

INSPECTION REPORT

LIVINGSTONE LOWER SCHOOL

Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109432

Headteacher: Mrs M Sharpe

Reporting inspector: Mr S M O'Toole
20891

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th July 2002

Inspection number: 243412

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Type of school: | First School |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 - 9 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Clapham Road Bedford |
| Postcode: | MK41 7LG |
| Telephone number: | 01234 352879 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mr A Ballantyne |
| Date of previous inspection: | 15/09/1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-----------|----------------------|--|---|
| 20891 | S O'Toole | Registered inspector | Foundation stage Equal opportunities English as an additional language Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology | The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What could the school do to improve further? |
| 14178 | P Willman | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 15011 | M Wallace | Team inspector | Special educational needs English Geography History Physical education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 15447 | C Glenis | Team inspector | Science Art and design Music Religious education | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Livingstone Lower School, located in Bedford, is a smaller than average sized primary school which admits boys and girls aged from four to nine. Most pupils live close to the school and their socio-economic circumstances are well below average. A total of 105 pupils (64 boys and 47 girls, including part-time children in the reception class) attend the school. The school admits pupils from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds. Almost half of the pupils are of white UK origin, 49 have other family backgrounds. The largest minority ethnic groups are Bangladeshi (about a third of whom speak Sylheti), European, Caribbean, Indian, and Pakistani. Of the 47 pupils who have English as an additional language most are at an early stage of English acquisition. Forty-one pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average. There are 53 pupils with special educational needs, which is well above average. Two have a statement of special educational need, which is about average for this size of school. There is a high level of mobility with about a fifth of the pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time of first admission or transfer. Children start in the reception class in the term after their fourth birthday. Attainment on admission is well below average; children have limited communication skills and their personal, social and emotional development is below that expected for their age. The school has a stable staff but has been unable to appoint a reception class teacher to cover during the last two terms. The school is part of an Education Action Zone and is also involved in an information and communication technology project with Bedford College.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and standards are average overall although generally below average in English. Pupils are prepared very effectively for life in a culturally diverse society. The teaching is good and pupils enjoy learning. The headteacher is determined and very capable and leads the school very well, ably supported by governors and other staff. Good management of all aspects of school life ensures that pupils' needs are met. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is good
- The headteacher is a very good leader and the school is managed well.
- The pupils' behaviour is good and they have positive attitudes to work.
- This is a caring school.

What could be improved

- The development of pupils' skills in English.
- The use of marking and target-setting to help pupils improve.
- The school's development plan.
- Attendance.

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 improvement since it was last inspected in September 1997. Pupils now make good progress and a higher percentage of pupils achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards in design and technology, information and communication technology and religious education are now average. The school has successfully tackled the issues raised in the report. Leadership and management have improved with a better balance of staff responsibilities and involvement by the governors. Teaching is now good. The school is in a secure position to build upon the good quality of education provided.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| reading | C | C | C | A |
| writing | C | D | C | A |
| mathematics | E* | C | D | B |

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Children start at the school with very low levels of skills, knowledge and understanding in their development. They make satisfactory progress in communication, language and literacy, in physical, creative and mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. By the time they start in Year 1 most have achieved the goals expected for their age in personal, social, emotional and physical development. Very few children attain the goals for their age in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

The school sets realistically challenging targets and is on course to meet them although the high level of mobility in each year group affects overall performance from year to year. The school has steadily increased the proportion of pupils attaining average levels in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 4. Inspection evidence and the preliminary results of national tests at the end of Year 2 this year show an overall fall in standards in reading from 2001. Standards in writing are below average and they are average in reading and mathematics. The dip in standards is due to the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. By the end of Year 4 standards in reading and mathematics are average but they are below average in writing. By the end of Years 2 and 4 standards in science are average. Pupils achieve well given the high proportion of pupils

who start at the school with little or limited English language skills. Overall standards are sufficiently high with the exception of pupils' skills in speaking, listening and writing. Standards in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, music, history, geography, physical education and religious education are in line with those expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils make good use of their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects but computers are not used sufficiently to support their work in some subjects. Pupils make good progress. Pupils with special educational need benefit from well-focused individual education plans and effective teaching and they make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress and it is a mark of the school's success that many of these pupils achieve average standards by the end of Year 4. The school makes good provision for the more able and these pupils make good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. The pupils are enthusiastic about school and keen to learn. They enjoy lessons and participate well in extra-curricular activities. They particularly enjoy practical subjects. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. The pupils play together well. There is little bullying or rough play. Pupils show respect for others, feelings and beliefs and there is a good sense of racial harmony. There has been one exclusion. |
| Personal development and relationships | Good. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are co-operative and helpful. They enjoy taking responsibility. Relationships are good. |
| Attendance | Unsatisfactory. Although attendance rates are improving they are well below average. Attendance is affected much by pupils taking holidays in term-time and higher than average levels of illness. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 4 |
|-------------------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Quality of teaching | 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.

