathematics and science books contain National Curriculum level descriptors which they mark off when they have achieved them and which they talk about confidently. There are some good examples of self-assessment by pupils in the reports on progress which are sent to parents who are made fully aware of their children's targets. These procedures give the pupils a very good understanding of their own learning and mean that parents can support them effectively. Pupils' work is assessed by teachers at the end of every unit of study and progress and targets are frequently reviewed and modified if necessary.

43. Assessment procedures in geography, history, design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education are satisfactory. They are generally related to the pupils' achievement in units of study which are often related to National Curriculum guidelines and record if a pupil exceeds, meets or does not meet appropriate standards. There are no formal whole school assessment procedures in art, music or religious education. Teachers' marking of pupils' work was found to be largely praise or correction with little indication provided to pupils about how to improve. This is partly because the school marking policy means that individual pupils' work is only

marked in detail on some occasions. This is designed to make marking effective and manageable but it does limit the comprehensive marking of pupils' work.

44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are effective. Registers are completed correctly and monitored on a regular basis by teachers and the administrative staff for patterns of lateness and absence. The educational welfare officer visits termly.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The very high proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire and attended the meeting show that they are strongly supportive of the school. They are very comfortable about approaching the school with suggestions or complaints. They feel that the teaching is good and that their children are making good progress and are being helped to become mature and responsible. They feel well informed about their children's progress. The findings of the inspection support the parents' positive views.

46. The school has very effective links with parents. The information it provides for them is good. The prospectus is attractively presented and is easy to use and understand. It complies with legal requirements, as does the governors' Annual Report to parents. All parents have signed the home/school agreement. Good information is provided each term on the curriculum to enable parents to help in their children's learning. Newsletters are frequent, well presented and friendly in tone. Reports are very helpful and include opportunities for parents and pupils to comment. A good welcome pack is provided for new parents. The home/school reading log and homework diaries are used well as a means of dialogue between school and home. There is a good range of consultation meetings and parents feel free to talk to teachers at any time about their children's progress. The weekly sessions after school, where teachers and governors are available for consultation, are particularly valued.

47. A very good number of parents help in school on a regular basis, in the library, with reading and with sports activities. The termly Fun Day also involves good numbers of parents. A very good proportion of parents come into school several times a week to help with their children's reading at the start of the day. Very good numbers of parents attend special assemblies and performances. The parent/teacher association runs a good range of social and fund-raising activities. Substantial sums have been raised to buy equipment to enhance pupils' learning.

48. The school builds a successful partnership with parents of children in the Foundation Stage. Parents are encouraged to visit the school before their children begin in the Nursery and they are provided with a useful entry pack which outlines some of the school's requirements and expectations. An open dialogue with parents is encouraged as parents bring and collect their children. The shared reading time with parents at the beginning of the day is a further positive initiative. Evidence from comments in children's reading diaries confirm that most parents support their children well by hearing them read at home. Parents are kept well informed of the activities of both classes through informal visits, newsletters and consultation times.

49. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well involved with their child's support, and are pleased with the provision made by the school. They are informed as soon as the school has concerns, and are kept well aware of the school's targets for their child. Parents meet staff regularly to discuss how much progress is being made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The headteacher's leadership of the school is good. A significant strength has been the way in which he responded positively to the judgements of the 2000 OFSTED inspection and his determination to secure improvements. He has worked hard to maintain and improve staff morale and has successfully re-focused the aims and direction of the school. This has worked well. Teachers and support staff are fully committed to the school's work and the school has a good capacity to secure further improvements. The headteacher has a caring approach to pupils, parents and staff. He has a

through knowledge of all pupils and their families. A strong feature of his leadership is the high profile which he maintains within the school. He is a regular visitor to all classes and his decision to take responsibility for the teaching of science in Years 5 and 6 gives him a useful view of the working of the school and enables him to provide very good models of teaching for the other staff.

51. The headteacher's management of the school is also good. The school has made a good response to the key issue identified at the last OFSTED inspection which required it to review its management structure to ensure more effective monitoring of its work particularly in raising standards. All staff now have revised job descriptions and the responsibility that each has in the drive to raise standards is clearly stated. A noticeable feature of the school's current management system is the effective partnership between the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Their respective strengths are used well to ensure that planned initiatives implemented properly. Regular full staff meetings, meetings of the senior management team and separate key stage meetings ensure that staff are well informed about, and involved in, decisions made about the school's work. The thoroughness and rigour with which the monitoring of teaching and learning takes place have also been improved. The headteacher and deputy headteacher both undertake formal monitoring of teachers' work which includes lesson observation and work sampling. This has been an important reason for the rise in standards in Years 3 to 6 since the last inspection. The new performance management systems have been embraced enthusiastically. There has been a smooth transition from the old appraisal process to performance management procedures. The linking of teachers' objectives to the achievement of their classes has ensured that performance management and school improvement planning are closely linked.

52. The quality of leadership and management provided by the headteacher and governing body has improved since the last OFSTED inspection when they were judged to have been satisfactory. Now they are good. The strengths which were identified in the HMI report of June 2001 have been maintained.

53. Good progress has been made in improving the focus of school development planning, which was also a key issue at the last inspection. The Action Plan which was devised after the last OFSTED clearly focused on raising standards and contained appropriate references to time scales, responsibilities and other aspects of the school's work. This provided a clear framework within which raising standards could be achieved. The subsequent school improvement plan has contains several of the strengths of the action plan. However, the specific and close relation to improving standards through target setting and projections beyond the current year are not sufficiently clear. As a result, it is more difficult for the school and the governors to monitor closely the school's progress in meeting the achievement targets which have been set. The HMI report of June 2001 noted that 'work is still taking place to develop a long-term whole school development plan'. This is still the case.

54. Governors support the leadership and management of the school well. Through the work of the full body and the several active committees, governors maintain a good view of the school's work. Individual governors support the school well. The chair is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and is involved well. The link that individual governors have made with particular classes in the school, and their responsibility to oversee subjects and areas of the school's work, are taken seriously. As a result, governors have a good insight into aspects of the curriculum. Several governors visit the school regularly to act as classroom helpers, and one gives valuable support to the process of analysing assessment data. An example of governors' willingness to improve their effectiveness is in the work done to define formally their strategic objectives for 2002 under several developmental headings. Good opportunities are provided for parents to meet governors and share concerns through the regular surgeries that are held. When securing building improvements or when making major purchases, governors have a good understanding of value for money.

55. The specific grants allocated to the school are used well to promote higher standards. Performance management procedures are used effectively to ensure that teachers' professional development needs are appropriately met. The school's financial management is secure. In the most

recent office audit by the Local Education Authority in September 2000, the school's financial systems and procedures were judged to have been good and the school indicates that the minor recommendations made have been satisfactorily addressed. The school secretary and the bursar, who is new to the school, support the headteacher and teaching staff well.

56. The leadership and management of the work of the Foundation Stage are good. The co-ordinator, who is also co-ordinator for Years 1 and 2, is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about provision for these youngest children. Although she does not teach within the Foundation Stage, by regular meetings and informal visits, she is aware of developing issues. The level of resourcing and the accommodation are good overall. They are good in the Nursery, with some very good elements, and satisfactory in the Reception class. The accommodation in the Nursery is very spacious and very generous for the 24 children currently attending. This represents a very helpful and imaginative use of a converted kitchen servery. General resourcing of the Nursery, including appropriate outdoor provision, is good. The provision of information and communication technology equipment is very good. The level of resourcing in the Reception is sound. The resourcing of literacy is good, but there are insufficient resources to support children's creative development

57. The co-ordinator of the school's provision for special educational needs carries out her responsibilities effectively. She supports teachers and pupils well, and ensures that the specific funding is used appropriately. Good records are kept of the school's work and of pupils' progress. The co-ordinator has managed the change from a system of withdrawal, criticised in the last inspection report, to class-based support very well, and pupils now benefit from a broad curriculum that meets their needs well. There is a designated governor who has a good knowledge of the provision and meets the co-ordinator regularly to monitor the school's work.

