

INSPECTION REPORT

EATON MILL COMBINED SCHOOL

Bletchley

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110262

Headteacher: Mrs M Pawley

Reporting inspector: Mr D Byrne
28076

Dates of inspection: 4th-7th December 2000

Inspection number: 224581

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First/Middle
School category:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 - 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Saffron Street Bletchley Milton Keynes
Postcode:	MK2 3AH
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Jane Williams
Date of previous inspection:	27-30 April 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr D Byrne 28076	Registered Inspector	Science Design and technology Equal Opportunities	The school's results and achievements Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well are pupils taught? What could the school do to improve further? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr R Miller 9619	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Ms S Russam 10228	Team Inspector	Art and design History Music Special educational needs	
Mrs A Wilkinson-Tilbrook 10068	Team Inspector	Foundation Stage Information and communication technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr D Carpenter 31807	Team Inspector	English Geography Modern Foreign Languages Physical education English as an Additional Language	
Mr K Heakin 27835	Team Inspector	Mathematics Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in East Bletchley in the Southern part of Milton Keynes. Children are admitted to the Reception class in the term they are five, and there are three intakes a year. Most pupils start school in the Reception class with standards that are below average. There are currently 298 pupils aged from four to twelve. Pupil mobility is high, with just over 17% of the school's population changing each year. The percentage eligible for free school meals is slightly above the national average at 24% of the school population. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is high at 27% of pupils on roll. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority groups is low. Four pupils are identified as needing English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that is rapidly improving. Standards in mathematics, science and English are close to the national average for seven and eleven year olds. The quality of teaching is very good for children in the foundation stage and in Years 1 to 7 it is good overall. The curriculum meets the needs of the wide range of pupils. The head teacher and senior management team work together well to effectively manage the school. The accommodation is of a good standard and is very effectively used. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Rapid progress is being made in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is good overall for all pupils in English, mathematics and science.
- Teaching for children in the foundation stage is very good.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to school life and to lessons.
- Very good assessment procedures are used well to monitor pupils' progress.
- The head teacher and senior management team provide firm management and direction for the school.
- The procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are good.
- The accommodation is of a good quality and is well used and maintained.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology.
- The rate of attendance, and procedures for monitoring absence.
- Some aspects of the school improvement planning system
- The involvement of parents in school life.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since the last inspection in 1998. Standards are much better across the school with the exception of information and communication technology. The quality of teaching has improved and is good overall. Gaps in the curriculum have been filled so that each subject is regularly taught for an appropriate amount of time. Very good procedures have been implemented for tracking pupils' progress and good use is made of assessment data to help to plan work that matches pupils' needs. The quality of the senior management team is much better and it has a positive impact upon monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. Resources have been improved in information and communication technology. The strong leadership and good quality of teaching offers good capacity for continued development in the future.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	1999
English	C	E	E	E
mathematics	D	D	C	B
science	C	D	C	C

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

The table shows that pupils' performance in mathematics by the age of eleven is better than that in similar schools, close to the average for similar schools in science but below the average for similar schools in English. When results are compared to all schools nationally, results were well below those nationally in English, but close to the national average in mathematics and science. The inspection findings are that standards are rising rapidly, especially in English and mathematics. Standards are now close to the national average by the time pupils are seven and eleven years old and pupils are doing as well as they can. Overall attainment varies from year to year because of high levels of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. For example, a third of pupils in Year 3 require additional support for learning.

By the ages of seven and eleven, pupils achieve standards that are close to national expectations in art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education. In geography, pupils do well and exceed expectations for their age. Despite recent progress in information and communication technology, standards do not yet match national expectations. Standards in religious education match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils, including higher attainers and those with learning difficulties, make good progress from a low level of attainment when they start school.

When children start school in the Reception class, they have particularly low levels of attainment in terms of language and communication and in mathematical development. Children in the foundation stage make good and often very good progress so that by the time they are ready to begin Year 1 the children are achieving well and likely to achieve all the early learning goals with the exception of writing.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to lessons. In Years 2, 5 and 6 in particular, pupils enjoy learning and respond well to challenging work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is nearly always good during lessons. Outdoors, pupils are energetic but well behaved.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good overall and very good in the foundation stage. Pupils aged 4-11 contribute well to a their own learning and are helpful and co-operative. In Year 7, opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of responsibility are more limited.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory. It is below the national average and the rate of authorised absence is above national average. A high proportion of pupils take holidays during term time. This adversely affects the progress of these pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years	Aged 11-12 years
67 lessons seen overall	Very Good	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 is much better than at the time of the last inspection. It is now good overall and in many of the lessons seen during the inspection it was very good or excellent. During the inspection, 34% of lessons were very good or better, 39% was good and 23% satisfactory. 4% of lessons were unsatisfactory. Particular improvements have occurred in the teaching of both literacy and numeracy. Pupils are expected to work hard, and to achieve good standards for their work. Teachers know their pupils well and use this knowledge to make sure that both higher attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties are given work that matches their needs. Lessons are well organised and managed and good relationships between teachers, support staff and pupils ensures that that pupils make good progress in most lessons. Homework is used effectively to extend pupils' learning and offer opportunities for parents to help their child at home.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Children in the Reception class experience a very good curriculum. A suitable and broad range of subjects is taught to all pupils aged 5 to twelve. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have both been implemented successfully and rapid developments have occurred in information and communication technology. Pupils' personal and social education is well provided for.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development but not enough thought is given to developing pupils' awareness and understanding of the diversity of local cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a safe and caring environment for all pupils. Health and safety procedures are fully in place and child protection systems are effective. Procedures for monitoring attendance and absence are unsatisfactory.
How well the school works with parents and carers.	The school tries very hard to communicate with parents. A good range of activities is provided throughout the year to keep parents informed about their child's progress. Very few parents, however, get involved in the school and this reduces the impact they could have upon the education of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher and staff have worked very hard to successfully improve the standards in the school in most subjects. The weaknesses identified in the previous report have been rectified.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is supportive of the school but is very dependent upon the leadership offered by the head teacher and it could become more involved in some aspects of school management.
The school's evaluation of its performance	All data from end of key stage National Curriculum tests are carefully analysed so that improvements in teaching can be made. All staff honestly evaluate the impact of what they do and consider they might improve further.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is carefully allocated to ensure schools priorities are funded. Staffing is generous. Teachers are well deployed but the deployment of some support staff could be more effective.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.	Pupils benefit from being taught by suitably qualified and experienced teaching and support staff. The accommodation is very well used and maintained. Resources are adequate for teaching all subjects and are carefully stored and looked after.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The way their children like school.• The good progress their children make.• The good quality of teaching and leadership of the school.• The behaviour and attitudes promoted.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The way in which the school works with parents.• The range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspection findings confirm the parent's positive views of the school. The provision of extra-curricular activities has been limited until recently but has now improved. The school tries very hard to involve parents in school life but many choose not to become involved. The school needs to continue to seek ways of involving parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The results of the 2000 baseline assessments carried out soon after the children join the Reception class show that the children start school at a low level, especially in terms of their language and mathematical development. The inspection findings indicate that because of very good teaching, children make good progress in the Reception class, and by the time they start Year 1, they are attaining the early learning goals expected for their age in each aspect of their learning, except in writing.
2. The school's 2000 end of key stage National Curriculum tests for seven year olds show that pupils' performance in reading, writing, mathematics and science is well below the national average and well below the average when compared to similar schools. Over a third of the pupils in the class who took the tests have special educational needs and this is a major factor contributing to the poor results. Over the last four years, standards have been consistently low but the impact of better teaching and improved subject management is resulting in rapidly rising attainment. Inspection findings indicate that pupils in the current Year 2 class are making good progress and achieve standards that are close to national expectations for seven year olds in reading, writing, mathematics and science. A significant minority of pupils have difficulty expressing themselves when speaking but their listening skills are good.
3. In writing, seven year olds are competent at writing legibly using a fluent, linked style. Pupils correctly use sentences using full stops and capital letters and are beginning to make good use of interesting words to bring their writing alive. By recording work in subjects such as science, pupils learn to write factually as well as imaginatively. Pupils make particularly good progress in Year 2, where the quality of teaching is good. In mathematics, pupils make good progress in their understanding and application of number and develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the value of numbers up to twenty and beyond. They learn to add and subtract numbers and are beginning to multiply and divide by sharing numbers. A comparative weakness is in the pupils' problem solving skills. In science, pupils are developing satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and their properties and the way things move and how sounds and light are made.
4. The progress of pupils between Years 3 and 6 has improved rapidly since the last inspection. Over the last five years, the school's end of key stage National Curriculum tests has improved at faster rate than the average improvement nationally. The results for year 2000 show that standards in mathematics and science are close to the national average but well below average in English. When the results pupils attained in Year 2000 are compared to similar schools, pupils are doing better than other schools in mathematics and as well as other schools in science, but below the average in English. The reason why English has lagged behind other subjects in its rate of improvement is that the co-ordinator has only been in post for four terms and the impact of the current very good management of the subject is only just being seen. Inspection findings indicate that standards in English are now rising rapidly. The inspection findings indicate that standards in English are currently close to the national average and the difference between the standards in English and mathematics and science is narrowing.
5. The rapid progress made in raising standards is a direct result of improvements in teaching in each subject and very good subject management by co-ordinators.

