

INSPECTION REPORT

HANSLOPE COMBINED SCHOOL

Hanslope, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110230

Headteacher: Mr R Fancourt

Reporting inspector: John Harris
19284

Dates of inspection: 14/01/02 – 17/01/02

Inspection number: 243336

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	County
School category:	Primary
Age range of pupils:	5 - 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hanslope Combined School Long Street Road Hanslope Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	MK19 7BL
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs D Henriksen
Date of previous inspection:	8 th – 10 th September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19284	John Harris	Registered Inspector	Mathematics	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results & pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led & managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
19578	Edmund Worby	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
24658	Fiona Musters	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Religious Education</p> <p>Under Fives</p>	
19237	Bill Russell	Team inspector	<p>Information & Communication Technology</p> <p>Design & Technology</p> <p>Physical Education</p> <p>Equal Opportunities</p> <p>Special Educational Needs</p> <p>English as an Additional Language</p>	<p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p>

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3664	Heather Tyrrell	Team Inspector	Science Art Geography History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
15034	Harmer Parr	Team Inspector	Modern Languages	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hanslope Combined School caters for pupils between the ages of four and twelve. It is situated close to the Northamptonshire border, about six miles from Milton Keynes. The school serves the village of Hanslope and the surrounding rural area, but also draws children from further afield. Movement of pupils between schools is much higher than usual; this is partly accounted for by the additional intake, at the age of eight, of pupils from a nearby First School. There are currently 246 pupils on roll. Parents are mainly employed in agricultural or professional occupations, and local housing is largely owner occupied. The attainment of children when they start school is higher than that normally found, and the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Approximately one tenth of the pupils have special educational needs, which is similar to the national picture, and five pupils have statements of special educational needs, which is above average. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is small; there are four pupils who speak English as an additional language.

At the time of the inspection a high proportion of the staff were new to the school. There are, however, strong procedures for their induction, and appropriate training opportunities have been identified to address their areas of inexperience.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful and enterprising school which is held in high regard by the community. Children have very good attitudes to their work and achieve standards which are similar to the national average. The overall quality of teaching is good. The school is strongly led and is committed to continuous improvement. It gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is good overall, particularly for older pupils.
- The children are responsible, well-behaved and very keen to learn.
- Pupils' personal development is very effectively promoted.
- The headteacher is a strong leader and is very well supported by governors and the deputy headteacher.
- A very good programme of additional activities extends children's learning opportunities.

What could be improved

- The teaching needs to be improved in the following areas: making more demands of pupils at Key Stage 1; developing a better understanding of the learning needs of children in the Foundation Stage; increasing expertise in mathematics and French in Year 7.
- Additional resources are required for the Foundation Stage curriculum, for information and communication technology and for the library.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1997 and has maintained an appropriate pace

of development since. The weaknesses identified at that time have largely been addressed successfully. The management of pupils is much more effective. Teachers' lesson plans identify clearly what they want children to learn, though in some lessons the level of demand is still not high enough. There is a rigorous programme to check how effective the teaching is, and a strong commitment to implement the necessary improvements. Schemes of work have been introduced for art, music, and information and communication technology; improvements in the latter have been particularly rapid. The governing body is now fully involved in planning for improvement and in budget setting. The deficiencies relating to collective worship, appraisal and information for parents have all been put right.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A*	B	C	D
mathematics	A	B	D	E
science	A*	C	D	E

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

National Curriculum test results for eleven year-olds over recent years show a decline from the high point of 1999. Compared with schools which take pupils from similar backgrounds, results in the 2001 tests are below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. The school's most recent National Curriculum assessment results for seven year-olds were below average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics, when compared to other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. As with the Year 6 results, there have been wide variations from year to year. Care is necessary in drawing conclusions from these statistics alone. Taking into account the previous attainment of particular year groups, the results of recent years do not indicate a cause for concern.

Children in the Reception Year are making satisfactory progress in all six areas of learning and are likely to exceed all the national goals for the Foundation Stage. Pupils in Year 7 are generally progressing well in all subjects except French.

Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are achieving the expected standards, and in some areas are better than this. There are particular strengths in children's achievements in mathematics and history in Year 6 and in information and communication technology throughout the school. The school has set achievable targets for its performance in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2002 and 2003. Assessment information kept by the school shows that children of all abilities are making satisfactory progress. Those with special educational needs are progressing particularly well.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Children are eager to come to school. They show great interest in lessons and take pride in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite, sensible and considerate.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships within the school are very good. Pupils show respect for different viewpoints and are sensitive to the feelings of others. They co-operate well and readily help one another. They are confident and self-reliant.
Attendance	Both attendance and unauthorised absence are close to the national average.

There are good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for aspects of school life and contribute towards improvements, for example through the School Council. Pupils take these responsibilities seriously and fulfil them very well.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6	Year 7
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.

Teaching in the school is good overall, though it is generally better for the older pupils than for the younger. The teaching of English and mathematics is mostly good throughout the school, and some teaching, in a range of subjects, is outstanding. Teachers make lessons interesting through their enthusiasm and by their use of a wide variety of methods. They plan carefully to meet the different learning needs of pupils. Very good use is made of teaching assistants.

Some of the work given to pupils at Key Stage 1 is not challenging enough. The teaching team for children in the Reception class do not currently have enough understanding of the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum. In Year 7, there is insufficient expertise for teaching French and some aspects of mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	A broad curriculum is taught, with an appropriate emphasis on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. All the required subjects receive sufficient attention. There are many opportunities for additional activities to provide stimulus and depth to pupils' learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is strong support for pupils with special educational needs. They take part in all activities and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils gain in their language skills through participating fully in all aspects of school life. They are able to access the whole curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. Children are taught to be caring and responsible members of the school community, and learn about their own and other cultural traditions. The school is very successful in promoting children's confidence and self-esteem.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Children are valued as individuals and are cared for very well. A close check is kept on their progress. There are well-established procedures for ensuring their health, safety and welfare.

The curriculum is carefully organised to ensure that all children, including those in classes of mixed ages, are able to build on their previous learning experiences. Detailed guidance provides good support for teachers when preparing lessons. Children are helped to understand what they need to do to improve their work, through the setting of individual literacy and numeracy targets.