58. The school has a good number of well qualified teachers who meet the demands of the curriculum well. They are supported very well by a good number of suitably trained and experienced teaching assistants, particularly in the support of pupils with special educational needs. All staff work together well and a strong team spirit exists. The school's accommodation supports the teaching of the curriculum very well. There is good provision for the Nursery and classrooms are adequate for the purpose. The school has specialist rooms for science, information and communication technology, art, food technology and a library. A good hall with a new non-slip floor supports physical education and other activities well. There is an ample grassed area, a learner swimming pool which is mainly used in the summer, adequate hard surfaced play area and an environmental area which is being further developed. The quality and quantity of learning resources are good overall and support the pupils' learning well. At the time of the 2000 inspection, resources were judged to be satisfactory. They are excellent in information and communication technology and good in English, mathematics, science and physical education and satisfactory in all other subjects. The school's staffing, accommodation and resources promote good standards.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to continue to improve the quality of education offered to the pupils the headteacher, governors and staff should:

1. Improve standards in music in Years 3 to 6 by;

- i) increasing teachers' confidence and expertise;
- ii) improve opportunities for composing and appraising;
- iii) enabling pupils to listen to a wider range of musical styles.

See paragraphs 5, 18, 121 - 124

2. Improve the confidence and quality of pupils' speaking skills by;

- i) fully implementing the school's speaking development programme;
- ii) raising teachers' awareness and expectations of what pupils can achieve;
- iii) widening the range of speaking opportunities provided.

See paragraphs 5, 72 - 85

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Improve the creative development of children in the Reception class by providing more regular opportunities for creative expression. See paragraphs 22, 56, 61, 71
- Ensure that the school improvement plan remains at the heart of the school's work, provides longer term strategic direction and is clearly focused on raising standards.
See paragraph 53

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	56
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	31	16	0	0	0
Percentage	4	12	55	29	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 more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	12	233
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	44

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	12
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.6

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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	12	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (98)	92 (100)	96 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	24	24	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (98)	96 (100)	96 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	22	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	20	19	21
	Total	32	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (86)	84 (86)	92 (82)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	14
	Girls	21	19	21
	Total	34	31	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (91)	82 (71)	92 (75)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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	1
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	232
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y1

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8
Average class size	29.1

Education support staff: YR – Y1

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	59

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	20
Number of pupils per FTE adult	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

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	1	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	433128
Total expenditure	439436
Expenditure per pupil	1772
Balance brought forward from previous year	11658
Balance carried forward to next year	5350

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	235
Number of questionnaires returned	102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	35	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	32	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	44	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	53	11	0	5
The teaching is good.	71	25	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	35	12	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	25	5	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	54	33	11	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	56	39	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	37	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	46	12	4	10

Other issues raised by parents

- Pupils achieve good standards.
- Behaviour is good and the school promotes positive attitudes and values.
- Homework is organised well.
- The school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

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

60. At the time of the inspection, there were 54 children in the Foundation Stage. Thirty of them are taught in the Reception class and 24 attend the Nursery part time. Children are admitted to the school at the beginning of the term after which they are four. They attend the Nursery for mornings only and transfer to the Reception class when they begin full-time education. When they enter the school, most children are achieving standards which are average for their age although the analysis of the data provided by the school's assessment on entry tests shows a wide range of ability and significant variations between different year groups.

61. By the end of the Reception year, most children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This was also the judgement of the previous OFSTED inspection and the conclusion made by the HMI visit in June 2001. At the time of the current inspection, the majority have already achieved most of the Early Learning Goals and are successfully beginning work within the National Curriculum. Standards achieved in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical development are above those expected for their age. These good standards and progress are achieved through several important strengths. Children are introduced to the school sensitively and effectively and, across this stage of their learning, all children are managed very well. A further strength is the way that children's achievement is carefully monitored, especially through the setting of useful achievement targets in English, mathematics and science in the Reception class. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what children can achieve. Standards in creative development are average. There are insufficient opportunities for children in the Reception class to have regular planned access to a wide range of painting, drawing and modelling materials for higher standards to be reached.

Personal, social and emotional development

62. Children make good progress and achieve well in this area of learning, and the quality of teaching and learning is also good. Children are introduced to the school's routines and expectations sensitively and effectively in the Nursery. The warm and welcoming way in which the teacher and her assistants treat new children in the Nursery helps them to feel safe and secure and they are soon ready to explore the classroom environment. The caring attitude of all adults in the class is a very good role model for children. An example of the impact of this approach was seen clearly during the inspection when one child was upset about being left by his mother at the beginning of school and another child spontaneously volunteered, 'I will look after him'. Children look after their own equipment and personal hygiene as they hang up their coats when they arrive at school, wash their hands before lunch and willingly tidy away equipment at the end of a session.

63. The relationships formed in the both classes are very good. Children share and take turns well. An activity in the Nursery clearly illustrated the effect of children's positive attitudes on their learning. A group of boys and girls were playing a dice game based on numbers, colours and shapes of snails with the teaching assistant. All the children enjoyed themselves thoroughly and they waited patiently for their turn. They were pleased at their own successes in the game and were very keen to win, but they were also pleased by others' achievements. Similar positive social attitudes are also a strength of the Reception class children. For example, during the time when children in the Reception class use the Nursery facilities, the control, co-operation and enjoyment shown by all children were very impressive. Children in the Nursery have good opportunities to choose their own activities and to initiate their own learning. This opportunity is less evident in the Reception class when children follow a more directed

curriculum. However, this is appropriate for the age and development of most of the children in the class.

Communication, language and literacy

64. The good teaching in this area of learning enables most children to make good progress and achieve well. Teachers organise regular opportunities for children to develop their confidence in speaking and listening. In both classes, children listen attentively and concentrate well for their age. They have the opportunity at the beginning of the day to talk together in a circle about the things they have done or the things that might be on their mind. Children in the Reception class sustain their interest and concentration well. For example, they watched a video presentation of the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears very intently and were able, subsequently, to talk about the story and to sequence events accurately. Children in the Nursery enjoy listening and joining in with their stories. The confidence with which these very young children participated in the telling of the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and joined in singing their action song in morning assembly in front of all pupils in the school, staff and a good collection of their parents, was very impressive.

65. Most children in the Reception class are beginning to read for their own enjoyment. Books are taken home regularly and progress is systematically recorded in their reading diaries. Most are well aware of letter sounds and names, and appreciate the importance of alphabetical order. Higher attaining pupils are well challenged in their reading and several read fluently and expressively with good levels of understanding and enjoyment. Children's writing skills are developed well. This is encouraged by the effective use of writing targets. Children are set clear and relevant targets to improve their writing and to monitor the progress they make. For example, targets such as, 'Can you use full stops and capital letters?' 'Can you read your own writing?' and 'Can you write the following letters....?' are helpful and challenging. This approach ensures that these young children are involved well in their own learning, understand clearly what is expected of them and know how they can improve. Most children write their own names and construct simple sentences. Several of the higher attaining children write independently for a suitably wide range of purposes. Children are introduced appropriately to a modified National Literacy Strategy approach.