Lessons are better organised and planned so that higher attaining pupils and lower attaining pupils are identified and given work that matches their ability. The quality of teaching is also regularly checked and areas for further improvements are identified.

6. In other subjects, pupils make good progress and reach the expected standards for their age in art and design, design and technology, history, music and physical education. In religious education pupils reach the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In geography, pupils do better than normally expected nationally for both seven and eleven year olds. Standards in information and communication technology are below the expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. Resources have improved greatly and more time is now spent on teaching information and communication technology but these initiatives have not yet had sufficient impact upon standards.
7. Pupils in Year 7, who were falling below average in their passage through Key Stages 1 and 2, are now well on track to be in line with expectations by the time they transfer to their secondary schools and are currently making good progress.
8. The school has a higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The percentage varies from year group to year group and in some years the impact of these pupils upon standards is greater than others. This accounts for the way the school's targets for each year group vary from one year to the next. Current targets for pupils achieving level 4 or above are well matched to the ability of pupils. The school's programme of support for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. It is effectively organised to identify pupils who need additional help in class. This ensures they make similar progress to that of their classmates. Arrangements for supporting pupils who have statements of special educational needs are very effective and ensure they attain standards that are in line with their prior achievements.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour is good overall both during lessons and outside during play. This view is supported by the vast majority of parents who see the school as being a well organised and orderly community. Most pupils like school and develop self-confidence and a sense of pride in their work. They willingly help each other, their teachers and other adults and usually enjoy their lessons. Pupils throughout the school are polite and respectful of others and make every effort to be helpful. There are some occasions, however, when a small minority of pupils in Year 7 are boisterous and insolent and this disrupts the education of other pupils in their class.
10. Children in the Reception class respond with enormous enthusiasm to the very good teaching and show boundless energy and enjoyment of learning. They rapidly acquire good attitudes to school and learn that lessons can be fun. This enthusiasm is maintained throughout the school except on the rare occasions where lessons lack clear purpose. Pupils across the school develop good attitudes to work and most lessons are epitomised by a quiet and industrious working atmosphere. Pupils develop a good tolerance for and understanding of each other's lives and there is no evidence of racist or aggressive behaviour.
11. Good behaviour is successfully promoted through a number of strategies. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and successfully combine a professional relationship with a friendly but firm manner. Pupils have been involved in devising sets of class rules. Teachers use praise to help pupils develop good levels of self-esteem.

Bullying is not a feature of the school. If incidents of behaviour become unacceptable, the head teacher acts to reduce the impact upon the majority of other pupils. There has been one fixed period exclusion in the last twelve months.

12. Pupils generally have good levels of independence and share in organising their activities during lessons. A range of duties are undertaken by older pupils, for example, helping to take out and put away resources for whole school assemblies and acting as receptionists at the main entrance during lunchtimes. Opportunities are not, however, fully exploited for pupils in Year 7 to be involved in decisions which affect the management of the school. Their views are not formally listened to through systems such as a school council or consultations during the school improvement planning process. The lack of recognition and status of older pupils in these ways lowers their ability to develop a sense of citizenship.
13. Attendance in the school is below average and the rate of unauthorised absence is above the national average. A high proportion of pupils take holidays during term time and this reduces the progress that these pupils make.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching is much better than it was at the time of the last inspection. A predominantly new teaching force offers pupils good standards of teaching. Teachers are hardworking and committed to raising the standards in the school and have successfully produced rapid improvements in the progress and attainment of pupils across the school. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good or better in 34% lessons, good in 39% of lessons, satisfactory in 23% of lessons and unsatisfactory in 4% of lessons. The unsatisfactory teaching was due to an insecurity in the knowledge of some teachers and the management of pupils when using the information and communication technology suite in particular.
15. Across the school, lessons are well planned, meticulously organised and well managed. Both higher attaining pupils and those who have difficulties with their learning are supported well and given work that is suitable to their needs. Most lessons have good pace and the good relationships that exist between the teachers and the pupils help to maintain good behaviour during lessons and an industrious, working environment. Teachers have worked hard to successfully implement the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Good subject knowledge makes sure that pupils are taught well in these subjects and this is having a direct impact upon standards. Progress and attainment in each subject has improved rapidly since the last inspection and is being maintained. In science, teaching is good overall, although teachers' subject knowledge varies. Science teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6 and this contributes to markedly increased progress in these classes. Teachers are not familiar with the best ways of using information and communication technology across the school and this is a key factor contributing to low standards in this subject. In all other subjects, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and, where there are strengths or weaknesses, teachers honestly recognise this and help each other out so that pupils are taught well. The subject knowledge of the co-ordinator for music is good and helps pupils to make good progress in lessons which she leads. The grouping of pupils by ability helps to provide suitable work for the wide range of abilities. This is especially the case in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 7 and contributes to improving standards.
16. Children in the Reception class are taught very well. They are provided with a wide range of exciting and relevant activities that challenge and extend the children's levels

of attainment, which are low when they start school. Good teamwork between the class teacher and classroom assistant makes sure that children are always occupied and learning. Children make good progress in each aspect of their education as a result of the good levels of guidance and support of the teaching and support staff.

17. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good overall and at times excellent. Very good use is made of planning so that lessons have a clear purpose and structure. Teachers know their pupils well and good use is made of the grouping of pupils so that work is provided to match their ability. Where pupils need extra support because they find learning difficult, classroom assistants work effectively with the class-teachers to provide this. There are times, however, when support staff are not involved, for example, at the beginning of numeracy lessons and during information and communication technology sessions. Four pupils require support for English as an Additional Language and they are given satisfactory levels of support.
18. Pupils in Key Stage 2 (aged 7 to 11) and in Year 7 are also taught well. Teachers share their enthusiasm for teaching and where this occurs pupils learn rapidly and are totally involved in their work. During a history lesson, very good teaching of pupils in Years 3 and 4 enthused and excited pupils so much that their level of understanding of aspects of the Greek wars with the Persians far exceeded those normally found for pupils of this age. At times, teachers successfully link subjects together so that pupils learn to apply their knowledge skills to new situations. For example, in science, well-organised tasks associated with gathering evidence on the impact of exercise on breathing successfully applied skills of mathematical measurement and recording. Pupils also used the computer to represent data gathered from the work.
19. Support in whole class lessons for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. It enables pupils to participate fully and with confidence in all learning tasks. Trained learning support staff are particularly effective and make a valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning as seen in a Year 3/4 music lesson. Good use is usually made of individual education plans to inform teachers' planning, although occasionally not enough attention is given to planning for individual targets.
20. The information gathered from the very good assessment procedures is analysed and carefully evaluated by teachers to find ways of making their teaching even better. The quality of marking is good across the school and pupils benefit from the encouraging diagnostic comments and the setting of targets. Good use of additional work at home extends pupils' learning and provides opportunities for parents to support their children at home if they wish to get involved.

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

21. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and meets statutory requirements. Each pupil, regardless of gender or ability, has equal access to the curriculum. Teachers effectively adapt the planned curriculum to match the needs of pupils with English as an Additional Language.
22. Children in the Reception class are given a very good curriculum that matches the requirements of the foundation stage of education. They are given a range of exciting and stimulating activities that help them to develop their language and communication skills, their mathematical development, their creative and physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Many good opportunities are provided to successfully develop children's personal and social development. Pupils aged seven

to eleven are provided with well-planned and organised programmes of work that enable them to learn every subject appropriate to their age. In Year 7, the planned programme is adapted to meet the pupils' needs and includes French. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented and make a significant contribution to the improving standards in each of these subjects. Standards in religious education are now better because pupils are taught all elements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. An appropriate amount of time is now given to information and communication technology.