A very extensive programme of additional activities is based in the school, many run in collaboration with community groups. The school has very effective links with parents, who are involved in many aspects of school life and are kept well informed about their children's progress. Parental satisfaction with the school is very strong.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher has a very clear view of how the school should continue to develop and leads through his personal example. He is strongly supported by the able deputy headteacher. All staff work well together towards a common purpose.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors play an active part in providing a sense of direction for the school. They are well organised and well informed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has developed good systems for checking how well it is doing. It uses this information to devise more effective ways of

	working.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good, and educational priorities are appropriately funded. Good use is made of additional grants for specific purposes.

The school deploys its staff effectively, though at the time of the inspection some were very new and lacking in experience. Resources are generally adequate; however, for the Foundation Stage curriculum, information and communication technology and library provision, there are gaps to be filled. The accommodation is restricted in some areas, but its use is kept under review and improvements are planned. Best value principles are used to guide the school's spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • Behaviour in the school is good. • The school is very approachable. • Teaching is good. • Children are expected to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that the school does not give pupils the right amount of homework.

The positive comments made by parents are supported by inspection evidence. The view that the school is not making effective use of homework is not borne out by the inspection. The work that children are asked to do at home is appropriate and consistently marked.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When the pupils start school in the Reception Year, their attainment is above average. By the time they start in Year 1, their attainment remains better than that expected for their age in all areas. They are confident and well-motivated, absorbing new knowledge and forming secure relationships. They communicate clearly and are making good progress with their writing. They are gaining a good understanding of mathematics and of the world around them. Their physical skills and their creativity are developing well.
2. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum assessments for seven year-olds were above average in reading and mathematics, and average in writing. Except for mathematics, they were lower than those of most other schools which take pupils from similar backgrounds. These results were poorer than for the previous two years, when they compared more favourably with other similar schools.
3. Results in the National Curriculum tests for eleven year-olds in 2001 were average in English, and below average in mathematics and science. They were lower than most other schools which take pupils from similar backgrounds, markedly so in the case of mathematics and science. The test results for this age group show a decline from the high point of 1999. However, other factors need to be considered when judging the school's performance. Though the school has very few pupils who are entitled to free school meals, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is around the national average and the number of pupils with a statement is high. The school gains pupils from a wide range of other schools, many at the time of middle school transfer at the beginning of Year 4, but also into other year groups. This changes the complexion of the older age groups, whose overall results at the end of Key Stage 1 have tended recently to be lower than average. Assessment information kept by the school confirms that pupils of all abilities are making satisfactory progress.
4. Inspection evidence reflects this picture. Standards are uneven from one year group to another and, because of the changes in the school population, are generally higher for the younger children than for the older ones. However, because of the high quality of much of the teaching in the oldest three classes, pupils tend to make more rapid progress here. Targets have been set for pupils' attainment in the national tests for English and mathematics in 2002 and 2003, based on teachers' assessments of how they are currently doing. These targets are likely to be met but they are not ambitious enough, given the evidence of what pupils are currently achieving.
5. In English, current standards for seven year-olds are above average overall, though they are better in speaking and listening and in reading than in writing. Children have a wide vocabulary and contribute actively to class discussions. They enjoy reading a range of books, particularly fiction, and have a good understanding of what they read. Standards are lower in writing mainly because children do not always pay enough attention to accuracy and presentation. Eleven and twelve year-olds are currently attaining average standards overall. As with younger pupils, their speaking and listening skills are good, whether talking in pairs, in class discussions or in drama lessons. Not all pupils, however, have maintained their enthusiasm for reading, and their ability to gain information quickly by skimming or scanning is not as good as it should be. Their writing is often imaginative and makes effective use of more complex structures such as subordinate clauses and paragraphs. Their handwriting is neat, though not always joined.
6. In mathematics, likewise, current standards for seven year-olds are above average. They are developing good mental calculation strategies and many are capable of

working with three and four-digit numbers. They discuss their work avidly and explain their reasoning clearly. Eleven year-olds are achieving well as a result of the expert teaching they receive. For example, they have a sound understanding of decimals and percentages, and are adept at selecting an effective way to calculate mentally from the strategies they have learned. In Year 7 standards are average. This cohort of pupils did much worse than expected in the national test at the end of Year 6, but many have made good progress since. There is, however, still evidence of underachievement, particularly among the more able.

7. In science, standards are average throughout the school. Seven year-olds make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding, though the more able do not always progress as quickly as they should. Eleven year-olds reach the expected standard and their enquiry skills are better than normally found. Twelve year-olds are making good progress as a result of the high quality teaching they receive.
8. In information and communication technology standards are better than normally found at the ages of seven and eleven. This is a tribute to the recent intensive work in the school to raise teachers' levels of expertise. In Year 7 standards are lower, though this is only because current pupils have not had sufficient experience in previous years for their capability to have kept pace with expectations. Their current progress is rapid.
9. In other subjects of the curriculum, pupils generally meet or exceed the standards expected for their ages. In lessons where the quality of teaching is particularly good, pupils show that they are capable of high achievement, for example in history and physical education at the end of Key Stage 2. Standards in French in Year 7, however, are not as high as they should be.
10. Throughout the school, there are no significant differences in the progress of boys and girls, or between pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds. Children with special educational needs are set appropriate targets and make good progress towards them. Class teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator take care to ensure that they are given work which is right for them, and they are given good support to ensure that they can achieve success.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Children's attitudes to school are very good, even better now than reported at the time of the last inspection. They are very friendly and out-going, and get along well with members of staff and with one another. They are eager to learn and willing to concentrate hard in lessons. They are very keen to contribute their ideas to discussion, and persevere with aspects of their work which they find difficult. Their positive attitudes are greatly helped by the strong encouragement they receive from home.
12. Children's behaviour is also better than it was. At the time of the last inspection, frequent lapses of good behaviour were reported in many of the lessons for younger children. This is no longer the case. Older pupils are mostly very sensible, as a direct result of stimulating teaching which makes high demands on both their thinking and their responsibility. They frequently become totally absorbed in their work, sustaining high levels of concentration for long periods of time.