Mathematical development

66. This area of learning is taught well and by the end of the Reception year most children are on course to exceed the Early Learning Goals for mathematics. Children in the Nursery begin to develop their counting skills as they play dice games together and count how many squares to move each time, and as they note how many children are present or absent from the class each day. The mathematical work for children in the Reception class is also organised well so that children are appropriately introduced to the National Numeracy Strategy format as they get older. Most have already met the Early Learning Goals in this area. They recognise the numerals from one to nine and several work confidently with numbers up to 20. Their understanding of the different combination of numbers which added together make ten is developed well through the provision of varied activities. Higher attaining pupils' appreciate 'more than' and 'less than' in numbers up to ten. Children's understanding of heavier and lighter is developed well as they find, for example, four things in the classroom that are lighter and heavier than a drawing pin, a feather or a leaf. The progress that children are making is encouraged and recorded through the setting of appropriate achievement targets which are clearly displayed in their mathematics books. Children are introduced to the idea of data collection as they undertake a survey in the class to see which are the class's favourite activities at school. This gave them opportunity of using tallying techniques and then results were transferred to a large block graph which is attractively displayed in the classroom. Children in the Nursery have fun at analysing data as they record and begin to interpret a simple block graph showing the type and amount of food consumed by the hungry caterpillar

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. By the end of the Reception year, children's knowledge and understanding of the world are above that expected for their age. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of development is good. The current focus on minibeasts in the Nursery gives the children a very good knowledge and appreciation of several living creatures. The range of insects and animals for them to observe, which includes goldfish, stick insects, tadpoles, a wormery, an ant colony and a very large land snail, is very impressive. The care with which these are handled and observed and the fond and interested way in which children talk about them, is an indication of their excitement and appreciation of these different life forms. Children in the Nursery also have separate outside areas where they can grow vegetables and other plants and take responsibility for tending them and watching them grow. In the Reception class, children's appreciation of the past is developed well as they make a collection of teddies from the past which they have brought from home. These are attractively displayed in the classroom, with challenging question captions such as, 'Which bear is the youngest?' 'Which is the oldest?'

68. In the Nursery and in the Reception class, children have good opportunities for using computers and they develop information and communication technology skills which are above those expected for their age. For example, the youngest children in the Nursery confidently access their computers and use the mouse with control and precision in their picture programs. Children in the Reception class use their digital camera to take and record photographs of themselves as part of their record of achievement. Children in the Reception class gain a good understanding of materials and how they can be changed as they observe closely what happens to jelly crystals as hot water is added and how the liquid changes as it cools. They then investigate their sense of taste as they share some jelly and ice cream! They develop a satisfactory understanding of aspects of their own environment as they undertake a survey around the school observing and recording what they hear and then explaining where the different sounds they heard have come from. Children are introduced appropriately to other values and beliefs through religious education.

Physical development

69. By the end of the Reception year, most children's physical development is above that expected for their age, and overall the quality of teaching and of children's learning is good. However, the lack of regular opportunities to develop the physical skills of the youngest children in the Reception class means that these children achieve average standards. Children in the Nursery have regular access to a separate play and activity area which is supplied with a good variety of equipment. There are bicycles, tricycles and other wheeled toys, appropriate climbing and clambering apparatus and opportunities to develop other physical skills, such as hammering, 'painting' the fence with water and digging in the garden. During the inspection, children used these facilities well and had good opportunities for developing and reinforcing their physical skills. Children in the Reception class do not have daily access to appropriate equipment, but they have regular physical education lessons each week and, one afternoon each week, they use the outside facilities provided in the Nursery.

70. Across the Foundation Stage, children have good opportunities for developing their hand co-ordination skills as they use building and construction equipment, and as they throw and retrieve dice. In the Reception class, children show good dexterity and careful pencil control in their handwriting. In the Nursery, children cut out their snail shapes with good care and control. Children in the Reception class move confidently around the hall in their physical education lessons with good regard to their space and that of others. They warm up energetically as they stop and start using the popular 'traffic-lights' game. They co-operate well with a partner or in a team as they find ways of transporting a beanbag around the hall. Children demonstrated good control and co-ordination as they confidently handled the ribbons and they kept in time with the music as they practised for their maypole dance.

Creative development

71. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of development is good in the Nursery, but satisfactory overall. By the end of the Reception year, most children reach the standards that are expected for their age. In the Nursery, children have experience of using a good range of different materials in their creative work. They use different types of paper as they cut out representations of snails and use yellow and green tissue paper and paint to produce pictures of daffodils for their work on spring. Other children use recycled materials as they make their own toys; for example, pop-up dolls, and toy cars and trains. Children in the Reception class paint pictures using bright paint and large brushes of people who help us. However, these children do not have regular access to a sufficiently wide range of creative materials or the opportunity to explore variations in colour, texture and pattern to enable them to reach higher standards. Both classes have role-play areas, but the one in the Reception class lacks imagination. Children in the Nursery sing appropriate songs. For example, during the inspection, they joined in enthusiastically with an action song to accompany and illustrate their story of the Hungry Caterpillar. Children in the Reception class took part enthusiastically as they used a range of untuned percussion instruments to provide the 'orchestra' for other children's maypole dance.

ENGLISH

72. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, standards in reading and writing were well above the national average when compared with all schools and above those found in similar schools in reading and well above them in writing. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001, pupils' standards in English were above those found in most schools and below those found in similar schools. Broadly similar standards were found during the current inspection. In Year 2, standards in reading and writing are well above average, while overall standards in Year 6 are above average. However, standards in the speaking element of English are lower. They are above average at the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection when standards by the end of Year 2 were average in speaking and listening and above average in reading and writing. There has also been a good improvement in standards in Year 6. In the school's previous inspection, standards of speaking were average which remains the case. However standards in listening, reading and writing were also judged to be average. Differences in standards are the result of effective teaching throughout the school. The school has set very challenging targets for the current group of pupils in Year 6.

73. All pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Pupils enter Year 1 with generally above average attainment in English and reach well above average standards by the end of Year 2. The current groups of pupils in Year 6 attained average standards in the national tests in Year 2 and have achieved well to reach above average standards in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs receive good, and sometimes very good, support from their teachers and learning support assistants through the school. Their needs are clearly identified and effectively monitored and, as a result, they achieve well. No significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls were observed during the inspection.

74. In Year 2, standards of speaking and listening are above average. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers and answer questions in class with ready enthusiasm and interest. Teachers specifically encourage pupils to be confident in using their voices, explaining how to communicate effectively to the whole class. This helps pupils to read their work aloud clearly and often with good expression in their voices.

75. In Year 6, pupils also listen effectively and well in class and pay good attention to their teachers and to each other's contributions. However, pupils in Year 6 often require supportive and additional questioning to encourage them to make detailed responses in class. Their answers are relevant and often thoughtful. However, the range of the vocabulary they use in class discussions and in contributing to word banks and lists of descriptive vocabulary is mainly focused on what is familiar and often lacks complexity. Younger pupils in the key stage respond in more detail and explore a growing range of vocabulary. Opportunities for pupils to speak to different audiences and in more formal

contexts are appropriately planned but are not consistently provided. The planned, progressive development of pupils' oral skills in the school's speaking and listening policy is not fully implemented. This was a shortcoming which was also identified in the school's previous inspection.

76. Standards in reading are well above average in Year 2. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic about their reading and enjoy reading aloud together and individually to the whole class. They take good notice of punctuation and expression markers, such as exclamation marks and capital letters, to help them read with more effect. Most pupils have a secure understanding of a good range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. They read a good number of books and have a very good understanding of how books are organised. Younger pupils talk about their books with interest, making use of illustrations to support their discussions when they are not able to read all the words.

77. In Year 6 standards in reading are above average. Most pupils read aloud confidently and fluently with regard for punctuation and meaning and some pupils use their voices expressively to create interest and understanding. They read the texts they encounter in class with generally good comprehension. Pupils of all abilities read a range of texts which provide them with an appropriate level of challenge. However, a number of pupils in the average ability range are reading books in their free reading which are comfortably within their scope and which are similar in content and level of difficulty. Most pupils talk confidently about the books they enjoy reading giving brief outlines of the plot and some description of the main characters. Some higher attaining pupils talk about the genre and style of books they prefer to read and compare their different qualities. Pupils across the school understand how to use the library and older pupils use the Internet well for their research. They develop their research and referencing skills appropriately across the curriculum.