23. The provision for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties is satisfactory. The school provides a suitable range of support to meet the various needs of individual pupils. The school ensures that the provision outlined in pupils' statements is very effectively met and progress is reviewed annually in line with Code of Practice recommendations. Higher attaining pupils are provided with appropriate programmes of work set by class-teachers.
24. Parents expressed concern about the range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils. This was a weakness in the last inspection but improvements have taken place and a satisfactory range of activities is now available, including clubs for reading, science, and information communication technology, cross-stitch, and musical and sporting activities.
25. A personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils develop a suitable knowledge and understanding of issues such as personal health, hygiene and healthy living. Health and safety issues are raised for discussion with pupils when they visit a nearby safety education centre. Issues such as drugs education and sex education are included at appropriate points in the pupils' education. In Key Stage 3, pupils are provided with adequate opportunities for developing their knowledge of citizenship.
26. Links with the local community are satisfactory and enhance the classroom activities given to pupils. Visits are planned to places of local interest, for example, a local art gallery and sculpture park and, in Year 1 and 2, a nearby play area to find out about the way things move as part of a science topic. Occasionally pupils take part in regional events, for example, Science Fairs and competitions. Theatre groups have also visited school to perform science linked plays. The choir is involved in the local music festival and instrumentalists take part in a woodwind festival. Although pupils in Key Stage 1 and 2 do not make residential visits, there is an annual field trip to Normandy for pupils in Key Stage 3. Good links exist with other local primary schools and this helps teachers to give even better support to their pupils. Links with local commerce and industry are weak.
27. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been maintained since the last inspection and is satisfactory overall. A satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils spiritual development are provided especially as part of Acts of Collective worship through prayer times. More opportunities, however, could be provided for pupils to develop a sense of spirituality in subjects such as art and music. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' social development. Lessons are frequently structured so that pupils work together in pairs or small groups. Pupils have writing partners in English and in other lessons, such as science, they frequently work very effectively in groups. These experiences give pupils the chance to learn to tolerate others and to share ideas and resources. As part of a design and technology activity, pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked with younger pupils to invent and create some intriguing games to help their mathematics. These pupils also have the opportunity to develop their social links by visiting Normandy with pupils from another school. Pupils'

moral development is satisfactorily promoted through a variety of approaches within the day-to-day organisation of the school. By devising their own sets of school rules, pupils develop a sense of the need for social order. Teachers reinforce this by using well targeted reward systems for desirable behaviour and academic performance. During discussions in lessons, such as English, science and history, pupils are encouraged to discuss issues that present moral dilemmas.

28. Overall, pupils' cultural development is satisfactorily planned. Visits to local places of interest, such as the art gallery, taking part in musical events and studies in art, music, geography and history contribute to this development. Religious education contributes to pupils' understanding of other faiths. There are, however, limited opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of the range of cultures in the immediate town provided by minority ethnic communities. The school is currently in the process of discussing with nearby schools ways of getting pupils involved in learning about and developing an understanding of the wide range of cultures in the local area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

29. The school's procedures are satisfactory for maintaining pupils' welfare and health and safety. Teachers know their pupils well and provide a safe and secure environment. Pupils are well supervised at all times and good provision is made for supporting pupils who become ill or upset. Procedures for child protection fulfil requirements. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good and staff monitor the progress of pupils in their personal development. Personal, academic and behavioural achievements are recognised through the effective use of a credit system and the presentation of certificates during a weekly praise assembly. Through regular discussion with teachers, pupils are made aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and they are then involved with setting their own targets for improvement.
30. Where necessary, the school works closely with representatives of outside agencies. For example, during the inspection the community nurse was present to administer inoculations to a group of pupils. Despite attendance being below the national average, the support from the Education Welfare Officer is poor and the school does not take adequate steps to check on absence. Formal systems for following up absence and analysing attendance data need improving. The school has devised good links with other agencies to ensure the provision outlined in statements of special educational needs is implemented. The special educational needs co-coordinator is responsible for liaising with a wide range of other professionals, parents, carers and other schools. These duties are undertaken diligently as is the organisation of annual review meetings.
31. The school implements very good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. Children are assessed when they start the Reception class and then again at regular intervals as they progress through the school. Detailed assessments are made of pupils' reading and writing skills and also of mathematics and science. The results are carefully analysed to find ways of improving standards in each subject. Teachers work together very closely to make sure that their assessments are accurate and in line with national criteria. The particular emphasis is on improvements in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Parents are informed of what pupils need to do to improve and have the opportunity to take part in activities to challenge and extend their child's learning.
32. Satisfactory assessment procedures exist to identify pupils with learning or behavioural difficulties. The school meets statutory requirements as outlined in all pupils'

statements of special educational needs. All statements and reviews are up to date and specified provision is implemented effectively, including access to additional staffing.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. Parents are satisfied with what the school provides and achieves. They feel their children make satisfactory progress, reach acceptable standards and behave well. The school's links with parents is satisfactory overall but parents have very limited involvement in the day-to-day running of the school.
34. A significant number of parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaires indicated that they felt that they were not kept well informed of their children's progress. Inspection findings, however, are that the school has good range of strategies for keeping parents informed. Induction procedures for parents of children who are joining the Reception class are good and ensure that the children are well prepared. Homework is provided for pupils aged five to twelve and offers an opportunity for parents to support their children at home. The school has an appropriate home-school agreement that outlines the responsibilities of both parents and school. Despite good levels of communication between the school, particularly with regard to the good quality of annual reports and the provision of termly parents' consultations evenings, parents are reluctant to get involved in the school. The low level of attendance at the pre-inspection meeting further supported this view. This adversely affects the quality of education of many pupils and means that the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is unsatisfactory overall. The school does not consult sufficiently with parents about major decisions that impact upon the curriculum or upon major spending decisions.
35. There are areas for growth, however. For example, a good link with the Open University provides opportunities for parents and members of the local community to come into school to learn how to use a personal computer. The teacher of the foundation stage recently invited parents into school at the end of a morning session and the invitation successfully brought in a good number of interested parents. There is an active Parent-Teacher Association organised by a small but energetic group of parents. Most fund raising events are well supported by the community and significant amounts of money are raised to benefit pupils' education each year.
36. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs are appropriately involved in annual review meetings. They are invited to contribute both in writing and verbally to the discussions about the continuing needs of their child and the progress he or she has made since the previous review. The special educational needs co-ordinator is working hard to consult with all parents of pupils who have individual education plans. She encourages them to be involved in identifying their children's needs, contributing to setting targets and working to achieve these both at home and at school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The school is effectively managed and the impact upon standards has improved significantly since the last inspection. The head teacher ensures that every pupil is treated equally and has an equal chance to receive an appropriate education. Since the last inspection, the head teacher has been successful in directing the activities of staff so that pupils reach much better standards. Very well organised procedures have

been established for regularly checking the quality of teaching so that improvements can be made where possible. A very effective senior management team works hard with the head teacher to identify where the school needs to develop and improve. The views of teachers are valued and this successfully creates a sense of openness and honesty amongst staff. Teachers carefully evaluate what they do well and identify areas for improvement. All staff are committed to supporting one another.

38. The school improvement planning process has been very effective. In response to the last inspection, an appropriately focussed set of targets was established that have successfully raised the quality of teaching and the standards in mathematics, science and English. Improvements have also been made in information and communication technology and religious education. Subject co-ordinators manage their subjects very well so that pupils are given an effective programme of work that steadily increases their knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school. Most co-ordinators have been in post for no more than two years. Their subject knowledge is good and good relationships with teachers ensures that everyone is supported appropriately. The appropriate emphasis on raising standards has, however, resulted in a rather narrow perspective for the school's future development. The head teacher and senior management team now have the opportunity to develop an ambitious and professionally stimulating school improvement plan that reflects the vision, expertise and ambition of the teaching staff. The consultation process for developing the plan needs widening so that the views of everyone in the school - staff, governors, pupils and parents are listened to and, where appropriate, included.
39. Support staff who have received specialist training are particularly effective in the contribution they make to teaching and learning, especially when they are deployed to support pupils in whole class lessons. The additional support provided for pupils with statements of special educational needs is most effective when used to enable pupils to be taught alongside their classmates. Special educational needs are effectively managed by a knowledgeable and committed co-ordinator. There is a policy for special educational needs and a named governor with responsibility for this aspect of the school's work but the governors have had too little involvement in monitoring the quality of special educational needs provision. The school provides a good level of resources and staffing to meet the needs of this group of pupils.
40. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties. It supports the head teacher's actions to try and raise standards in the school but tends not to take an active role, which would complement the actions of the head teacher and staff. Governors for mathematics, literacy and special educational needs are committed to finding out what goes on in the school but procedures for evaluating the impact of spending are limited. The governing body is responding appropriately to guidance for implementing performance management procedures. The school secretary is highly competent and well organised and makes a very good contribution to the financial management and the day-to-day routines of the school.
41. The school improvement plan is carefully costed and linked directly to targets within it. The finances of the school are well managed by the head teacher and subject co-ordinators. The impact of generous staffing has, however, reduced the budget surplus to a very small percentage of income. The governors are aware of this and are monitoring spending and are prepared to make budget cuts if necessary. The improvements since the last inspection in the standards attained by pupils, the better quality of teaching and the effective quality of school management means that the school is giving satisfactory value for money.
42. Pupils benefit from a generous number of well qualified teachers who give up a great

deal of time to make sure that their training is kept up to date. The number of support staff is also good and whilst all are effective when supporting pupils, there are times when their deployment could be more effective. During the inspection, there were a number of occasions when support staff became spectators, for example, during the mental arithmetic part of some numeracy lessons. When this occurs, this unnecessarily reduces the contribution of support staff.