13. Outside lessons pupils of all ages mix freely and are generally well-mannered and polite. Behaviour at lunchtimes is good, making them happy and sociable occasions. Younger children are very appreciative of the help and support they receive from the older ones. Behaviour on the playground is also good. Children have responded well to recent concerns about this, and make very good use of the games equipment which is now provided.
14. Children show respect for one another's beliefs, cultures and backgrounds. They make good use of opportunities in lessons to explore feelings and get advice on how to deal with difficult issues, like keeping friends and respecting differences. They know and adhere to the school's 'golden rules' which they have helped to create. They show a strong awareness of the needs of their classmates who have physical disabilities and make sure they become involved in all activities.
15. Children share ideas and resources and take pleasure in the success of others. They particularly value the frequent opportunities they are given to discuss their work in pairs, and also collaborate well in larger groups, for example, to create a dance sequence or design a page for the school web-site. In such lessons, where they are expected to take on a large measure of responsibility for organising themselves, they respond with great maturity and resourcefulness.
16. Pupils are involved in the daily routines of the school, and love to help. For example, they act as guides to show visitors around the school, and ensure that equipment is well looked-after and put away properly. The School Council provides pupils with a very good opportunity to use their initiative and to contribute towards school improvement. Recent discussions have been about making changes to playtime routines in order to ensure that the space is used fairly and to the benefit of everyone. Members of the Council take their responsibilities very seriously, carefully canvassing the opinions of their classmates and ensuring that they represent their viewpoints accurately. Currently the younger year groups do not have representation on the School Council, but this is being reconsidered.
17. The rate of attendance and of unauthorised absence are both close to the national average. Punctuality is satisfactory and the school works hard to encourage better timekeeping in the small number of children who are late. Registration takes place promptly and little time is wasted during the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. The overall quality of teaching is high, and has improved since the last inspection. The school has recently completed an extensive review of its teaching methods, and the fruits of this are evident throughout the school. Teachers are enthusiastic and use a wide range of approaches to gain children's interest and commitment. Particularly effective are the frequent opportunities which children are given to discuss their work in pairs. Lessons are carefully planned and purposeful, and take good account of pupils' different levels of understanding. Teachers share with their classes information about what they want them to learn, and help individual children to identify what they need to do to improve. Teaching assistants are well briefed, and make a very effective contribution to children's learning. This is particularly so for those with special educational needs.
19. Teaching in the Reception Year is satisfactory overall, with a number of strengths and a few weaknesses. Teachers make skilful use of devices such as puppets and

sound effects to hold children's attention and stimulate their interest. They introduce children to a range of objects, such as an African toy made from recycled materials, which immediately arouse their curiosity. They ask pertinent questions in order to stimulate their thinking. The weaknesses are largely due to inexperience. Children are sometimes given things to do which are not appropriate for their stage of development. Teaching assistants are currently under-used as they have been very recently appointed and have not yet had the opportunity to receive training.

20. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, and sometimes better. However, in some lessons it does not make sufficient demands on pupils' concentration or effort. In many cases tasks are not well matched to what pupils are capable of doing. As a result many children, particularly among the more able, work too slowly and are content to settle for less than their best. In a Year 2 science lesson, for example, pupils had too little time to explain what they had found out, and therefore were unable to develop their understanding of how to make a test fair.
21. Throughout the school, much of the teaching of English and mathematics is strong. In both subjects, basic skills are taught systematically, following the objectives set out in the literacy and numeracy frameworks. Lessons often cover a lot of ground and keep children actively involved. There are, however, some shortcomings in the teaching of mathematics in Year 7. The numeracy strategy is new to this age group and its requirements are not yet sufficiently well understood. In particular, not enough is expected of brighter pupils to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.
22. The best teaching is to be found in the oldest three classes. Some of this is inspirational. For example, in a Year 6 dance lesson the teacher constantly fired pupils' imagination by her enthusiastic response to their ideas. The lesson built to a climax as pupils watched one another's performances with rapt attention. Likewise, in a Year 7 English lesson the teacher skilfully encouraged pupils to experiment with evocative and atmospheric language in their writing about prisons. In another lesson, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were helped to refine their knowledge of living conditions in Tudor times as a result of the teacher's searching questions. In these classes there is a high level of intellectual challenge and pupils take pride in striving to achieve what is expected of them.
23. The teaching of French in Year 7 is unsatisfactory; the teacher's experience as a specialist is too limited to teach the subject successfully.

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

24. The school provides pupils with a balanced curriculum which fosters both their academic achievement and their personal development. There are regular opportunities to take part in a range of experiences to enrich and deepen their learning. Among these have been a series of workshops with successful artists, craftspeople and musicians including the Milton Keynes Youth Opera and the international performer, Evelyn Glennie. There is also an extensive programme of educational visits, including a visit to France.

25. The school teaches all the subjects required. This includes lessons in sex education and drugs education which are taught as part of the well-planned programme of personal, social and health education. The school makes successful use of the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy and these have helped to improve consistency in the way these subjects are planned. Information and communication technology is also taught more systematically than at the time of the last inspection as teachers have become more skilled as a result of specialist training.
26. Each curriculum subject is thoroughly planned by teachers and systematically reviewed to ensure that the pupils make progress in their learning from year to year. This is important in a school where the varying numbers in each year often necessitate classes of more than one age group. Teachers use these subject plans to organise lessons that will challenge and motivate pupils of all abilities. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Their progress is carefully planned and regularly assessed so that they receive the right support in lessons and around school. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to the high quality of this support. As a result, these pupils are able to benefit from all that the school provides, including after-school clubs.
27. The school makes good use of its local community. Over the years it has built up an extensive network of contacts with people and organisations within and beyond its immediate locality. These include a number of other schools which offer their specialist facilities for the use of older pupils, and the on-site pre-school group. The school has also developed a web-site to promote its work further afield.
28. Extra-curricular activities are many and varied and include sports, arts and Information communication technology. Some are run by volunteers during and at the end of the school day. Others, organised by the '326' childcare club, for which parents pay a small fee, provide such activities as pottery led by a specialist tutor. These activities are highly popular with both pupils and parents.
29. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is very good. Children are helped to develop their self-esteem and their social skills by learning, for instance, about the importance of compromise, sharing and co-operation. They respond very well to tasks that require them to take responsibility or to work together. These include opportunities such as older children taking younger ones to the dining hall for lunch, as well as helping with more routine tasks in and around the school. In lessons they frequently discuss their work in pairs, before reporting their findings to the whole class. The School Council offers children a formal channel for contributing to decisions which affect them, though it is open only to older pupils at the present time.
30. Pupils develop their understanding of right and wrong from the time they join the school. They discuss a variety of issues that help them understand more about how human beings should behave towards one another and the impact of people on the natural environment. Older pupils discuss how they feel about recent world events. Teachers and other adults value what pupils have to say and encourage them to talk about their feelings and opinions. The school creates formal occasions for celebration and reflection, for example, in assemblies, and teachers also make sure that there are times in lessons for children to think deeply about what they have seen and heard.
31. There are much better opportunities for pupils to learn about different cultures and world religions than there were at the time of the last inspection. Provision is now very good. The headteacher keeps a check on the types of activities that pupils