78. Standards in writing are well above average at the end of Year 2. The writing of all pupils communicates meaning. Higher attaining pupils are often confident, lively writers and are beginning to select words which are interesting and to use more complex structures. A good example of their skills was seen in the range of sentences produced by pupils in Year 2 as a result of reading, discussing and writing about their shared text. These included; 'The sun reflected on the pond where the dog was sitting sadly.' 'He does not look his usual self at all.' 'I demand that you give him back his basket'. They have a good grasp of the basic accuracy of spelling and punctuation because they are specifically and effectively taught. The writing of average pupils is often lively but levels of accuracy are more variable. Lower attaining pupils write clearly and are developing their understanding of how to write accurate simple sentences.

79. In Year 6, standards of pupils' writing are above average. They write for a good range of purposes which include elements of biography and autobiography, retelling of myths and legends, formal letters, descriptive poems, personal accounts, transcribing a narrative to a playscript, newspaper articles, diary writing, and persuasive writing. More able pupils write confidently and fluently, using a good range of vocabulary which is appropriate to the purpose of the writing. They organise their writing into paragraphs and are beginning to use a more formal vocabulary and sentence structure in writing, such as in formal letters and newspaper articles. Average pupils use a more everyday range of vocabulary and develop their ideas in more limited detail. They use narrative structures confidently and generally accurately. Lower attaining pupils show they understand the use of paragraphs but do not use them consistently in their work. Ideas are developed to a straightforward level using mainly simple structures and levels of accuracy are sometimes variable. Standards of presentation are good throughout the school. The clear neat joined handwriting, which most pupils develop from an early stage, reflects the recent effective focus on developing pupils' skills. Pupils are proud of their work and treat their own and the work of others with respect.

80. Standards of literacy and the development of literacy across the school are now good. There have been important improvements in this area as this was a key issue at the previous inspection. The school plans a specific framework for developing literacy skills in all subjects of the curriculum and a folder of pupils' work is maintained to illustrate both the range and standard of work achieved.

Literacy skills are used well across the whole curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 2 write about people, places and events, such as the story of Katie Morag in geography and Guy Fawkes in history. In Year 6, pupils use descriptive and analytical writing as they record their science investigations and describe the working of their models of a shaduf. Across the school, pupils make good use of their skills in information and communication technology to explore a range of fonts, colours, organisation and presentation. There are, however, some missed opportunities for older pupils to develop the depth and detail of their written work in religious education.

81. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and some very good teaching and learning was seen. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when standards were good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. All teachers plan carefully and in good detail with good attention to the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Resources are well organised and well matched to pupils' abilities and interests. Teachers know their pupils' well and, together with teaching assistants, they plan and develop activities, which are well matched to pupils' needs. There are very good relationships in all classrooms and pupils have a positive approach to their work and to other pupils in the class. They have trust and confidence in all the adults involved in their learning and this helps them to be receptive to advice and guidance. These features all positively influence the quality of pupils' learning.

82. Qualities of very good teaching were clearly seen in a literacy lesson in Year 2, where the class was exploring how the dog in the story felt about losing his favourite basket. The lesson began with a very clear explanation of the learning objectives which focused pupils' attention well at the beginning of the lesson. Pupils read the shared text together well because the teacher modelled the appropriate expression and discussed with pupils how each line should be spoken with good regard for the punctuation of the text. The teacher then gave very clear explanations and instructions for pupils about her expectations of their work and linked these effectively with pupils' individual targets for improving their writing. These were given a high profile on pupils' desks as they wrote, to help keep them well in mind. Her emphasis on good practice in developing handwriting skills and the very good organisation of pupils' working environment enabled pupils to settle to their work in a very organised and productive atmosphere. Time was used well during the lesson because the teacher gave frequent reminders about how much time remained to complete the task. By the end of the lesson, pupils had a very positive appreciation of their work and what they had learned. They had made very good progress in their writing task and skills and had developed both their vocabulary and the range of their expression well.

83. Minor shortcomings, in otherwise satisfactory lessons, are where there is a slow pace in parts of the lesson where pupils' concentration is less focused on what the teacher is explaining and this inhibits their responses. In the analysis of written work, although all pupils' work was marked regularly and supportively, not all teachers were consistent in ensuring that the quality of marking which clearly explained to pupils how they could improve their work. One pupil was told she had worked well in several consecutive pieces of work with no other comment to help her improve her writing. In the best marking there are well detailed comments which carefully explain the next stages in improving pupils' skills and often linking the comments directly with pupils' targets. Although opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills are planned appropriately, the focus on developing skills progressively is not sufficiently evident and teachers' expectations of pupils' responses are not consistent.

84. The subject is well led by the literacy co-ordinator who is an experienced teacher and a member of the senior staff of the school. The subject benefits from her overview of the work of the school, which ensures that she has good knowledge of pupils and staff and is able to respond effectively to the needs of the subject. She has monitored class teaching, teachers' planning and pupils' work on a regular basis. As a result of monitoring, teachers have been given good opportunities to watch colleagues teach both in their own school and in other schools. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when management in the subject was judged to be satisfactory. Resources in

the subject are good and reflect the care with which the school has selected resources which match pupils' interests and needs. The library is an attractive space, which is organised and managed well by the teaching assistant in charge. She has a good understanding of how to encourage and develop pupils' interests in reading and a personal enthusiasm, which helps to enhance pupils' own interests. The subject is well supported by events such as World Book Day, which involved the whole school and staff and was a celebration of books and their characters. The school has a Book Club, which enables pupils to purchase books as they wish. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through discussions about characters and relationships in the books pupils read and through the opportunities for whole class and small group discussions.

85. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented well and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The curriculum provides further effective support through the implementation of programmes such as the Additional Literacy and the Early Literacy support programmes. Assessment procedures are good. The school makes effective use of the results of national and recognised standardised tests at the end of each year to identify clear targets for individual pupils and to track their progress through the school. These provide useful benchmarks in reading and writing but the analysis of pupils' skills in speaking and listening is not sufficiently detailed or consistently maintained and is more dependent on individual teachers' organisation. Pupils' individual targets are included in all English books and, in most classes, they are regularly reviewed. In the best practice, they have a high profile in the class and are regularly referred to. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is good.

MATHEMATICS

86. In the national tests in 2001, Year 2 pupils' results were well above the national average, and above standards attained by pupils in similar schools. The test results show a marked rise since 1998 when they were below average. Year 6 pupils attained standards that were above the national average, and the same as those of similar schools. These results also show an upward trend from 1998, when pupils' attainment was average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similar standards to their mainstream peers. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Specific groups of pupils who are achieving just under national standards benefit from extra 'booster' sessions and these are making a significant improvement on the proportion of pupils attaining nationally expected levels.

87. This inspection finds that pupils' standards by Year 2 are well above average and this is a very good improvement on the standards reported in the previous inspection when they were average. Nearly all pupils are skilled at solving problems to find, for example, different ways to make 13 pence, and how to share out 12 cakes. Pupils enjoy these challenges, and are quick to find alternative ways to solve problems. Their numeracy skills are very well developed. Nearly all pupils have a very good understanding of place value, and add ten and 100 to a number quickly and accurately. They add two-digit numbers in their head easily, using effective strategies involving breaking up numbers into tens and units. Pupils have a good concept of space and time, and measure mass and length with kilograms and metres very well. They collect data systematically, and produce clear and accurate graphs of their results.

88. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is above average, and these pupils have made very good progress from Year 2 when their results in the national tests were below average. Year 6 pupils have had lots of work on solving problems, and they are quick to see different ways to respond to a challenge. Nearly all pupils have developed a good 'feel' for number which helps them to estimate more accurately and gives them a good idea as to whether their answers to problems are accurate. Pupils' number skills are very well developed. Regular practice has given them a very good grasp of multiplication tables, and this helps them attain good standards in other areas of mathematics. They are skilled at rounding up or down to the nearest ten or 100 and work confidently with factors and

prime numbers. Pupils are confident with negative numbers, and their work with co-ordinates in four quadrants is of a high standard.