43. Accommodation in the school is good. The amount of space in classrooms is adequate for the number of pupils. The caretaker and his staff maintain the school buildings meticulously and make sure that both pupils and staff benefit from a clean and neat environment. Children in the foundation stage benefit from a spacious indoor area and safe and secure outdoor area. Pupils in Year 6 and 7, however, are educated in classrooms that are small for the numbers in the class and this restricts opportunities for pupils to perform some practical aspects of learning. The access for people with disabilities does not currently meet the requirements defined by the Disability Act of 1999.
44. Resources to support learning have improved since the last inspection and are now adequate overall. The provision of equipment and resources for information communication technology is much better and is beginning to improve standards in this area. Resources for developing pupils' knowledge of the richness and diversity of other cultures are weak, however.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the quality of education further the Governing Body, head teacher and staff should:

- 1) raise standards in information and communication technology by:
 - ensuring that existing plans for staff training are implemented and appropriate support is given to less confident teachers.
 - Improving planning to ensure that more opportunities are given to pupils to use information and communication technology in all subjects.
 - devising and implementing effective ways of assessing pupils' progress.
(*paragraphs 6, 15 and 98-102*)
- 2) devise and adopt rigorous procedures for monitoring attendance and following up absence. (*paragraph 30*)
- 3) improve the school improvement plan that reflects the vision, expertise and ambition of the school. (*paragraph 38*)
- 4) continue to strive to involve parents in the life and work of the school. (*paragraphs 33-36*)

In addition the following minor areas might be included in the action plan

- Implement plans to develop links with other cultures within the immediate environment of the school. (*paragraph 27*)
- Find ways of forging links with local business and commerce (*paragraph 26*)
- Review the deployment of support assistants. (*paragraph 42*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	67
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4%	30%	39%	23%	4%	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll(FTE for part-time pupils)	0	298
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	73

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	80

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	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.9%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.2

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	23	20	43

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	19
	Girls	13	14	17
	Total	24	26	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56(62)	60(61)	84(77)
	National	83(82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	19	11
	Girls	14	15	15
	Total	25	34	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	58(61)	79(80)	60(75)
	National	84 (82)	88(86)	88(87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	35	17	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	28	31
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	29	40	44
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56(56)	77(60)	85(69)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	18	23	22
	Girls	14	11	13
	Total	32	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (47)	65 (62)	68 (64)
	National	70(68)	72(69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	2
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	4
Chinese	0
White	277
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.92
Average class size	24.83

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	149

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
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	£
Total income	524619
Total expenditure	520907
Expenditure per pupil	1748
Balance brought forward from previous year	2864
Balance carried forward to next year	6576

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	298
Number of questionnaires returned	50

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	54	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	54	0	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	56	6	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	44	8	4	2
The teaching is good.	44	52	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	34	16	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	34	8	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	40	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	62	16	10	8	4
The school is well led and managed.	42	44	6	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	34	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	36	16	12	14

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. Most children enter the school with below average levels of attainment in social skills, mathematics, communication and language; standards in writing are well below average. This is confirmed by the initial assessment conducted with these young children. Children make good and often very good progress so that by the time they are ready to begin Year 1 the children are achieving well and likely to achieve all the early learning goals with the exception of writing. Good progress is mainly due to very effective teaching and a well-planned range of activities. The curriculum is rich and varied; well organised and promotes all six areas of learning. Knowledgeable and understanding staff recognise the developmental needs of young children and challenge them very successfully. All staff within the foundation stage relate well to the children and this has a significant impact on the children's sense of security and quality of learning. The provision for children in the foundation stage has improved since the last inspection.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

46. Children reach good standards of personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress because of the skilful teaching by all staff in the reception class. Children are encouraged to learn about different feelings and to explore what makes them sad or happy or angry as they listen to the story of 'Making Faces' in literacy lessons. They write about what makes them happy or sad and staff encourage them to think about the consequences of their actions and consider what is right and wrong. Children behave well. They share resources and work co-operatively in groups and pairs. They take turns, for example, when they use the computer, and are developing good personal independence as they decide for themselves when to have milk. They collect the milk carton, pour their own milk and wash up their own cup. They make choices from a range of well-planned activities and select from a range of different resources, for example, when making a model or a collage. Children have very good relationships with adults and approach visitors with confidence, for example, talking about going to the doctor as part of their role-play experiences. They concentrate well in literacy as they work diligently on their writing and sit quietly listening intently to the teacher as she reads the story. Assemblies enable children to consider the needs of others and learn about Christian events such as Christmas and Easter, but opportunities for them to learn about different cultures and beliefs are more limited.

Communication, Language and Literacy

47. Children make good progress in speaking and listening and reading. They reach satisfactory standards for their age although early writing skills are weak and many children find it hard to express what they mean. "Circle time" is used effectively to encourage children to speak clearly and to listen to each other. In literacy sessions children make very good progress, they listen attentively to questions and instructions and respond to stories with interest. They express themselves well, for example, they develop their vocabulary as they describe their different emotions and talk about being 'shocked' or 'frightened' and describe iced biscuits as 'delicious'. The session at the end of the morning is used very well to encourage children to think about and discuss what they have accomplished during the session. All children join in enthusiastically when reading together with the teacher and link sounds to letters, often identifying the initial letter of a word spontaneously. Each week there is a special letter and staff encourage children to bring in objects from home that begin with the letter and match

pictures and objects to the letter. This develops children's awareness of letter recognition.

48. The children know a range of songs and rhymes and sing these with enjoyment and enthusiasm. In the writing area, there are pencils, paper and rulers and children readily access these freely. The teacher acts as a scribe for most of the children and encourages those who are able, to copy-write or use a highlighter to help them to form their letters correctly. The 'doctors surgery' provides good opportunities for children to take on different roles. For example, they make appointments, write prescriptions and administer 'injections' to patients suffering from a heart attack. The computer is used very well to support pupils' literacy skills and there is a good range of software for matching and sorting letters and sounds.

Mathematical development

49. Children count confidently to 10 and recognise and name numbers. In numeracy sessions, they use number fans confidently and are learning to add and subtract, for example, to identify which number comes before 5 or after 4. There is a large, colourful number line and children recognise and use numbers in the environment and readily in their play, for example, counting the class as they take on the role of the teacher and writing down the numeral independently. There are many good opportunities for children to use numbers in games and activities and they use mathematical terms confidently when comparing objects, such as tall and taller and cutting string and liquorice threads making them longer or shorter lengths.
50. Staff promote mathematical skills, understanding and language very effectively through well-organised structured play and small group work. They encourage children to bring in different shapes from home and compare flat and solid shapes, putting them into sets and recording this in their books. Children solve simple mathematical problems, for example, finding out which three-dimensional shapes they can make with plastic construction tiles. Most children have a good command of the language of shape as they name and investigate the properties of cones, cuboids and pyramids, finding out, for example, the ones that will roll or those they can build into a tower. When working with construction toys they readily recognise and recreate simple patterns and extend these to making shapes with play dough and other materials. Water and sand play is always available for them to explore different mathematical ideas.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

51. There are very good opportunities for the children to explore and investigate the world around them. They look at X-rays of a skull and another of feet in the 'doctors surgery' and talk about 'going to hospital when you are ill'. They investigate what happens to different ingredients when liquid is added. For example, they use their senses to examine the difference in coffee, salt, flour and chocolate powder when they add water. They are currently decorating biscuits as part of their topic on 'making faces' and use their senses to smell, taste and feel the icing sugar both when dry and when made into icing. They spoon out the icing carefully onto their biscuits and decorate them with a range of different sweets. They are constantly challenged by teachers to think about what they are doing. For example, 'why do we wash our hands before we touch food?' All children use the computer independently for literacy and numeracy and use the mouse with confidence. Children are developing a sound sense of place and time. They bring in photographs of themselves as babies and look at the kinds of clothes they used to wear and recognise how their body changes as they grow. There

are very good opportunities for children to make models using construction toys, play dough and a wide range of recycled materials.

Physical Development

52. There are regular, planned opportunities for children to move with increasing control and confidence in physical education lessons. Children reach standards expected for their age by the time they start Year 1. Children are encouraged to climb and balance on the benches and planned dance lessons offer very good opportunities for them to move safely and imaginatively in time with the music. A very good activity was planned during the inspection using ribbons in a variety of ways to extend the children's movement as part of their work on feelings.
53. There is immediate access to a safe outdoor area and a good range of wheeled toys for children to develop their co-ordination. When the weather permits, they develop an obstacle course and learn about road safety and having consideration for others. Children use small apparatus, for example, hoops, balls and skipping ropes with increasing skill and awareness of space and others. Staff encourage them to think about what happens to their bodies when they exercise and they are currently making a poster on being healthy. They learn about hygiene and demonstrate knowledge of germs and how these can lead to 'tummy aches'. In cooking, they learn to use different kitchen tools with increasing control, for example, spreading the icing on their biscuits. They use a good range of small tools in the workshop area for cutting and joining different materials to make a range of objects. However, some children have difficulty when using scissors. They explore different shapes with play dough; sometimes making three-dimensional shapes to support their mathematical skills.