formally encounter. Pupils observing religious festivals are asked to talk to their classes so that there is a sharing of information about cultural differences, values and beliefs. There is a high expectation, strongly promoted throughout the school, that pupils should be tolerant and respectful of others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The headteacher and staff know all the children very well. The monitoring of pupils' personal development, though informal, is consequently very effective. Relationships between adults and children are warm and friendly. This promotes an atmosphere of trust and support which is evident throughout the school. For example, during lunchtimes older children help the youngest when they become upset, and in lessons more able children help those who are hesitant or unsure. Everyone plays a part in making sure that children with special educational needs are fully involved in all activities. Individual achievements are frequently celebrated in assemblies; in lessons children take pleasure in others' acquisition of new skills.
33. The school's agreed code of conduct is prominently displayed throughout the school and is known and understood by the children. Occasional lapses of good behaviour are handled sensitively but firmly. The anti-bullying and anti-racist strategies adopted by the school work well, with all staff responding swiftly to any incidents that occur. Parents are reminded about the importance of good attendance in newsletters and the school secretary consistently follows up unexplained absences each day. Members of staff have been fully trained to follow the approved child protection procedures.
34. The school has developed effective systems for the identification and assessment of children with special educational needs and is currently updating them to meet the recommendations of revised SEN Code of Practice. Statements of special educational need, and their annual reviews, are up to date. Supporting individual education plans closely reflect the specific provision identified in the statement. They clearly outline the action the school should take and the additional support other agencies should provide. Parents, teachers, and teaching assistants regularly review the progress children are making in meeting their targets. This enables all children with special educational needs to participate fully in every aspect of school life. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are likewise integrated fully and are able to take advantage of all the school offers.
35. The school has established detailed systems to keep a check on pupils' progress. All teachers maintain comprehensive records of children's academic achievements in lessons. The school makes very effective use of its system of Progress Books to provide a 'snapshot' of children's achievements at regular intervals during their time at school. Good use is also made of various tests to provide reliable indicators of their progress year by year. The analysis of results is thorough, though many teachers are not making the best use of the information gained to guide their lesson planning and teaching.
36. Accurate targets are set for the school's performance in statutory tests in English and mathematics, based on teachers' predictions about what individual pupils are likely to achieve. These are refined in discussion with the headteacher and governors. Children are set their own individual targets for literacy and numeracy and they are discussed and reviewed termly with parents. Most children find them helpful in focusing their attention on what they need to do to improve. However, not all children

are clear about what their targets are, and few references are made to them in lessons or in the marking of work. More consistent and systematic use of this system could be made, in order to help children achieve better standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. The last inspection found that parents were very involved with the life of the school and this continues to be the case. Parents are very supportive and are highly satisfied with all aspects of the school's work. They feel that the school is a very welcoming place and they are most appreciative of its openness and warmth. They especially commend the way in which the school includes all children irrespective of background or need, and they value the social benefits this brings.
38. The school sees a close partnership with parents as fundamental to its work and is very keen to take their views into account. Parents are invited to complete questionnaires on areas of concern and many of their responses are incorporated into the school's improvement plans. Those who attend meetings to learn about aspects of the curriculum, such as the literacy and numeracy strategies, are asked to comment on their usefulness. Focus groups of parents meet regularly to discuss future school policies and procedures.
39. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. The format of the annual report gives parents a clear and concise indication of what their children can and cannot do. The home-school book provides two-way communication between school and home. Regular newsletters keep parents in touch with the day-to-day life of the school.
40. Parents provide a high level of support for the school. Children are strongly encouraged to do well in their work. There are many regular volunteers, including some who are not parents, who help in the classroom. Others help with particular projects, including the highly successful '326 Club' which meets after school. The club is wholly managed by parents and provides a wide variety of activities for children on a daily basis. It is an outstanding asset. Despite there being no formal parent/school organisation, money-raising and social events are regularly organised by parents. The funds raised are spent wisely in consultation with the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41. The work of the school is informed by a clear set of values to which everyone subscribes. Relationships are of a very high quality throughout the school, and this underpins the commitment and loyalty of staff and pupils alike. The emphasis on well-being and happiness, noted in the last inspection report, is still very much in evidence, but the school now has strengthened its determination to achieve high standards.
42. The headteacher is a very effective leader who motivates the whole staff to work towards a common purpose. He is reflective and supportive, and sets a strong personal example to his colleagues. He is receptive to new ideas and well-informed about current educational developments, seeking to involve the school in projects and initiatives which will bring about improvements. He is very ably supported by the energetic and resourceful deputy headteacher.