89. Pupils' understanding of shape and space was weak in the 2001 national tests and the school has done much already to improve these skills. As a result of well-targeted work and regular practice, these pupils have a good understanding of angles, and calculate missing angles easily using geometric rules for angles in a triangle, for example, or within a circle. Pupils' collection and use of data are above average. They are good at, for example, looking at results in a football league table and picking out important facts to display in a graph. They move on from this well, and produce line graphs on a computer of the number of lengths swum during a marathon swimming event.

90. Pupils make good use of their number skills in other subjects, using spreadsheets in information and communication technology, handling data in science and taking great care to measure accurately in design and technology. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, and this is why pupils make good progress. In Years 1 and 2, teachers are well organised with resources ready for use and support staff aware of what they are required to do. Teachers maintain good control of the pupils with a friendly but firm manner, and this ensures a good pace of both teaching and learning. Teachers successfully involve all pupils by asking questions directed at different ability levels. Pupils respond well to this method because it gives them a good chance of success, whatever their level of attainment. Other methods, such as open-ended questioning, enable pupils to reflect and think for themselves. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and prepare them very well for difficult challenges. One teacher, for example, introduced some extension work on counting in hundreds by warning, "Now this is tricky," and pupils could barely wait to hear what was coming.

91. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers make lessons fun so that pupils enjoy learning. Techniques such as 'mental gymnastics', for example, when pupils combine quick-fire tables work with physical movements, have everyone laughing and learning at the same time, and are a huge success. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are good, and ensure that pupils develop their basic skills well. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly, and give pupils challenging mental mathematics work at the start, good practical tasks in groups and thoughtful summing-up sessions at the end. Work is planned to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, so that those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils are all stretched appropriately. The two ability sets for older pupils work very well and provide challenging work for both groups. Gifted mathematicians also benefit from very challenging work when withdrawn from the rest of the class. This is good practice, and enables these pupils to attain high standards in mathematical investigations.

92. An excellent lesson that illustrates these strengths saw Year 4 pupils start with a quick-fire multiplication tables session that had all involved in improving their skills. The teacher's infectious enthusiasm had pupils desperate to contribute, and she kept up the breathless pace by using encouragement such as, "Come on, you're on a roll – answer the next one quickly!" The lesson moved on to doubling, trebling and quadrupling numbers, and pupils were learning almost without realising that they were working. As soon as the teacher saw pupils were thinking mathematically, she moved quickly on to the next part of the lesson involving collecting data from graphs. The teacher did not want pupils to laboriously draw and colour graphs, because the lesson was about the range of information in graphs, so she swiftly gave them a cube the same colour as their eyes and made an 'instant' graph. In this way, pupils were soon looking at 'real' data and interpreting the information. The whole lesson was built around high quality teaching where pupils enjoyed learning and made excellent progress.

93. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is committed to the raising of standards, and knows how to do this. Importantly, the co-ordinator sets an excellent example by her own teaching. The teaching of mathematics is monitored regularly, and examples of good practice are shared with all staff. Pupils' national test results are analysed carefully and, where weaknesses are found, the planning of future lessons is amended to improve specific skills. This

leadership, and very good support from the headteacher and senior staff, account for significant improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in the standard of pupils' mental mathematics, provision for higher attaining pupils and the quality of investigational work. Assessment procedures are good, and are used very well to raise standards. Resources are good, and enable teachers to teach all aspects of the subject well.

SCIENCE

94. The findings of the inspection are that standards are above average in Year 2 and in Year 6. These findings are similar to the school's results in the most recent end of key stage national tests and assessments. However, they represent a significant improvement on the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection when standards were judged to be average. This improvement has come about because the school has adjusted the curriculum taught in the subject to match more closely the work the pupils need to have covered in order to reach higher standards in the tests. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and no differences in the achievement of boys and girls were seen during the inspection.

95. In Year 2, strong work was found in all aspects of the subject. The pupils can explain why investigative work did not turn out as they expected and why this was so. They have a clear understanding of the effects of friction on speed, know what living things need to stay healthy and why some materials are suited to specific purposes. In Year 6, work in all aspects of the subject is good. At the time of the last inspection, work in life processes and living things was considered to be unsatisfactory. Pupils show understanding of fair tests, make predictions based on their scientific knowledge and were able to draw conclusions from their work. They know the anatomy of plants and understand food chains and webs. The pupils can recognise different types of rocks and have, for example, carried out a test to find out how much air was contained in soil. In their work on floating and air resistance, the pupils show a clear understanding of gravity and up-thrust.

96. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good and there are examples of very good and excellent teaching. Teaching was also judged to be good during the school's last inspection. A good Year 1 lesson about what plants need to grow illustrated the general quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. The teacher started the lesson by discussing its objectives with the pupils. The pupils demonstrated their earlier learning well and clearly identified what plants needed to grow successfully. They listened attentively and responded well as the teacher explained the activity of planting and growing cress seeds. The pupils' knowledge of the parts of plants was carefully revised during this explanation. They observed the cress seeds closely and enthusiastically and offered some good descriptions of their appearance – "hairy". At this stage, the teacher questioned the pupils carefully about the objectives of the lesson. They showed clearly that they understood that some seeds were to be deprived of water or light and their growth was to be compared with others that had access to all the needs the pupils had identified earlier in the lesson. The pupils worked in three groups each of which was supported by an adult. The basic task was the same for all pupils but the detailed support given to those with special educational needs ensured that they also made good progress. The pupils worked well with their peers and adults which made a good contribution to their social development.

97. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable co-ordinator and has made a very good improvement since the school's last inspection. Assessment procedures have improved, management of the subject is stronger and the curriculum has been revised. These changes have caused standards to rise. The weaknesses in the pupils' progress and imbalances in curricular provision no longer exist. The subject is well resourced and the specialist science room enhances its teaching considerably. The provision of homework supports teaching and learning well. Literacy and numeracy skills are well used. For example, pupils produce lots of well-presented work of a good standard which involves factual writing and finding things out for themselves. Numeracy skills evident in their work in the subject include measurement, mass, averages and recording data in graphical form. The school has identified the further development of the use of information and communication technology and

investigative work in the subject as areas for development. The findings of the inspection support this but also found examples of good work using information and communication technology, particularly in Year 6. For example, Year 6 pupils demonstrated considerable skill in control technology during a science lesson. The further development of investigative science, although strong, is an appropriate priority in line with the school's policy of ensuring that it enables pupils to reach their full potential in the end of key stage tests. The school's environmental area is in an early stage of development and makes only a limited contribution to science. The subject makes a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual and moral development as they appreciate, for example, the reasons why frogs produce so much spawn and the purpose and impact of technology on the world.

ART AND DESIGN

98. In Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve average standards. This was also the judgement of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve similar standards to their mainstream classmates. Because of the way in which the timetable is organised it was not possible to see any teaching in Years 1 and 2. Judgements about standards and achievement in this key stage have been made following a scrutiny of previous work, class and school displays and of teachers' planning. Across the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

99. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are introduced to a sound range of tools and techniques in their work. For example, younger pupils use thick paint brushes and bright paints to produce pictures of their mummies, and chalk and charcoal to draw pictures of their houses. Paintings of the island of Struay showed a good attention to detail and the effective use of interesting wash-techniques. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 use art well to support their cross curricular work. For example, effective pencil and crayon work was used to decorate book covers for the recent celebration of World Book Day. Interesting work on textures and the art of different cultures was developed following the school's International Food Day festival. Older pupils, studying the work of Joseph Turner, have produced their own pictures in a similar style. These are effective and several are attractively displayed around the school.