Creative Development

54. Children make good progress and reach standards expected for their age by the time they start Year 1. They explore colour when they paint and have made some very attractive self-portraits. They develop their imaginations when painting and drawing and there are very good opportunities for them to use a wide range of different media. They explore different textures and shapes in the workshop and make a different object each day. For example, they are currently making a puppet with two faces, one happy and one sad. They move imaginatively in dance lessons using 'light, bouncy steps' to show how they can move in a happy way and compare strong galloping movements with light, gentle ones. They look at how instruments make sounds, and make their own shakers which they use to accompany taped music. They listen and respond to different kinds of music, for example, creating pictures and music in response to 'angry Arthur'. They learn a range of songs and rhymes but play a very limited role in the Key Stage 1 singing assemblies. They begin to describe the texture of different substances as they feel the icing sugar and compare it with glue. They explore different tastes and smells when cooking and feel and smell the differences when soap and bubble bath is added to the water tray. The 'doctors surgery' and the writing area provide very good opportunities for children to make up stories and to enjoy role-play. Staff take every opportunity to encourage children to talk and write about their ideas and parent helpers support children very effectively in role-play activities.

ENGLISH

55. Inspection findings indicate that overall standards in English are now in line with national expectations. On the surface this appears to be maintaining the position found during the previous inspection but during the interim, end of key stage National Curriculum test results indicate that pupils' performance in English has been consistently well below the national average. As a result of the efforts of the subject co-ordinator and all staff, standards are now rising rapidly. A small number of pupils are now attaining standards well above average. Pupils in Year 7, who were falling below average as they moved through Key Stages 1 and 2 are now well on track to be in line with expectations by the time they transfer to their secondary schools and are currently making good progress.
56. Standards in speaking and listening are good throughout the school and spoken vocabularies are often ahead of those in pupils' writing. However, a significant minority of pupils have a limited range of vocabulary and they find it hard to say what they mean. Standards in reading are good at the end of both key stages, even for those pupils who profess little of a reading culture in their lives. Standards in writing and presentation have improved dramatically and the school has placed a great deal of emphasis on bringing about this change. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good progress from a very low starting point and this reflects the dedication of the teaching staff towards bringing about this improvement.
57. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils express themselves clearly, take part in discussions and communicate enthusiastically with classmates and their teachers. A significant minority, however, have a narrow range of vocabulary and struggle to express themselves clearly. In Year 2, most pupils read their restructured stories with great confidence and everyone listens with polite attention as they do so. By the age of eleven, most pupils' speaking skills have improved and they express themselves in mature and thoughtful ways. Year 6 pupils conducted a well-informed debate on dilemmas in planning decisions in their geography lesson. Teachers generally encourage their pupils in their oral responses by skilful use of questions and this is especially noticeable in both Year 6 and Year 7. Listening skills are also good in both key stages. Pupils listen to their teachers and respond swiftly and competently to instructions. They also listen well to one another and this is particularly apparent in Year 6 during their debates and in the evaluations in their physical education lessons.
58. Reading standards are in line with those expected for both seven and eleven year olds. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy their 'Big Books' and become closely involved with the subject matter of the story. They are good at picking out visual clues in the illustrations and they read aloud with enthusiasm. In their individual reading they show a good knowledge of the conventions of reading, and are able to address unfamiliar words with confidence. When they read aloud, they self-correct many minor errors and they read fluently with emerging expressive skills, sometimes including elaborate hand gestures to emphasise a point in the text. Teachers at Key Stage 1 have given the pupils a love of books and the great majority of pupils read regularly.
59. By the age of eleven, pupils are reading a wide range of appropriate literature and are knowledgeable about modern cult books by popular authors and some of the traditional classics of children's literature. By Year 6, pupils have a good knowledge of different styles of writing and this is transferred to their writing in English and other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 7 are discovering new forms and fields of literature, and have taken much pleasure in their reading of Chaucer in Modern English and the original in extract form.

60. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in their written work. The quality of handwriting has improved enormously as the teachers have increased expectations of pupils. For some pupils, spelling remains weak but, by the age of eleven, the great majority of pupils are spelling confidently and appropriately. Pupils in Years 3 to 7 are writing sequences of events and ideas in their stories and the higher attaining pupils are extending their writing. Analyses of work done in Years 1 and 2 indicate that the improvements flowing from the good quality teaching in English are impacting on the quality of writing in other subjects. The recording of work in Science, for example, has improved considerably.
61. By the age of eleven, pupils are producing expressive and detailed pieces of writing. Pupils use extracts from famous diaries as a basis for their own works in producing a diary. The quality of the emotional reflection and expression in their work is high. A feature of one lesson was the good way pupils shared their work and ideas with one another in a mature and unselfconscious way. By Year 6, pupils draft and edit their work in a professional manner and are able to word-process and edit on screen. Year 7 pupils are showing an increasing maturity in their use of vocabulary and are making good progress in their writing.
62. The quality of teaching in English is good overall and during the inspection it was often very good and occasionally excellent. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and is using the benefits deriving from it to improve language and writing in the other subjects of the curriculum. The recent emphasis on improving the quality of presentation and content in writing has brought a significant improvement and is testimony to the secure subject knowledge and dedication of the teachers. Lessons are well planned and presented in interesting and engaging ways. The quality of marking is good across the school and pupils benefit from the encouraging diagnostic comments and the setting of targets. Dedicated classroom support assistants who are able to work with those pupils who have special educational needs and English as an additional language help teachers throughout the school. A weakness in using information and communication technology to support English is evident in most classrooms.

MATHEMATICS

63. By the age of seven and eleven, pupils make good progress and attain the standards expected for their ages in number, algebra, space, shape, measures and data handling. The only weak area is problem solving. Standards in the school were close to the national average in the year 2000 and are better than similar schools. A significant number exceed the expectations for eleven year olds but the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs results in a small number of pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 not reaching the expected standard. Standards in the school are improving, especially in the last year, and the more able pupils are being suitably challenged. There are no marked differences in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs receive adequate support and make satisfactory progress.
64. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of numbers to 100 and can count forwards and backwards in ones and twos. They know some of the properties of two-dimensional shapes like squares and triangles, and also three-dimensional shapes, including cubes and pyramids. They are doing more work now on solving problems in all aspects of mathematics. By the age of eleven, pupils are much quicker at working out calculations in their heads and interpreting data accurately from a chart. They have a good understanding of place value and understand different methods for multiplying

numbers. They are familiar with shapes and measures and most can calculate the circumference of a circle. They are less confident at estimating and solving problems, but this is an area that has been identified for further development. Pupils in the final year of school in year 7 continue to make adequate progress in all areas of mathematics and standards are satisfactory.

65. The good quality of teaching and learning is good overall and this has a positive impact on raising standards. In the lessons observed in Year 1 and Year 2, teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent. In years 3 to 6, the teaching was good and sometimes very good. The analysis of pupils' work revealed that the higher ability pupils in year 4 could have more challenging work set. During an excellent lesson in Year 1, the teacher had a stimulating and effervescent manner, which captured pupils' imagination. There was an extensive range of resources used to demonstrate the concept of pairs, including soft toys, caterpillars, bells and cymbals to count up to 20. In the other good lessons, the teachers identified learning objectives carefully and shared them with the pupils then referred to them again at the end of the lesson. The brisk pace and challenging activities for pupils of all abilities enabled the pupils to make good progress. The grouping of pupils by ability for mathematics in the key stage 2 classes also helps to improve standards.
66. All teachers have implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and they use this as the basis for their planning, along with a new commercial scheme. All teachers involve pupils in a well taught mental arithmetic session at the start of lessons, followed up by written or practical tasks and then a clear session at the end of the lesson to iron out any problems and reinforce new learning. The teachers use a good range of mathematical vocabulary and, in some classes, the relevant vocabulary is written on the board at the start of the lesson. Consequently, the pupils are able to explain their work using the appropriate terminology. The oral and mental sessions are usually lively and challenging and are enjoyed by all pupils. This helps them grow in confidence in manipulating numbers and problem solving in their mind. In the main part of the lesson, pupils practice their skills in a variety of challenging activities that are well managed and controlled.
67. The pupils' ability to use information and communication technology is limited but the teachers have identified this as an area for development. Their literacy skills are being developed in mathematics, especially speaking and listening. Pupils can offer well-structured explanations during lessons. Mathematics is also used in other areas of the curriculum, for example, when drawing graphs and charts in science or when measuring and taking readings.
68. Teachers use mental arithmetic tests to assess pupils' attainment, and use a commercial scheme to assess progress each half term. The assessments are used to set targets for all pupils that are reviewed later in the year or at parents meetings. Annual tests are also used to assess progress and move pupils up or down the teaching sets.
69. The subject is very well managed. The two co-ordinators work energetically to promote good practice and have been instrumental in the school's efforts to raise standards. The school has made very good improvements since the last inspection. Teaching standards have improved and the role of the co-ordinator has been strengthened. There are more resources including a new commercial scheme and standards are improving.