43. The school has developed good procedures for checking how well it is doing. Consequently the headteacher has a good understanding of the school's current strengths and weaknesses, particularly in the area of teaching. Staff training needs are clearly identified, and very good opportunities are provided for their continuing professional development. Procedures for inducting new members of staff are similarly strong. This has been particularly important in view of the high turnover of staff in the last year.
44. Planning for school improvement, considered weak at the time of the last inspection, is now much better than it was. Priorities for development are identified as a result of the school's checks on its provision, and there are good procedures for judging their success. There is, however, more scope to use information derived from pupil assessments to raise standards, through better target-setting in particular. All teachers with management responsibilities share in devising an action plan for their areas, and leading its implementation. This has been particularly effective in securing improvements in information and communication technology, mathematics and science. Pupils, too, contribute to school improvement through the School Council
45. Financial planning is strong, and value for money satisfactory. The school directs its funding towards its educational priorities. It makes effective use of best value principles to help it to do so, for example through its consultation procedures with parents and pupils. Effective use is made of specific grants for their designated purposes, and the day-to-day administration of the school is very efficient. Members of staff are deployed well, and particularly good use is made of teaching assistants to provide extra help for pupils. An effective solution, however, has not been found for the teaching of French in Year 7. The accommodation is restricted in some areas, but its use is kept under review and improvements are planned. There are some inadequacies in the school's resources. The number of computers for the size of school is too small, and Foundation Stage pupils do not have access to some of the equipment and resources that they need. A bigger range of books is needed in the library.
46. The governing body plays an active part in shaping the overall direction of the school. This is a notable improvement since the last inspection, when the governors' involvement was described as "informal". Governors discuss all aspects of the school's performance in their regular meetings, and many are frequent visitors to the school. The headteacher keeps them very well informed through the detailed reports that he provides. A particularly strong feature is the annual conference at which governors and staff work together to plan for the year ahead.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. The school now needs to:
- Improve the quality of teaching in some areas of the school by:
 - ◆ making higher demands on pupils and increasing the pace of learning at Key Stage 1 (paragraphs 20, 59, 73);
 - ◆ ensuring that all staff working in the Foundation Stage have a good understanding of the learning needs of young children (paragraphs 19, 49);
 - ◆ training programme for teaching numeracy in Year 7 (paragraphs 21, 73);
 - ◆ making arrangements for the specialist teaching of French in Year 7 (paragraphs 23, 45, 99).

- Ensure that there are adequate resources for the Foundation Stage, for information and communication technology and for the library (paragraphs 45, 51, 53, 60, 65, 97).

In addition to the issues above, the governing body should consider the following when drawing up its action plan:

- Making better use of the targets set for pupils to help them improve their work (paragraph 36).
- Making better use of the analysis of test results in matching work to pupils need (paragraph 35).
- Ensuring that the frequent good practice in challenging more able pupils is extended to all lessons (paragraphs 6, 20, 21, 52, 65, 75).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

44

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

28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	6	18	14	3	0	0
Percentage	7	14	41	32	7	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	246
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	36

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	28
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	7	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	17	17	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (96)	89 (93)	95 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	17	18	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (96)	95 (100)	95 (89)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	15	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	12	15
	Girls	12	11	14
	Total	25	23	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (77)	68 (81)	85 (92)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	13	16
	Girls	13	12	13
	Total	28	25	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (81)	74 (81)	85 (81)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	182
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	27.3

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	[]
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	[]
Total number of education support staff	[]
Total aggregate hours worked per week	[]
Number of pupils per FTE adult	[]

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	2

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese	2	
White	1	
Other minority ethnic groups	3	

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	412196
Total expenditure	406210
Expenditure per pupil	1847
Balance brought forward from previous year	9136
Balance carried forward to next year	15122

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	239
Number of questionnaires returned	106

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	43	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	43	5	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	50	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	48	12	5	2
The teaching is good.	48	45	1	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	41	6	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	25	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	33	1	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	44	8	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	65	30	2	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	30	3	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	52	36	5	2	6

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

48. Currently the school admits children to the Reception Year in September and January, but there are plans for schools in Milton Keynes to admit all reception children in September. The school makes good opportunities for teachers, parents and their children to share information through a series of introductory visits and meetings. As a result children settle into school quickly and the partnership between home and school is well established. Attainment on entry to school is higher than average and most children in the reception class have some pre-school experience. By the end of the Reception Year, most children's attainment is likely to go beyond the early learning goals in each of the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum.
49. At the time of the inspection the two part-time teachers of the reception class had been in post for two terms. Since their arrival, the school has made rapid progress in developing a planned curriculum for the recommended six areas of learning. Together with their newly appointed assistants, they are strongly committed to creating a good learning environment but have not had sufficient time to establish a confident working team. Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some strong features and some weaknesses due to inexperience. As yet, the assistants have not had an opportunity to attend training in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The classroom is small for the number of children but good use is made of an adjoining cloakroom area for play activities. There are some gaps in the range of resources.

Personal, social and emotional development

50. Children are interested and motivated to learn. They try new activities and maintain concentration for short sessions. They are forming good relationships with one another and with adults, and are learning to work as part of a class or a small group. They show good independence in classroom routines such as undressing for physical exercise and getting ready for lunch. However, there are too few occasions when they can select their own resources and plan their own activities. They also need more opportunities to express their feelings and think about issues from the viewpoint of others.

Communication, language and literacy

51. Children start school with good communication skills. They enjoy listening to stories, rhymes and songs. They correctly recall the main characters and events in stories they have heard, and imaginatively recreate them in their play. They know some large and small letters of the alphabet, and, with adult guidance, can use them in their writing. They know the sounds that some letters make. They can copy words and letters and many can write their names accurately. The teaching of literacy is lively and as a result children are eager to learn more. They like books, but their choice is limited, as there are not enough picture and early reference books in the classroom.

Mathematical development

52. Children start school with a good understanding of a range of mathematical concepts and many have already met the learning goals for the end of the Reception Year. More able children can make repeating patterns using four different beads or cubes. They can say which object is bigger or smaller than another. They know that two and two make four, count with precision beyond twenty and recognise numerals less than ten. Some teaching activities could take better account of children's knowledge in this area. Currently children's mathematical thinking is insufficiently stretched.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

53. Children identify a range of materials, such as metal and wood, from which toys are made. They observe similarities and differences in their large collection of teddy bears. They describe the feel of biscuit dough on their hands and note the changes when it is cooked. They have a weekly lesson in the computer suite but are unable to consolidate their learning because there is no computer in the classroom. There is a shortage of play equipment representing, for example, farms, zoos, and hospitals. The range of construction equipment is also limited.

Physical development

54. Children are given daily opportunities for physical activities outside when the weather permits. They use either the small outdoor area in groups, where they have regular access to wheeled toys, or the hall for class lessons. They handle toys, tools and modelling dough with good control and co-ordination. In cookery sessions, they use the equipment with confidence and enthusiasm. They respond well to instructions and are developing an awareness of safety. The school has plans to improve the outdoor area in order to increase opportunities for children to develop a wider range of physical skills and adventurous activities.