100. The quality of teaching and learning across the school is satisfactory. No overall judgement on the quality of teaching was made at the last inspection. A scrutiny of teachers' planning in Years 1 and 2 indicates that pupils are provided with an appropriate range of tools and techniques. In the lessons observed in Years 3 to 6, teaching was satisfactory with some good features. Teachers organise interesting activities. For example, pupils in Year 5 were designing, decorating and making a small box container. This activity had good links with design and technology. The teacher had provided a good selection of other containers to widen pupils' awareness. Where teaching is good, teachers explain the techniques that pupils might use very carefully, ensure that pupils' self-esteem in their work is raised and provide regular and appropriate time limits for pupils to work to. These features positively influence pupils' learning and they remain committed to their work and are keen to do well. Pupils are prepared to try new things and they are keen to share their achievements with others. This was particularly observed in a lesson to pupils in Year 6 who were being encouraged to observe the proportions of the human body before making their own drawings of people.

101. Teachers are supported by a sound policy statement which has been appropriately revised since the introduction of Curriculum 2000. This includes a useful indication of the time to be spent on the subject across the school. A minor weakness is that there is insufficient guidance for teachers in planning for progression in specific skills, for example, in drawing and painting. As a result, the useful sketchbooks which pupils maintain throughout Years 3 to 6, do not show a tight and clear development of skills. Work is planned in units which largely follow those outlined in the nationally recommended scheme of work. The subject is co-ordinated satisfactorily by two teachers representing the two different key stages. Currently, pupils' work is assessed informally by each class teacher. The co-ordinators intend to introduce a more formal recorded system of assessing and recording the progress made by pupils. This procedure is detailed and thorough and is due to be implemented from September 2002. Interest in the subject is promoted well through the organisation of whole school art afternoons

during the summer term. During these, a wide range of activities is planned, which have included clay work, technical drawing, sewing, tie-dyeing and photography. These activities are supported well by parents and others from the local community. Pupils' work is satisfactorily displayed around the school. The use of information and communication technology supports the subject satisfactorily.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Pupils' work in design and technology is above average in Year 2, and average in Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 have benefited most from the co-ordinator's skills and her support of teachers. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and their work is sometimes among the best in the class. Across the school, pupils achievement in the subject is satisfactory.

103. Years 1 and 2 pupils make a good start in their model making and get an early feel for movement in their models, and accuracy in their building. They make good cranes with working winding mechanisms that they demonstrate with great pride. Most pupils handle simple tools confidently, although a few have difficulty using scissors accurately. They evaluate their models well, and make good improvements as they work. Their designs are good, and are illustrated well by useful labels to show the different parts.

104. In Year 6, pupils work well to gather information about a project, and generate a reasonable number of ideas. Their models of a shaduf, linked to their history topic on Ancient Egypt, show a good eye for detail, and sound making skills. Their designs are made more effective by including step-by-step sketches, and short statements of what they did at each stage. Their designs of slippers and finished products are of a good standard. Pupils evaluate their work at the end, but focus more on what they like about the model than its shortcomings. Pupils have good cookery skills, which benefit from the well-equipped cookery room and good support from parents.

105. It was not possible to see any lessons in Years 3 to 6, but the analysis of pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' planning is comprehensive, and gives appropriate attention to the development of pupils' skills. Teachers make very good links with other subjects, such as art, history, geography, music and science. This works well, giving a purpose to pupils' models of the River Nile valley, percussion musical instruments and Elizabethan cakes. A strength of the teaching is in the testing of pupils' models to see how well they work in practice. This was illustrated well in a Year 1 / 2 lesson when pupils tried lifting objects with their cranes to see if they would work on the Isle of Struay. Teachers generally have high expectations of pupils, but in Years 3 to 6, they give too few opportunities for pupils to work at open-ended projects. This has the result of most pupils reaching an expected standard, but few developing higher levels of skills. Teachers make useful assessments of pupils' progress, and use the digital camera very well to record creations.

106. A good scheme of work, based on national guidelines, provides useful guidance to teachers, and states clearly how pupils' skills should progress through the school. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has benefited from involvement in the local 'cluster' of schools. The co-ordinator supports colleagues well; she has raised the profile of the subject in the school, and is improving their confidence in the teaching of design and technology. This is a significant development since the previous inspection when the lack of a co-ordinator was affecting standards. The school has spent well on resources, and they provide good materials for all aspects of design and technology. Information and communication technology is used insufficiently to support this subject.

GEOGRAPHY

107. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe one lesson of geography. Judgements are based on this lesson, and on the analysis of pupils' work throughout the school, discussions with pupils and teachers and on the school's planning and records. The evidence indicates that standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. This is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection in Year 2 but represents an improvement in Year 6. This improvement is due to better

curricular planning and to the provision of more time to allow the pupils to record their work. Both of these features were judged to be weaknesses in Years 3 to 6 at the time of the school's last inspection. All pupils achieve well in this subject and there are no differences in the achievement of boys and girls.

108. In Year 2, pupils have knowledge of some features of Africa, for example, the Suez Canal and can name the countries of the United Kingdom. They have done in depth work on the fictional Isle of Struay including comparing the island with their own homes. The analysis of work showed some use of information and communication technology and of fieldwork as pupils in Years 1 and 2 took part in their residential visit to Ellesborough where mapping and land use studies were important elements. There were also good links with art. The analysis of work in Years 3 to 6 shows a broad cover of well-presented work. Topics covered included factual and imaginative writing about features of human and physical geography, for example, about Paris and the Sahara, during a round the world trip by balloon. Additionally, work included features of rivers and a comparison between villages in India and the United Kingdom which makes a good contribution to the pupils' social development. Years 3 to 6 have undertaken good work about the redevelopment of a local cement works which supports the pupils' moral development and their understanding of the environment very well. However, this work is not currently a regular part of the curriculum although the co-ordinator plans to modify curricular provision to incorporate it. Throughout the school, the progressive development of map work is a weaker area in the subject.

109. The analysis of work in Years 1 and 2 showed good amounts of well-presented work which indicates good quality teaching and learning and good application of literacy skills. Good expectations of the pupils by the teachers were indicated as was a good knowledge of the subject. The quantity and quality of pupils' work indicated a good response to the teaching. The work was wide ranging and developed progressively. No judgement about teaching in Years 1 and 2 was made during the school's last inspection.

110. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 is good. This was exemplified by the lesson about Milton Keynes seen in Year 5. The lesson began with the teacher revising the work previously covered. The pupils and the teacher's plans showed that they had found out information about their own area, for example, by using the Internet and asking their parents. It was also evident that they had classified this information well. Milton Keynes was located in an atlas during which the pupils showed that they understood both simple map references and some points of the compass. They also showed an ability to use simple scales as they measured and converted the distance between London and Birmingham. Pupils with special educational needs received good support which helped them to match the progress made by other pupils during this and other activities in the lesson. The pupils also used bus and train timetables to plan a journey between Pitstone and Milton Keynes. These activities were good applications of their numeracy skills. The pupils then watched a good video about Milton Keynes which gave them a clear insight into its history, development and purpose as preparation for visiting the town. The lesson concluded with a good discussion of similarities and differences between Milton Keynes and the pupils' local area as well as the setting of suitable homework. The pupils made good progress in this lesson which was lively, well structured, knowledgeable and to which they contributed well, behaved well and worked hard. No clear judgement was made about teaching in Years 3 to 6 by the school's last inspection as it was said to be "satisfactory or better". The marking of pupils' work seen was largely praise and correction and did very little to help them to improve.