SCIENCE

70. The standards achieved by pupils by the ages of seven and eleven are close to the national average. A significant number exceed the expectations for eleven years olds but the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs results in a number of pupils in both Year 2 and Year 6 in Year 2000 not reaching the expected standard. The quality of teaching is good overall and makes sure that pupils do as well as they can. Pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and their properties and the way things move, the way light and sound are made and the relationship between the Earth, the sun and the moon. By the age of seven, pupils are able to perform simple investigations appropriate for their age and by the age of eleven they can plan, carry out and record the results of fair tests with reasonable independence. A comparative weakness is the pupils lack of skills to use equipment to make precise measurements.
71. In Key Stage 1, pupils are taught well. They respond positively to well-organised and managed lessons and show high levels of enthusiasm and natural curiosity. During a lessons observed in Year 2, pupils worked with high levels of motivation and energy in exploring how to introduce a switch into a simple electric circuit. Their excitement and delight when they connected the three wires to the switch and the bulb was a joy to behold. By working with pupils in groups of similar ability, the teacher successfully managed to challenge the higher attaining pupils, whilst using the classroom assistant to help pupils who found the work hard. Discussions with pupils showed that by the age of seven, they have a secure knowledge of electricity and the ideas about ways of breaking the circuit with a switch. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in their science work in years 1 and 2.
72. In Years 1 and 2, teachers work hard to support science learning by preparing good quality wall displays of science work. A recent visit to a nearby park has brought meaning to some aspects of learning about forces. Pupils benefited from being able to see how pushes and pulls make things move. Discussion with pupils show how well most understand this difficult idea. Further discussions showed that pupils know expected ideas about the way their body works and the basic needs and life cycles of plants and animals. They can describe how to group common materials by the way they look and feel and explain the basic idea of changes resulting from heating up and cooling things down. Most seven year olds respond to the expectation by the class teacher to record using a good standard of presentation, although information and communication technology is not evident in pupils' recorded work.
73. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress so that by the end of Year 6, they do as well as they can. The quality of teaching is particularly good in Years 5 and 6. In Years 3 and 4, some teachers are unsure of some aspects of managing lessons that demand that pupils perform simple investigative tasks. In these classes, there is a tendency for lessons to have a slow pace with too much emphasis upon pupils writing too much before carrying out tasks. By the age of nine, however, pupils' knowledge has progressed at a satisfactory rate since the age of seven. They have developed a secure knowledge about the way some materials are magnetic whilst others are not. Behaviour during a lesson observed looking at magnetism was satisfactory overall, although the slow pace tended to promote some restlessness amongst higher attaining pupils. Pupils aged nine know how to make a prediction, carry out a fair test and then use the information gathered to inform whether or not their prediction was accurate or not. These pupils respond to high expectations for presenting their work by recording what they do neatly, although analysis of work shows that only a few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop independent recording skills. Pupils know about the range of light sources and use scientific words accurately in describing the properties

of materials that are transparent, translucent and opaque. Their knowledge of light and the way the eye works is good.

74. In Years 5 and 6, pupils benefit from particularly knowledgeable and skilled teaching. Expectations for independent investigative work are high and this reflects in good progress in the ability of pupils to apply investigative skills. During investigations into the relationship between lung expansion and the amount of “puff” of individuals, pupils competently set up and performed well-organised tests. Before doing this, very good teaching succinctly explained the way the lungs work and skilfully introduced pupils to terms such as diaphragm and vacuum to effectively explain the process of breathing. Teachers in Years 5 and 6, make good use of scientific vocabulary and present pupils with well organised and managed lessons during which pupils of all abilities are suitable challenged, supported and advised. Pupils behave very well, work very hard with others and make good progress as a result. The comparative area for further development is to improve pupils’ ability to precisely read and record information. In response to high expectations, pupils in Year 6 recorded their work very well using the computer to create graphs and charts. This use of information and communication technology is a strength in science in this year group. In Year 7, standards are close to those expected for their age.
75. The subject is very well managed. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and works tirelessly to raise the profile of science across the school. All teachers have clear guidance of what should be taught in each class and careful monitoring by the co-ordinator and the senior management team makes sure that standards of teaching and pupils’ achievement are regularly checked. An accurate and honest evaluation of how standards can be pushed higher has been made and positive action taken to do so. Assessment procedures are very good and generally accurate, although more seven year olds are at the above-expected standard of level 3 than has been recorded. The commitment of the co-ordinator is demonstrated in many ways but particularly in the additional time given to organising a lunchtime science club, involving pupils in local challenges such as the Buggy Competition and in giving of her own time to attend liaison meetings with other schools. The co-ordinator is committed to improving links with the secondary school, although this is not easy at times. Resources for the subject are adequate, although access to more science based non-fiction books might improve links with literacy. The links with literacy are currently good with particular emphasis upon developing pupils’ instructional writing. Links with numeracy are satisfactory, although more could be done to challenge pupils’ application of measurement. Some good use is made of information and communication technology to support science but this is not a consistent feature across the school.

ART AND DESIGN.

76. Pupils reach the standards expected for both seven and eleven year olds. In Year 7, the standard of work produced by pupils is satisfactory and throughout the school pupils make satisfactory progress. Progress in maintaining standards since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The recently appointed co-coordinator is aware of aspects that still need to be addressed. With her clear view of the further developments required, the school is now well placed to improve the quality of some aspects of teaching and assessment procedures in order to improve standards further.
77. Relative strengths are in the pupils’ development of drawing skills. A weakness in art is the lack of a systematic development of a wider range of skills because of limitations in

the school's curriculum. Teachers generally plan only a very narrow range of simple drawing activities with occasional painting and work in other media. Teachers miss many opportunities to interest and inspire the pupils in a more imaginative range of activities. There is too little use of printmaking, ceramics or textiles, or of techniques such as batik, tie and dye or working in three dimensions with clay or other modelling materials.

78. Pupils in Key Stage 1 use art to illustrate their work in a range of other subjects. Pupils in Year 1 effectively mixed primary colours to create the colours needed to paint pictures of teddy bears and other cuddly toys as part of their work in history. They have explored elements of texture and shape when producing clay models of teddies. Year 2 pupils build upon these skills and use collage and textiles to create added dimensions. Teachers' planning and work displayed indicate that pupils study the work of Indian traditional artists to develop their knowledge and understanding of using lines as part of pattern making when creating Rangoli patterns. However, some work lacks quality, as too little attention is paid to the careful and progressive development of drawing and painting skills.
79. In Key Stage 2 and Year 7, pupils have recently started using sketchbooks but there is very little work currently recorded in them to make any judgement about their effectiveness. There is little art work displayed in classrooms, except to illustrate work in other subjects. In Years 3 and 4, pupils produce their own pictures inspired by the work of Turner. In work linked to Ancient Greeks, pupils use a range of their own work to illustrate and replicate similar styles to that of the Ancient Greeks. The work includes illustrations of alphabet letters to designing clay tiles. Pupils across the school have produced a large collage, displayed in the hall, depicting a range of different pantomimes. Year 6 pupils are familiar with the works of well known artists, a range of styles they employed and the titles of particularly well known pictures. These include Monet's 'Water Lilies', Van Gogh's 'Sunflowers' and the 'Mona Lisa' by Leonardo da Vinci. This work is developed further in Year 7, where skilled teaching is particularly effective in developing pupils' ability to evaluate and analyse the work of others.
80. Although the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, an aspect for improvement is the teaching of specific skills to improve the quality of drawing and painting and of other techniques. Occasionally, pupils would benefit from teachers making more critical evaluations of skills and of the effort made. Discussions with pupils indicate that they enjoy art activities but do not always take a lot of care over the quality of their work.
81. Because of the appropriate emphasis upon raising standards in the core subjects, the subject co-ordinator has little opportunity to monitor the quality of planning, teaching and learning. This has allowed pockets of underachievement to occur and inconsistent progress. The co-ordinator has few opportunities to assess standards of pupils' work or to observe teaching to any given criteria. As yet, staff make inconsistent use of information and communication technology to aid pupils' learning, particularly in studying the work of well-known artists. The co-ordinator envisages that the recent introduction of the nationally recommended guidance for art and design, alongside the existing scheme of work, will help teachers plan their lessons more effectively and become more confident in their own ability to teach the subject. Resources are currently satisfactory for the current range of activities, but when art is taught more comprehensively, the current level of materials, books and pictures of well-known works of art will be inadequate.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