Creative development

55. Children learn the words of songs quickly, and enjoy singing together and adding the appropriate actions. They pay careful attention to stopping and starting signals and make very good attempts to anticipate pauses in tunes. They make sound effects for stories such as 'Peace at Last'. They listen attentively to music while taking a mid-morning snack. In their role-play, and when playing with dolls' house equipment, they take on different characters, for example those in the Goldilocks story. Teachers become involved in these activities in order to sustain their concentration and extend their use of language. There were few opportunities to see children paint and draw but the children's pictures on the wall indicate that they successfully explore colour, shape and form in their artwork.

ENGLISH

56. The school has successfully implemented the literacy strategy throughout the school. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching, particularly for pupils from the age of seven. The teaching for these pupils is now good overall, and sometimes outstanding; this is a better picture than at the time of the last inspection. Teaching at Key Stage 1 remains satisfactory.
57. A new literacy coordinator has recently been appointed and brings to the post a valuable depth of knowledge. She has not yet had sufficient time to evaluate provision properly, but an interim action plan has been written which promises some immediate improvements.
58. Standards in speaking and listening are high throughout the school. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and contribute readily to discussions of all kinds, particularly when they are given opportunities to talk in pairs. Lively discussions are held, especially in the older classes, on issues which are of immediate interest to children such as the use of mobile phones or possible changes to playground rules. Teachers maintain the flow by asking stimulating and challenging questions which ensure that children give reasons for their responses. More reticent children are skilfully drawn in and given sufficient time to contribute. Good use is made of drama activities to develop confidence and the ability to use language persuasively.
59. In reading, standards reached by seven year-olds are at least average. They enjoy reading together in pairs so that they can talk about the pictures and read parts to each other. They are less forthcoming in whole class groups, where the expectation that they will all join in is not strong enough. Children read mainly from a range of stories drawn from reading schemes and general fiction. They read accurately and show that they have understood the main points. They remember details about the plot and find their own words to describe the characters. Most pupils are given support at home and the reading diaries are used well, both by teachers and parents, to record children's progress.
60. Standards in reading for the eleven and twelve year-olds are average. Children read with fluency and understanding, and the more able are frequently avid readers. A few of these prefer to bring books from home because they find the books in the library dull. The rate of progress which children make in their reading during Key Stage 2 is variable, however. Too many lack enthusiasm. Some are uncertain about the way in which the library is organised or, in Year 7, of the way books are classified. There are gaps in their knowledge of how to scan or skim texts to locate information quickly, or how to use the contents and index pages of a book. Standards could be raised by greater access to both reference books and fiction, and better guidance in their use.
61. Writing standards for seven year-olds are average. They have frequent opportunities to write in lessons on a variety of subjects, and this is helping to consolidate their skills. Spelling is taught well. This means that children remember words which are common and apply their knowledge of sounds to those which are not. Pupils also know about capital letters and full stops, though they do not spend sufficient time reading what they have written and making corrections. Their persistent errors prevent their work from reaching the high standards it could.
62. By the age of eleven most pupils, including those that join the school during Key Stage 2, are reaching average standards. They can divide their writing into paragraphs and are beginning to use formal language to present an argument. They can identify subordinate clauses in complex sentences, and write examples of their own. Following a discussion of the features of particular kinds of writing, for example,

fables, myths and legends, they can begin to apply these in their own work. Their handwriting is neat and well presented, though too many are not joining their letters consistently. The marking of work for the older pupils is consistently very good. It helps children to know clearly what they are doing well and what they can do to improve.

63. The teaching of spelling for the seven to eleven year-olds is lively and in the majority of classes standards are satisfactory. Teachers help pupils to find ways to remember the common words that they need, to see patterns and identify differences. In some lessons, insufficient attention is given to ensuring that pupils spell correctly the special words they need, in science lessons, for example.
64. Pupils' writing in Year 7 is thoughtful and imaginative. They study carefully the ways in which authors write and then apply the same techniques to their own work. They confidently experiment with words and phrases in order to create the mood and feeling that they want. During this year these pupils have made rapid progress as a result of teaching of the highest quality. The work they are given, and the support they receive during lessons, continually helps them to improve and refine their writing. The teacher's strong subject knowledge, and the enthusiasm which she brings to her explanations, motivates and challenges all pupils to concentrate hard and strive to do their best.
65. The quality, range and quantity of resources for teaching English are satisfactory overall but, as the school recognises, the library needs revitalising.

MATHEMATICS

66. The school has enthusiastically adopted the planning guidelines for the National Numeracy Strategy. Teachers now have greater confidence: they expect more from the children and their lessons have a better structure. They are quick to implement new ideas they have gained from training courses or from discussion with colleagues. They receive guidance from the subject leader and benefit from an evaluation of their work. All these are significant improvements since the time of the last inspection.
67. By the age of seven, pupils attain standards which are above those expected for their age. They know, for example, what each digit in a two-digit number represents, and understand that 45 is equivalent to $40 + 5$. Many pupils can confidently partition three-digit numbers and some can work with four digits. They discuss what they are doing in small groups and in whole-class sessions, explaining how they work things out and using correct mathematical language.
68. By the age of eleven, pupils are generally attaining standards which are typical for their age, and many are achieving well. For example, most recognise that division is the inverse of multiplication, and can use this knowledge to help them calculate mentally. They understand decimals, counting accurately forwards and backwards in steps of 0.25 or multiplying 0.79 by 100. They know how to work out 20 per cent or 40 per cent of a number. More able pupils go beyond this, calculating, for example, the additional cost of VAT on an item valued at £500.
69. Pupils in Year 7 likewise attain average standards. For example, they derive information from charts and graphs, and express proportions in fractions and percentages. Given that standards for this cohort were below average in the national tests at the end of Year 6, this represents good progress for many of them. However,

those capable of higher attainment are not given work of sufficient difficulty and are therefore still not doing as well as they could.

70. Pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 are mostly making the progress expected. They are prepared to work hard, concentrating well and persevering to overcome difficulties. For older pupils at Key Stage 2, progress is often more rapid, due to the high level of demand in the lessons. Children enjoy the intellectual stimulus which mathematics offers, and strive to extend their skills by setting challenges for themselves. One Year 6 pupil, for example, chose to work out 61 per cent of a number, and was able to explain her mental strategy for doing so. Another moved quickly to working with numbers to three decimal places as soon as she had grasped the principle with two.
71. In many classes good use is being made of information and communication technology to develop children's mathematical understanding. For example, databases help them to see quickly how information can be presented in different ways. Pupils also make effective use of their mathematical skills in other subjects, for example, in science, measuring the temperature of a hot liquid and plotting a graph to show how quickly it cools.
72. The teaching of mathematics is often good and sometimes very good. Features common to the best lessons include the highly effective use of resources, such as counting sticks, number lines and individual whiteboards. Teachers keep lessons interesting by ensuring variety and good pace. They make it clear that they expect the most of pupils through constantly encouraging them to extend the limits of their understanding. They make sure that all children are fully involved by their skilful questioning and good attention to everyone's learning needs. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional help of high quality which enables them to achieve success.
73. There are few weaknesses in the teaching. In Year 2, teaching would be even better if more attention was paid to ensuring that the pace of work is maintained throughout lessons. In Year 7, where some aspects of the teaching are currently unsatisfactory, a better understanding of the subject is needed to ensure that the right demands are made of pupils.

SCIENCE

74. Standards overall are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection. A number of improvements have been made under the capable leadership of the subject co-ordinator. These include using information from tests and lesson observations to modify teaching.
75. By the age of seven, standards are comparable to those found nationally. Pupils can complete simple experiments, for example, to find out whether toys can be both pushed and pulled, or whether a seed will grow in the dark. They understand some ways to ensure that a test is fair. They can talk about their observations and record what they have found out in different ways. Most children make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding, though the more able do not always progress as quickly as they ought to.
76. By the time they are eleven, pupils' knowledge and understanding reach the expected standard but their enquiry skills are better than normally found. Pupils plan carefully how they will carry out an experiment, for example, separating solid objects from

water by sieving and filtering. They thoughtfully select the equipment and materials they need. They discuss their work avidly, drawing on their previous knowledge to help them predict what might happen. Their observations and comments are astute and precise, distinguishing, for instance, between clear and clean water. They record their findings carefully and accurately.

77. Twelve year-olds also successfully develop their understanding that the scientific method involves the collection and interpretation of evidence. For example, they know how to test solutions for acids and alkalis. They can make predictions about, and then evaluate, the changes that occur when adding substances to a solution of red cabbage juice. They are making good progress in extending their knowledge, too, for example, about the properties of rocks or aspects of astronomy.
78. Pupils are enthusiastic about science from an early age and are keen to learn more. They work with confidence and handle equipment and materials responsibly, showing awareness of safety issues. They are very keen to put forward ideas and opinions, and are quick to make use of new scientific vocabulary in both discussions and written work.
79. Pupils are taught investigative skills particularly well, especially at Key Stage 2 and in Year 7, and are given time to apply them. In the best lessons, teachers outline the purpose of the work, highlighting the scientific knowledge and new vocabulary, and expect pupils to think carefully about their work. All pupils are helped to develop their understanding by the emphasis on working methodically, observing carefully and measuring accurately. When planning activities for lessons, teachers take into account their knowledge of individual pupils. This ensures that they are all given work at the right level of difficulty. Explanations are detailed and authoritative, and pupils are strongly motivated by the responsibility they are given for organising their work.

ART AND DESIGN

80. Judgements about attainment and progress are based upon an examination of work on display, pupils' sketch books and work portfolios, and observations of two lessons.
81. Pupils meet the expected standards in all parts of the school, as at the time of the last inspection. By the age of seven, pupils have a secure grounding in basic skills such as colour mixing and the use of pencils, paint-brushes, chalks and crayons. By the age of eleven, they successfully use a range of materials such as feathers, pasta and buttons, as well as paper and paint, to produce, for example, collage pictures. They approach their work with thought and care. For example, the portraits of famous Tudors, on display at the time of the inspection, were detailed and well observed, making good use of historical sources.
82. The school has a scheme of work to ensure that art and design experiences for pupils get progressively harder. It makes good use at times of local artists and craftspeople, and pupils clearly enjoy their art lessons and clubs. The variety of activities in pupils' portfolios and displayed work is adequate but there are too few opportunities for three-dimensional work other than pottery. To address this, the school has started to use some commercial materials to give teachers a wider range of stimulating ideas for lessons.
83. Teachers help children to experiment with different materials and techniques to get the effect they desire. They challenge children to extend their skills by constantly

advising, assisting, prompting and praising. Pupils respond well to this, persevering with their ideas and reflecting thoughtfully on the outcomes of their efforts.

84. The school has the capacity to improve art and design work further. There is a comprehensive plan of action, written by the subject leader, to guide it in doing so.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. Throughout the school children are given an interesting range of opportunities to design, make and evaluate various products. For example, they have studied bread making, created a recipe for a savoury loaf, and evaluated its taste and appearance. Others have designed and made models and cards using simple levers and pneumatics, or evaluated the effectiveness of food packaging.
86. Two lessons were observed during the inspection. In both, ten and eleven year-olds were examining different slippers as a preparation for designing their own slippers in future lessons. The teachers led lively discussions which encouraged pupils to consider who would be likely to wear the slippers, what they were made from and how comfortable and practical they were. Children were keen to contribute their suggestions and observations, for example about why certain materials had been used rather than others. Their drawings were detailed and well-observed, indicating, for example, how many parts had been used in their construction.
87. These lessons and the other work examined indicate that standards in design and technology are satisfactory and that the subject is often well taught. There are sufficient resources, which are well organised and of adequate quality.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

88. Three history lessons were observed, all at Key Stage 2, but it was not possible to see geography being taught during the inspection period.
89. By the time they are eleven, pupils' attainment in history is better than normally found at this age. They are adept at gathering and interpreting historical evidence from a range of sources. For example, they carefully extract information about how people used to live from copies of original paintings, as well as from television programmes about the Tudor period. They have a secure understanding that some sources of information are more reliable than others and can offer plausible reasons for why some things happened as they did. They write detailed, illustrated accounts about famous characters, such as Henry VIII, with feasible explanations as to why his marriages may have failed.
90. The good progress which pupils make at this age results from the lively and informed quality of the teaching. This emphasises the importance of looking at evidence and motivates children to find out as much as they can. Activities are imaginative and well-organised. Note-taking is practised as an important skill and information communication technology is used well to widen the field of historical research. Pupils enjoy the challenge of the work they are given. They use resources confidently and in a discerning manner, asking questions of their own, as well as responding to those from the teacher.