111. The subject is well managed by an experienced co-ordinator and has improved very well since the last inspection. Standards have improved in Years 3 to 6. Pupils now record ample work, the curriculum is well structured, management is good not unsatisfactory, and a good number of visits, including two residential visits, take place. Additionally, the subject now makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development. This is shown by the school's international day during which, for

example, pupils used information and communication technology to find information about other countries and to produce topic books which recorded their findings. Information and communication technology also supports cultural development well through the Year 6 link with a school in Japan. Assessment procedures and resources in the subject are satisfactory although some maps and atlases are out-of-date. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work but has not had the opportunity to undertake direct observation of teaching and learning.

HISTORY

112. In Year 2 and Year 6, standards in history are above average. This judgement shows similar standards to those reported in the previous inspection in Year 2, and an improvement on the average standards found before in Year 6. Given their average knowledge and understanding of the world on entry to the school, pupils achieve well. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and benefit from good support from learning assistants. High attaining pupils achieve well, and benefit from the school's interesting selection of computer programs to aid their independent research. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when this group of pupils were not challenged sufficiently.

113. Year 2 pupils show good early research skills, and have a well-developed sense of chronology for their age. They are good at using vocabulary indicating an awareness of the passing of time, and at discussing some of the ways in which objects, such as toy cars, can be 'old' and 'new'. They show a good understanding of conditions in the time of the Great Fire of London, and make perceptive attempts at writing diaries in the style of Samuel Pepys.

114. Year 6 pupils have a good depth of factual knowledge and understanding of Ancient Egypt, Ancient Greece and Tudor times. They have a clear insight into the way that people lived at different periods and the important events that shaped their lives. They use their literacy skills well to write in depth about the differences in farming techniques in Ancient Egypt compared with today, and this represents a good improvement from the last inspection when pupils' writing in history was weak. Pupils make good use of the Internet to research their topics, and this adds much to their depth of knowledge about history, and about different sources. Pupils pick out important social issues in Victorian times, and show a deep understanding of the difficult lives of many children at that time.

115. The quality of teaching and of pupils' learning in history is good. Throughout the school, teachers show confidence in teaching the subject, use suitable vocabulary, focus well on historical skills and have high expectations of all groups of pupils. This was exemplified in a Year 3 lesson when the teacher insisted that pupils always use appropriate vocabulary, and pupils responded very well by using terms such as 'primary sources' and 'evidence' appropriately. These qualities give pupils a thorough knowledge of history, and challenge all of them to produce their best work. A strength of the teaching of history that has a big impact on pupils' learning is the use of local historical sites. Pupils' work, for example, on the nearby cement works followed a visit by those in Years 4, 5 and 6 to the site. The excellent work that resulted showed that pupils gained a great deal from first hand experience of an important part of this community's past.

116. A good policy supports the teaching of the subject well, and the school makes good use of the units of work in the nationally recommended curriculum guidelines. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future development of history in the school, and this is an improvement from the last inspection when there was no co-ordinator for history. The good support provided by the co-ordinator has enabled the school to raise standards, and give pupils more experience of history around them. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, and give a sound picture of pupils' skills and progress. Curricular provision is also enriched by visits to local historical sites such as the water mill and windmill. There are good links with other subjects when pupils make shadufs out of wood in design and technology and paint 'Egyptian' pictures in art and design.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. In Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve above average standards. This has maintained a strength at Key Stage 1 which was recognised at the last inspection, and represents good improvement at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to other pupils. Good overall progress has been achieved as a result of the effective and imaginative use of strategic resourcing for the subject and the confident and enthusiastic way in which all staff have used the new equipment.

118. Across the school, pupils' achievement is good. As they move through the school pupils' word processing skills are developed well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use word processing skills to write and display their news, whilst pupils in Years 3 to 6 extend their use of these facilities as they write and print their poems on 'What is Green', and publish their spaceman stories. An important achievement is the confidence with which pupils access and use the Internet. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 find and print maps and other information about their work on the island of Struay and pupils in Years 3 to 6 use the Internet confidently to access data for their history and geography projects. For example, their booklets on The Victorians contain copies of Internet research into, for example, the life of Dr Barnardo, the scourge of cholera and details of the Boer War. They are well presented and attractive. Older pupils' work in using control mechanisms is good. This represents an improvement since the last inspection when this aspect of the subject was underdeveloped. Pupils in Year 6 confidently devise programs which switch lights on and off according to a predetermined sequence, using commands such as procedure, repeat and toggle. Older pupils use e-mail facilities confidently. During the inspection, groups of pupils in Year 6 were sending and receiving e-mails from Year 4 pupils while taking part in a 'find out who I am' game. A further achievement across the school is the use of information and communication technology to record and analyse data. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 collect information about members of the class and compile an 'about me' database. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make spreadsheets showing the temperature recorded at different parts of the school.

119. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection except that teaching at Key Stage 1 was judged to have been very good. The quality of teaching and learning in the single lesson seen in Year 2 was also very good. In this lesson, where pupils were designing a poster to attract animals to Noah's ark, the teacher used the new equipment, including the interactive whiteboard confidently and was enthusiastic and knowledgeable in her approach. Her lesson planning included specific objectives and activities and included important links with other subjects. Pupils were guided carefully through the stages of the lesson and made important gains in their understanding and use of pictures and text. In Years 3 to 6, teachers build well on pupils' existing skills. They re-cap on their previous learning and introduce and reinforce new vocabulary well. A strength in teaching is the co-operation between the teachers and teaching assistants or the parent helpers who work in the school. These are well prepared and related to all pupils very well. While pupils are working on their own computers the adults in the class move well around the groups giving support and encouragement. This adds positively to the quality of pupils' learning. Minor shortcomings are when teachers do not identify the specific information and communication technology skills that are being developed in the lesson and where pupils' lack of knowledge in another subject, for example in telling the time, limits their capacity to use their computers successfully.

120. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator's work to secure and maximise the use of recent funding has been especially effective. By judicious and imaginative use of grant allocations and commercial donations the school has managed to provide an excellent level of resourcing. There is a fully equipped computer suite with an interactive whiteboard, other classes have their own computers and several have banks of machines which are shared with the neighbouring class. A strong feature of the school is the way in which the networking and linking of several of the class computers to the computers suite means that work done in one area can be simply transferred to work in another. This is good practice. Planning based on the nationally recommended scheme of work is secure. It ensures that concepts and skills are taught progressively

across the school. Assessment procedures are good. Pupils' achievement at the end of each unit is assessed and some of these are matched against National Curriculum criteria. There is an impressive whole school commitment by teachers and pupils to information and communication technology. Further interest is generated by the after school club through which pupils are able to pursue other uses of the computer, such as in PowerPoint presentations.

MUSIC

121. Pupils reach average standards in Year 2 and but below average standards in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs attain similar standards. At the previous OFSTED inspection, the development of pupils' skills was judged to have been satisfactory at both key stages but there were too few opportunities for pupils to listen to and appraise a range of music. This remains the situation. The school has a good range of peripatetic music specialists, who offer opportunities for approximately 25 pupils to learn to play the piano, the flute, the clarinet and the guitar.

122. Opportunities for pupils to develop their performance skills through singing are addressed appropriately at both key stages, through, for example, the school's musical productions, assemblies, the school choir and in class. These were illustrated in an assembly where Year 2 pupils sang 'Noah built an ark' accompanied by the rhythmic actions of the whole assembly. Across the school, pupils sing with enthusiasm and enjoyment maintaining the melody effectively. All pupils follow the instructions of a conductor to bring them into the actions at the appropriate time, showing they can follow a measured beat and regular rhythm. All pupils in Year 2 have the opportunity to play the recorder and to take part in a recorder club in Year 3. Older pupils sing in assembly with a secure understanding of rhythm and most are able to follow a melody line tunefully. In their school productions, the most recent being a performance of 'Cinderella', pupils' performance skills were enhanced by the skills of a visiting music specialist. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are building their skills satisfactorily but the limitations of the school's previous scheme of work, noted in the last inspection, have narrowed the opportunities for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to build an appropriate range of musical experiences. These older pupils are not achieving satisfactorily.