82. The standards reached by both seven and eleven year old pupils are close to national expectations for their age. The satisfactory level of attainment has been maintained since the last inspection throughout the school.
83. Pupils benefit from regularly experiencing a full range of activities for design and technology. A well planned curriculum, based upon national guidelines ensures that pupils learn to use a wide range of materials to design and create a range of products. Good leadership by the knowledgeable co-ordinator offers teachers good support and guidance so that pupils are taught well.
84. By the age of seven, pupils are familiar with the process of sharing ideas and following instructions to make simple moving models. By using paper plates, good quality models of rocking horses have been designed as part of a topic on movement. A visit to a nearby park prompted work based upon the way structures are designed and pupils have constructed simple working models of simple playground apparatus such as swings. Fabrics have been used to create simple finger puppets. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 to 6, are provided with regular opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding of the design process. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked very well in small groups using found materials to design and make models of monsters. During the lesson, pupils behaved very well and worked with high levels of interest and motivation. Although some pupils were unsure of ways of joining some of the containers they had collected, they managed to construct some exciting models. The good teaching and subject knowledge of the class-teacher successfully guided pupils into using balloons, plastic tubes and syringes to apply the idea of pneumatic movement. Many pupils proudly displayed monsters with mouths that opened and limbs that moved by blowing air into a balloon or by pushing air into a syringe. In Year 5 and 6, pupils have converted plans into reality by designing and making moving buggies and pupils in both Years 5 and 6 have developed a knowledge of food technology by evaluating real biscuits and then designing and baking their own. The biscuits appeared to be very tasty and pupils offered very good evaluations of their products. In Year 7, pupils have made very good quality heraldic shields involving the application of sewing skills.
85. The good teaching in design and technology supported by good subject management makes sure that pupils make good progress in the subject. Lessons are well organised so that pupils of all abilities are suitable challenged. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour to design and technology are very good and pupils thrive on the opportunity to work with others in creating designs. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed to supporting both pupils and staff so that high standards are reached. The new scheme for the school gives appropriate emphasis to each part of the design and technology curriculum, although the co-ordinator intends to strengthen work linked to mechanisms. Design and technology is often linked to other subjects, for example, science or history, and this adds meaning to the activities carried out. Although pupils are familiar with the process of planning and evaluating their work, they do not have a Design book that would enable them to record their work and inform evaluations of the progress they make over time.

GEOGRAPHY

86. The previous report concluded that standards were satisfactory in both key stages. Standards have improved since the last inspection. Pupils make good progress and

standards and are now above expectations by the time pupils are seven and eleven years of age.

87. The school uses the local environment very successfully as a resource and all pupils have a well-grounded knowledge of the geography around them. The proximity of the new town development of Milton Keynes and the existence of smaller older settlements that have been incorporated into the new town have been used successfully as a geographical study and teachers make good use of this resource in their teaching of the subject.
88. Pupils in Year 2 describe their experience of the world around them and they are aware that human beings have a dramatic impact on the physical world. Teachers use the study unit "Where in the world is Barnaby Bear?" to introduce pupils to the concept of long distance travel and also of the need to cherish the world in which we live. By the age of seven, pupils have examined safety in the local area, the environment around the school and their own locality. Pupils have also begun to develop basic skills in mapping and planning which they are aware are essential tools for the geographer. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject and this is reflected in the improved standards since the previous inspection. Recording in topic books and folders is variable in standard but is beginning to show signs of improvement as the school addresses the quality of writing and presentation through the literacy strategy.
89. By the age of eleven, pupils have acquired a deeper knowledge of the key skills and fundamental concepts of geography. In the Years 5 and 6 class, pupils are able to discuss the moral and ethical issues surrounding planning decisions with considerable maturity of outlook. The quality of teaching in Year 6 is such that the teacher is raising standards across the whole year group. Questions are asked in ways that challenge pupils to develop issues in depth. Pupils also ask profound questions of their own in addition to responding to those asked of them. When working in groups, pupils are imbued with a sense of purpose and they enjoy and take pride in resolving such problems as the consequences of diverting the course of a river. When discussing issues such as the preservation of wildlife and habitat, the morality of the exploitation of animal life is seriously examined. It is also apparent that recording skills are improving as a result of the emphasis on these as part of the literacy strategy. In Years 3 to 6, pupils also study aspects of settlement change, the position of the United Kingdom in Europe and the nature of less economically advantaged localities such as Chembakoli, India.
90. The quality of teaching in geography is good overall. Good planning ensures that all pupils are taught a wide and interesting range of skills and knowledge. Although opportunities are used for applying both literacy and numeracy skills to geography, these are not yet fully planned. Use of information and communication technology is limited. Although the co-ordinator does not teach geography in either key stage, she has a good management overview of the subject and is aware of the need to maintain the improvement in standards that has been achieved. Assessment is improving as part of a whole school strategy to increase the efficiency of assessment procedures in non-core subjects across the school. Resources are satisfactory, although the number and quality of atlases could be better.

HISTORY

91. The satisfactory standards of attainment in history identified at the last inspection have been maintained throughout the school. Pupils achieve standards that are consistent with those normally seen for pupils at the age of seven and eleven.

92. They make steady progress with their learning. Guidelines for history, which are based on national guidance, successfully help teachers to plan clearly for specific periods in time. The school ensures that history is taught regularly and this enables pupils to sustain a steady pace of learning through the school. Their skills in asking historical questions and communicating their findings are effectively developed, particularly in Years 6 and 7. There is an appropriate focus on the use of historical sources that require pupils to undertake research and develop a critical awareness of what information is relevant to their search.
93. Younger pupils learn about the passing of time. They sequence old toys in order of age and make comparisons with modern ones. They begin to use historical vocabulary and relate their learning to shared experiences at home and school. They learn about famous people and events from the past, such as Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot, and begin to learn about the history of the local area.
94. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 had produced some detailed work about the Ancient Greeks. They were able to talk about the similarities and differences in day-to-day life. This included features about the daily life of women and children, how rich and poor people lived and the type of accommodation they occupied. In discussion, pupils could recall detailed facts about various battles including those of Salamis, Marathon and Thermopylae. They had recorded their own accounts of Greek legend including stories about King Midas, Perseus, Pandora's Box, and 'Persephone and the Pomegranate Seed'. By the time pupils are in Year 7 they have developed a wider knowledge and understanding of time and place. They talk about Medieval Realms, especially in relation to specific studies about events such as the Battle of Hastings, Saxon resistance and the Anglo-Saxons in France and the Celtic lands. Several speak with amazement about the significance of the scenes depicted in the Bayeux tapestry.
95. Pupils are interested in history and motivated in lessons by the effective use of resources and artefacts. Good use is made of the local area and places of interest to extend pupils' learning.
96. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have a secure grasp of the subject and they use questioning well to encourage deeper investigation of source material. This was a positive feature of the Year 3/4 lesson seen during the inspection. A very positive feature of teaching, particularly at the top of the school, is the way in which teachers have used history as the basis for much of the extended writing undertaken in literacy work. This is successful in raising standards in both subjects, when pupils are well motivated by the choice of play scripts, such as 'Erik the Viking' and tales by Chaucer, including the 'Reeves Tale' and the 'Millers Tale.' Planned opportunities for using information communication technology to support learning in history are limited.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

97. The standards achieved by pupils by the age of both seven and eleven are below those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils' progress is, however, improving as a result of the efforts of the subject co-ordinator to improve the quality of computers and to make sure that information and communication technology is regularly taught throughout the school. Resources have improved and more improvements are planned. Access to the Internet exists, although the recent nature of the initiative has yet to impact upon pupils' skills in using it. A new scheme of work has been in place since September and this makes sure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are now fully met.

98. In Years 1 and 2, all pupils are keen to learn. They listen attentively to the teacher during the introduction of the lesson and work well in pairs. Some pupils make good progress, for example, in understanding how information and communication technology can be used to create Christmas paper. This is due to skilful teaching and tasks that challenge pupils effectively. However, where the lesson is poorly organised and the teacher lacks the necessary subject knowledge, pupils make very limited progress. By the time they reach seven, pupils use a graphics package confidently, enter and save their work and know how to print the pictures they create. They talk about their experiences of information and communication technology outside of school but, with the exception of some aspects of science in Year 6, for example, there are few links made with other curriculum subjects, for example science and mathematics.
99. The attainment of pupils aged 11 years is below that expected nationally. In lessons observed during the inspection, some Year 3 and 4 pupils made limited progress. This is mainly as a result of the insecurity of some teachers and a lack of experience using the new facilities. Pupils insert their disk in the computer correctly, open their own file and, as part of their history topic, use a word processor to write a 'Spartan' newspaper. Some pupils save their work and amend it appropriately, but few pupils are confident in accessing the spell checker or using appropriate editing and presentation techniques. The very limited skills of some pupils mean that they require a high level of support in class and too much time is spent waiting for the teacher's attention. Pupils in Year 5 make good progress in lessons. They use heat sensors with the computer to monitor temperature. They produce a graph to demonstrate the effect of the change of temperature and interpret the changes.
100. The teaching in both key stages is improving steadily. In lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was mostly good, but in recent years the quality of teaching has not been satisfactory and this has contributed to low standards. Where teaching is good, teachers have secure subject knowledge and demonstrate competence and confidence with the hardware and software and lessons are well planned and prepared. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, a significant minority of pupils are not engaged in the lesson, lessons are poorly organised and move at a slow pace and teachers lack the subject knowledge necessary to teach basic skills in information and communication technology successfully.
101. The school is now implementing a thorough programme for raising standards. The scheme of work covers all the necessary elements of the new national curriculum. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection, which identified serious gaps in the curriculum that impacted on standards. Teachers' long and medium term plans are monitored but there is currently no time available for direct observation of teaching. Pupils show very positive attitudes to the subject. The Year 6 computer club is very well attended and this has a positive impact on their learning. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has made an accurate and honest evaluation of the current stage of development of information and communication technology in the school. A realistic but appropriately challenging action plan has been devised aimed at improving staff's confidence and knowledge so that pupils' competence improves as well. The recent creation of a designated area for information and communication technology is making a positive contribution to improving standards. These initiatives are improving progress but are not yet having sufficient impact upon standards to raise pupils' attainment to national expectations.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