91. In geography, pupils study a range of localities in and around Hanslope and much further afield. They experience a suitably varied and well-planned geography curriculum, enriched by visits to a field study centre and to France. Children's work throughout the school indicates that standards are as they should be.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

92. At the time of the last inspection, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) were below those expected. Since then the school has appointed a new subject leader whose personal expertise and irrepressible enthusiasm has had a decisive effect on the school's provision. A computer suite of ten networked computers has been established, which enables children throughout the school to have regular weekly lessons. All teachers are currently receiving intensive training to improve their own capability and their understanding of how to teach the subject successfully.
93. The result has been a significant improvement in standards, which for the seven and eleven year-olds are now better than those normally found for pupils of their age. Seven year-olds use computers confidently and purposefully. They use a word-processor to write captions, labels and simple sentences, and painting programs to illustrate their work. They select and use appropriate software to make pictograms and block graphs. They use the mouse accurately to control the cursor on screen. They know how to save, retrieve and print their work. Eleven year-olds understand how the use of information communication technology can enhance the presentation of work. They know how to create, edit and format text. They can use simple databases and the basic features of a spreadsheet, and can find information on the Internet. They make good use of their developing capability to create a range of documents, such as letters, posters, and certificates.
94. Children in Year 7 confidently use the Internet as a resource for research and make effective use of control technology. During visits to local secondary schools they have further opportunities to extend their skills, for example by creating a multi-media presentation. They, too, are making good progress and their confidence and expertise is developing rapidly, but their overall capability is not yet sufficient for them to reach the expected standard.
95. The teaching of information communication technology is good, particularly for the older pupils. All teachers now have a sound understanding of the subject, and they use their increasing knowledge well to explain techniques and respond to children's questions. There are frequent opportunities for children to experiment, practice and refine their skills. They have high expectations of children and set appropriate challenges for them. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, children who had designed a control procedure to switch a lighthouse on and off were encouraged to synchronise the sounding of the foghorn with the switching on and off of the lighthouse's internal lights.
96. Children enjoy their work and become engrossed in the tasks set. They talk knowledgeably about what they are doing and support one another when problems arise. All pupils are helped to experience success. Individual and group support provided by teaching assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons and make good progress.
97. The ratio of computers to pupils is below the current average for primary schools and

additional machines are therefore needed. This will enable further development in the use of information communication technology in other subjects. A well attended computer club meets at lunchtime and provides a good opportunity for children to apply and consolidate their information communication technology skills, for example by e-mailing children in other schools and participating in 'on-line' discussions and games.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

98. Standards in French are below what they should be. Pupils' ability to communicate is very limited, with only the highest attainers able to respond to basic questions about themselves and their families. The majority do not understand questions and classroom commands without prompting, and cannot easily remember work they have done before. There are three main reasons for this. Firstly, they do not have enough opportunities to use French to exchange information with each other or the teacher. Secondly, they are not able to practise the new language enough before being asked to write it, so their pronunciation suffers. Thirdly, work from previous units is not regularly re-used to keep it fresh in the mind, to build a growing store of language and to develop confidence.
99. The teacher works extremely hard to prepare her lessons. She is positive and encouraging, drawing a good response from both boys and girls. Her whole-class teaching is lively, and she uses her support assistant well to ensure that pupils with special educational needs can keep up with the rest of the class. However, the school does not have a subject specialist and is therefore not able to gauge exactly what pupils of this age should be able to do. Consequently, not enough demands are made of pupils and uncorrected errors spoil the quality of both spoken and written work. The time currently allotted, two thirty-minute periods per week, is about half the time normally given to French in Year 7. The combination of these factors means that standards are exactly as they were at the time of the last inspection.

MUSIC

100. The evidence of one lesson indicates that by the age of eleven pupils meet the expected standards in composing and performing. They know some of the ways in which composers show how music is to be played. They can make their playing loud or soft in response to musical notation. When composing, they select instruments thoughtfully to create special effects. They handle instruments with care and play well together in a small percussion band. They follow a simple score and take note of the conducting of the teacher. The lesson was well paced and ensured that children built up their skills from one activity to the next.
101. During assemblies for older pupils, a range of recorded music is played and children who take instrumental lessons are given an opportunity to perform. Singing is tuneful and rhythmic though somewhat lacking in feeling.

102. Children have exciting opportunities to make music inspired by different cultures such as that of the Bakka tribe in Cameroon. The music curriculum of the school is further enriched by the availability of instrumental lessons and lunchtime choir and recorder clubs.
103. Teachers now use a published scheme of work to help them structure their lessons and ensure that there is a consistent approach to music teaching. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection. The stock of percussion instruments, however, is barely adequate and there are still too few examples of recorded music from other cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

104. The physical education curriculum is well planned and offers a broad range of activities over the course of the year. All children participate in half-termly programmes which include athletics, gymnastics, dance, games and swimming. Older children have opportunities to undertake outdoor and adventurous activities during an annual residential visit. Children in Year 7 benefit from the PE facilities and specialist teaching when they visit their partner secondary schools. A good choice of lunchtime and after-school clubs further extends children's opportunities to participate in physical and sporting experiences.
105. In the two lessons observed children were encouraged to warm up thoroughly and were very receptive to the instructions and suggestions made by the teacher. Younger children were provided with sound opportunities to practice and refine their bat and ball skills, which they then successfully employed in games. The older pupils were inspired by very skilful teaching to create and develop a sophisticated sequence of dance movements.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

106. Religious education lessons are based on the locally agreed syllabus and nationally available schemes of work. Pupils show an appropriate knowledge and understanding of Christianity and some other principal religions of the world.
107. Seven year-olds recall stories that Jesus told, such as The Prodigal Son, and know the sequence of the main events. They can find simple words to describe how the people must have felt, and more able children are able to retell the story from the viewpoint of one of the characters. Older pupils are able to recall details about a number of important Jewish festivals. In their discussion they speculate about why trees are important in the festival, Tu B'Shvat. The work of pupils in Year 6 records their thoughts about the words of Confucius, showing mature reflection on the learning which can be derived from past mistakes.
108. Insufficient lessons were seen to make broad judgements about the teaching. Opportunities for collective worship and visits from local Christian ministers make a good contribution to children's religious education and personal development. The new subject leader is awaiting the review of the locally agreed syllabus before planning any further development for the teaching of religious education.