123. Across the school, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. At the previous inspection teaching was satisfactory across the school. In the lessons observed, the quality of teaching and learning was at least satisfactory but with some good features. In the good lesson seen in Year 3, pupils were developing their awareness of rhythm through traditional clapping games. The teacher used her secure subject knowledge to encourage pupils to show that they could identify what made a song successful. They discussed features such as, a 'catchy' tune and repeated lines and rhythms. The teacher's effective organisation and good pace ensured that all pupils were well involved in performing a range of clapping games. Both boys and girls were used well to demonstrate their techniques and, by the end of the lesson, all pupils had made good progress in sustaining different rhythms in their clapping. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 and the lesson observed indicate that teaching and learning in lessons are generally satisfactory. However, the development of both the range of music to which they listen and pupils' abilities to talk and write about features of music, have not been progressively developed. Similarly the range of opportunities to construct their own compositions and to record, evaluate and improve their work have also been more limited. These shortcomings make the quality of teaching and learning unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

124. The co-ordinator for the subject has a secure understanding of her role and is herself a good practitioner. Some monitoring of teaching has taken place in the subject and she provides a good level of informal support and discussion. The school is currently trialling some units from the nationally recommended scheme of work and this is beginning to provide a wider range of experiences than the narrow scheme previously used. However, these new units have not had sufficient time to have an impact on the skills and understanding of older pupils in the school. The process of assessing pupils' attainment against the requirements of the new scheme of work has not begun. There are no formal systems for assessing pupils' attainment or measuring and recording the progress they make.

Resources in the subject are satisfactory but the school has rightly recognised the need to develop further the range of recorded music in both western and other cultures to meet the requirements of the new scheme of work. Information and communication technology is used insufficiently in this subject. Provision is enhanced by the support of visiting specialists and by the recorder club and choir, which the school organises. During the International Food Day, pupils were able to listen to and watch a steel band from a visiting secondary school and an Indian dancing group. These opportunities enhance their own experiences and skills well. The whole school shares in these experiences in concerts organised for both parents and pupils. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' social development and a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Pupils reach above average standards in physical education in both Year 2 and Year 6. This is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection in Year 2 but represents an improvement in Year 6. This improvement is due to refinements in the school's scheme of work for the subject. In Years 1 and 2, it was only possible to observe dance during the inspection. These observations showed that the pupils produced some good short dance sequences in which they selected and applied key dance techniques and developed their ideas well. There was little evidence that pupils understood the basic effects that exercise has on the body. In Years 3 to 6, the pupils showed good throwing and catching skills, good levels of imagination and creativity when creating dance movements linked to their work in geography and appropriate co-ordination and control when travelling on the floor or apparatus in gymnastics. The school's records show that most pupils are able to swim for at least 25 metres safely and unaided in Year 6. A strength of the pupils' performance in Years 3 to 6 is the way in which they select and apply skills when given a task to perform. However, their skills in evaluating and improving their own and others' performances are underdeveloped.

126. All pupils achieve well and there are no differences in the achievement of boys or girls. Pupils with special educational needs normally take a full part in lessons without the need for additional support. However, when support is necessary, for example, in the case of a child with behavioural difficulties, it is good and supports the pupils well.

127. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. This is the same judgement as that made by the school's last inspection and the good attention to safety noted by that inspection is also still in place. The good quality of the teaching and learning throughout the school was exemplified by a Year 3 gymnastics lesson. This lesson began promptly so that no time was wasted with a very energetic warm up. This gave it a good impetus to which the pupils responded well. The teacher ensured that the pupils understood the need to warm up and how exercise influenced their bodies, for example, the rate of their heart beat. The teacher emphasised the need for safety and to control and develop technique and movement. The pupils demonstrated their understanding well as they ran and jumped in varied ways and concentrated on improving their landings. Pupils demonstrated their work but their evaluative skills were not fully developed. They set out the apparatus well which assisted their social development as they worked together very effectively. The pupils worked hard both physically and mentally when they were given the opportunity to select a piece of apparatus and devise movements which they thought would develop their jumping and balancing skills. There was a good discussion of safety, co-operation and a focus for further improvement at the end of the lesson.

128. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who, for example, produces a termly report on the subject. There has been a good improvement in physical education since the school's last inspection as standards have risen in Years 3 to 6. The subject is well resourced and benefits from a good-sized field, a hall which has a new non-slip floor and a learner swimming pool which is heated. The hard surfaced area available to the school is less generous but is adequate as its use is well managed. Assessment procedures are sound. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities such as football and netball and takes part in competitive fixtures with other schools in these sports. Through its display of dance on May Day, which includes pupils dancing

around the Maypole, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' cultural development and links with the community. However, there is no formal action plan for the improvement of physical education and no time has been available for the co-ordinator to observe teaching and learning. No use of information and communication technology was observed during the inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

129. In Year 2, pupils' knowledge and understanding are above those required by the locally Agreed Syllabus and in Year 6 they meet the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards met the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs are well involved in lessons and their rate of progress is similar to other pupils in the class because they receive effective support from both their teachers and the learning support assistants. The school has a caring ethos, which encourages pupils to respect the ideas and opinions of others.

130. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and they achieve well. This is because the teaching is good and expectations of pupils' responses are high. Pupils have a good appreciation of important aspects of the Jewish religion and of Christianity. They have an understanding of the person of Jesus and know he was a Jew and that he was God's special messenger. They have a good understanding of stories from the Old Testament. For example, they know details of the life of Noah, including the precise measurement of the ark in cubits! They appreciate aspects of the Jewish religion such as the importance of the kippah, the Torah and that Jewish people speak Hebrew.

131. In Years 3 to 6, pupils develop a sound appreciation of the elements of world faiths. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are developing their understanding of traditions and beliefs of the Hinduism. Other pupils learn about aspects of the Islamic faith and make simple comparisons with symbols used by others. In Year 4, there is a good emphasis on a range of stories from the Old Testament and some of the parables of Jesus. However, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to explore spiritual and moral issues and their own responses in depth and to make more productive links with their work in literacy. This issue was also identified in the school's previous inspection.

132. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 1 and 2. Teachers are well prepared, plan well and show empathy for the subject. Lessons are introduced clearly and the focus of the lesson is well established through the teacher's good use of questions to pupils. Teachers use interesting and challenging resources, and these, combined with the teachers' skilful explanations, encourage pupils to want to know more about the topic. Teachers value all pupils' contributions and this gives them confidence to contribute their ideas even when they are not certain whether they are right.

133. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and work covers the elements of the Agreed Syllabus appropriately. This is shown in both the lessons seen and in pupils' recorded work. However, the depth and detail expected of older pupils' oral and written responses are sometimes too limited for them to achieve higher standards. They explore their personal responses to events such as the school pantomime, the work of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and the visit of the Imam from a local mosque. In their work group projects, they explore their knowledge of aspects of the Muslim faith in appropriate detail, sometimes using information and communication technology effectively.

134. The co-ordinator is new to the role and is developing her understanding appropriately. She has monitored teachers' planning and pupils' work to ensure that the requirements of the school's scheme of work are met. However, there has been no opportunity for her to monitoring class teaching. The school's planned curriculum follows the guidance of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and planning indicates the coverage of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The curriculum is enhanced by such events as the school's International Day when the traditions and beliefs of countries representing the major faiths of the world were celebrated and discussed. There are visits from members of the local

clergy and the school has organised visits from a local representative from the Islamic faith. There is no formal system of assessment in the subject because the school believes that religious education is a subject which pupils experience rather than one in which they are formally graded. However, teachers do monitor pupils' responses informally against the objectives identified in their planning. Resources in the subject are satisfactory and well supplemented by the resources of the local education authority's multicultural centre. The subject makes an appropriate contribution to pupils' spiritual development and a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.