102. The teaching of French is a part of the Year 7 Key Stage 3 curriculum. This course acts as a preparation for pupils who will transfer to secondary school at the end of the year, and by the age of twelve, their attainment is in line with national expectations. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
103. Pupils are making satisfactory progress at this stage in their learning. They understand simple words, phrases, instructions and questions. In gaining a basic vocabulary, they are also enhancing their speaking and listening skills and their spoken responses are given confidently and without embarrassment.
104. The teacher has an enthusiasm for teaching French and is fully confident in her approach to the subject. This confidence transmits itself to the pupils and has a significant impact on their response in class. Lessons are pitched at a sensible level of challenge and by using cartoon drawings the teacher presents the subject in a way that enables pupils of all abilities to respond in line with their ability level. During the remainder of the course, the teacher will vary the material to offer an appropriate challenge to those higher attaining pupils in the year group.
105. An annual trip to France provides pupils with valuable experiences and insights into a cultural milieu other than their own. In conversations, Year 7 pupils express an enthusiastic desire to go on the trip. By the end of the year, they should be well prepared for their transition into the remainder of Key Stage 3 in their secondary schools.

MUSIC

106. Pupils throughout the school attain the standards expected of pupils when they reach the age of both seven and eleven. Pupils enjoy their music making activities. The tuition that is provided by the subject co-ordinator enables pupils in Years 5 and 6 to achieve well. This is enhanced for some pupils by tuition from visiting specialist teachers in strings, brass and woodwind. Pupils benefit from listening to the performance of professional musicians who visit the school, such as the string quartet. These events are often used to promote pupils' literacy, as well as their music skills. Pupils in year 6 were able to explain how the music they listen to affects the way they feel and how music adds to the drama of an occasion, such as the soundtrack on a film or video. Pupils in years 6 and 7 also benefit from the good links with the local secondary school and particularly enjoy opportunities to share live music with other young people.
107. Throughout the school, pupils' singing shows good control of pitch and rhythm. There is satisfactory progression in skills from Year 1 to Year 7 and teachers regularly provide opportunities for pupils to compose and evaluate music. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 listen to traditional music from other cultures and identify the beat and rhythm that gives its own particular qualities. By listening to 'Havah Nagilah' and identifying its dance rhythm, pupils could then compare their own versions of dance music. They are developing the ability to talk constructively about the quality of their work and can make sensible comments about how it might be improved. In one lesson observed in Year 6, the standard of work produced by pupils was good and higher than that generally achieved at this age.
108. The very good quality of teaching by a music specialist is a significant contributory factor to the quality of teaching and learning. Pupils work together confidently in small

groups to compose simple music accompaniments, using notes C, E, G. When discussing their compositions, they were confident using a good range of descriptive vocabulary including tempo, dynamics, composition and beats in a bar. During singing practice for pupils in Years 3 to 7, pupils were less effusive and spontaneous in the contribution they made. However, many are in the choir and make greater efforts when performing in that context.

109. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. Both are very good in Years 5 and 6. Music is taught by the co-ordinator who is a specialist, and by class teachers. In some classes, the class teacher is sometimes assisted by the co-ordinator in lessons. This enables the teacher to benefit from the co-ordinator's expertise and to support the co-ordinator in class management. In a satisfactory Year 3/4 lesson observed during the inspection, pupils' learning slowed during the group work. This was because not all pupils responded to the expectations of the teacher to play an instrument when it was their turn. Pupils produced little work and the teacher brought them together to reinforce appropriate behaviour and pupils' learning. Good plans are being developed for the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.
110. Satisfactory improvement has taken place since the previous inspection. The standards and progress of older pupils in the Key Stage 2 have been maintained. There is detailed guidance to help teachers plan their lessons and good resources to support teaching and learning. There is a competent system for assessing and recording pupils' progress in music from one year to the next. This means that work is not repeated without good reason. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and curriculum planning and her role as a curriculum leader has focused effectively on improving teaching and learning and maintaining standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. Pupils' attainment by the ages of both seven and eleven is in line with national expectations, and standards in swimming in year 5 are satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. In addition to the time allocated to physical education in the timetable, pupils also have the opportunity to participate in a number of after school activities that include netball and football. The school is also involved in competitive games and matches with other schools although these tend to take place at other times of the year during better weather. Valuable teaching support is also received from a local secondary school to assist pupils in acquiring hockey skills.
112. Much of the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is aimed at providing pupils with a secure grasp of control and co-ordination and introducing them to the concept of beneficial physical activity as part of a healthy lifestyle. Pupils in Years 3 to 11 have access to a more comprehensive range of activities, including swimming in year 5. Progress made in dance, games and gymnastics is satisfactory overall. Year 5 pupils make satisfactory progress in swimming with approximately 95% attaining the recommended twenty-five metres and a good number of pupils attain levels of proficiency in swimming that go beyond the twenty-five metre target and develop the ability to use a variety of strokes.
113. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Planning is good and during the inspection lessons were conducted in a structured and efficient manner. Year 3 and 4 pupils responded well to simple dance patterns, showing good body awareness and visual-spatial ability. Often in these situations boys show signs of reluctance to participate in activities of this type but there was no discernible difference between the response of boys and girls. Pupils in Year 6 took their cue from the good quality of the teaching and kept up

a lively and fulsome response to the task required of them. Transition sequences from one activity to the next were carried out smoothly with due regard for safety. Individually, pupils have a good sense of body rhythm and symmetry in partner work. Evaluations were thoughtful and intelligent and the teacher was particularly adept at asking appropriate questions to further develop pupils' awareness. Unfortunately, in a Year 7 lesson that was observed, a small group of very badly behaved boys set out to disrupt the activities planned. The teacher responded to their quite unwarranted provocations calmly but clearly had difficulty keeping the lesson on target. Other pupils in the class were frustrated by what happened but did their best to maintain their own participation in a well-planned sequence of circuit training activities. It was apparent from the work carried out that pupils in Year 7 are making satisfactory progress.

114. Teaching is satisfactory overall and some good teaching was observed during the inspection. Teachers take opportunities for advising pupils as to how they might best improve their skills in physical education, and they plan their lessons to challenge pupils' competence and performance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

115. Since the last inspection there have been many improvements in religious education. Standards throughout the school have risen and are now in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed syllabus.
116. By the end of Year 2, the pupils understand the importance of Christian festivals such as Christmas and festivals from other faiths such as the Hindu festival of Divali. They know several bible stories such as Noah's Ark and Joseph. They are aware that churches are for special events like christenings, weddings, and funerals, and that Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus. By the time that pupils reach the age of eleven, they are aware of the main religions of the world. They know that there are different names for places of worship, such as churches, temples and synagogues. They know of the Pillars of Islam and the links between Judaism and Christianity. They have also interviewed leaders from the local community and have considered aspects of leadership.
117. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well to motivate pupils. In one lesson in Year 3/4, pupils were using the computer to look at a CD Rom about Muslims and why they fast during Ramadan. In another lesson in year 7, pupils were looking at artefacts from the Buddhist religion and writing about their possible use. In a lesson on preparing for Christmas in year 1, the pupils were in awe as the Nativity figures were unwrapped and placed in the crib. Standards of presentation in the books are good and pupils enjoy the variety of approaches to the subject. In a year 2 class, pupils made their own good quality booklet about the story of Rama and Sita.
118. In most lessons, teachers' expectations of pupil's behaviour are explicit and they achieve the objectives of the lesson. Behaviour in the lessons observed was good, except for one lesson where a few Year 7 pupils were disruptive and affected the learning of other pupils in the class. Lessons, work displays and teachers' plans and pupils' books show that, in the main, teachers provide a balanced programme of religious education. Teachers extend pupils' literacy skills through religious education. They read stories, show pictures, encourage pupils to discuss and write independently.
119. The co-ordinator for religious education ensures that planning throughout the school corresponds to the Agreed Syllabus for Milton Keynes, but has not yet started to

monitor teaching. Subject co-ordination is satisfactory. There are good levels of resources in the school and the co-ordinator has identified the need for more poster packs, artefacts, CD ROMs, and videos. The curriculum is enriched by visits to local places of worship. Pupils in Year 2 have visited St Martin's church at Fenny Stratford. Good use is made of visiting speakers, such as a local Anglican Parish Worker, and the leader of the local Brownie pack, who spoke to Year 5 and 6 pupils. Better use could be made of information and communication technology to support learning in religious education.