The quality of teaching is good. Teaching meets the needs of all groups of pupils. The more able pupils are set sufficiently challenging work. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and all staff work hard to identify particular needs, plan appropriate work and set targets which are reviewed regularly. The support for pupils with English as an additional language is good and these pupils are taught well. This is particularly effective in Years 1 to 4 where the bi-lingual support contributes much to the pupils' progress and understanding of English. In the reception class, the teaching of reading is good. Planning is satisfactory but activities are not always well focused and some opportunities to develop the children's language skills are missed. In Years 1 to

4, the teaching of English and mathematics is good as there is a strong emphasis on improving basic skills although there is not enough use made of role-play and drama to extend pupils' spoken language. The teachers encourage pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills well in other subjects but this is not as well done in using computers to support the teaching of science, art and design and music. Strengths in the teaching include thorough planning and preparation including the good use of resources. Teachers also have good relationships with the pupils and manage behaviour well. Support staff often make a significant contribution to learning but in some lessons they are not sufficiently involved. The teaching of design and technology, religious education, history, geography and information and communication technology is good. Art and design, music, science and physical education are taught satisfactorily. Pupils' learning is good. In most classes the pupils apply their skills well and work hard. They are mostly attentive although lose concentration when introductions go on too long. The teachers start lessons by sharing objectives with the pupils so that they are clear about what is expected. However, marking does not guide the pupils sufficiently on how they might improve and there is insufficient attention given to dating the pupils' work and insisting on careful presentation.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 enjoy an interesting and sufficiently challenging curriculum. The provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Some aspects of art and design and music are not given sufficient emphasis. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good. Pupils are supported well through thoughtful teaching and good additional support. Individual education plans are well crafted and reviewed regularly. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good. Staff have good experience and expertise in supporting these pupils. There is good bi-lingual teaching and a suitable range of resources. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good. The school's very good provision for cultural development equips pupils well for life in a multi-cultural society. The pupils are supported well through effective provision for moral and social development. The school promotes good spiritual understanding and respect for different faiths. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | This is a caring school. The staff know the pupils well and work hard to meet their needs through careful and effective assessment and support. |

The school has good links with parents and most are supportive of the school's work. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Good. The headteacher provides firm and very effective direction and the staff are a successful team who work together well. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Very effectively. The governors are shrewd and perceptive and provide very good support. They take a keen and well-informed interest in the work of the school and regularly check on its performance and finances. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. The school makes good use of data to set targets and the system of performance management is well established. More needs to be done to sharpen up the development plan to include measures of success. There is good monitoring of teaching. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good. Financial systems and control are robust and effective. The school uses funds wisely to improve the quality of education by ensuring best value when purchasing supplies and services. Very good use is made of additional funds and staffing provided through the Education Action Zone. |

The school's accommodation is good and is enhanced by extensive grounds. There are satisfactory resources for the curriculum although the library is short of books. There is a good number of staff who have good experience and expertise.

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's progress and enjoyment of school. • The good quality of teaching. • The approachability of the staff. • The way the school helps their children to become mature. • The leadership and management of the school. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in homework. • The information they receive about their children's progress. • The way the school works with them. |

The inspection team supports the parents' positive views. The school makes appropriate provision for homework. There are suitable opportunities for the parents to be involved in the school. The

quality of information provided is satisfactory but reports do not contain sufficient detail of progress in all subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards at the school have improved since the previous inspection due to much better teaching and effective leadership and management. There is some variation from year to year in national test results at the end of Year 2 and preliminary indicators of the results this year show a dip in attainment in reading and writing when compared with 2001. However, the trend over time shows that there is an increased percentage of pupils attaining average and above levels in the tests. Given the pupils' well below average attainment on admission to the school the pupils achieve well and make good progress in most aspects of English, mathematics and science.
2. The following factors have a significant bearing on attainment at the school:
 - Well below average attainment on admission.
 - Most pupils on entry to the school have limited communication skills and their personal, social and emotional development is underdeveloped.
 - About half of the pupils have English as an additional language and most of these pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition.
 - Almost half of the pupils have free school meals and the school is in an area of socio-economic deprivation.
 - There are well above average levels of mobility. For example, over half of the pupils in the current Year 2 have changed in the last year.
 - Well below average attendance.
3. The school works hard to overcome these disadvantages and is successful in raising the pupils' achievement because of the following:
 - Good teaching.
 - A strong emphasis on planning work which caters for pupils of all abilities.
 - Good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
 - Good provision for pupils with English as an additional language.
 - Effective use of assessment to identify the needs of the pupils.
 - Involvement in the Bedford Education Action Zone.
4. More remains to be done in the following areas in order to build upon the school's success:
 - Extending pupils' speaking and listening skills through drama and role-play.
 - Developing the school's approach to the teaching of writing.
 - Extending opportunities for creative expression through art and design and music.
 - Using marking more effectively to guide pupils on how they might improve.
5. Results of national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 showed that pupils attained average standards in reading and writing and below average standards in speaking and listening and mathematics. When compared with schools with similar intakes standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. Teacher assessments showed that standards in science were above average. Inspection evidence shows that this year standards in writing and speaking and listening are below average. Standards in reading, mathematics and science are average. These variations are due to the natural differences found in small cohorts, better teaching through implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and

the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in this cohort. In addition, the year group has been affected by high levels of mobility.

6. Results of optional tests at the end of Year 4 in 2001 showed that standards in reading and mathematics were below average and standards were well below average in writing. The results were a significant improvement on the previous year. This good improvement has been maintained this year and standards in mathematics and reading are now average, although they are below average in writing. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. The areas for development in writing are due to pupils' limited skills in spelling and lack of a wide vocabulary and understanding of ideas. Inspection evidence shows that standards in science are average.
7. There are variations in the performance of boys and girls from year to year. Girls tend to achieve better than boys in reading and writing, although the gap in performance is closing. In mathematics girls do very slightly better than boys and the school's successful approach in teaching this subject means that the gap in performance is now narrow. Analysis of tests results at the end of Year 4 shows that the girls achieve significantly better than boys in reading, writing and spelling but boys outperform girls in mathematics. Care needs to be taken when drawing conclusions from these figures as the number of girls and boys involved is quite small and one pupil may represent seven per cent.
8. About half of the pupils have family backgrounds that are other than UK heritage. A third of pupils have Bangladeshi origins. The school makes good provision to support these pupils and they make good progress. The small number of pupils in each cohort means that test results should be treated with caution but the trend over time shows clearly that pupils with English as an additional language achieve well and that by the end of Year 4 most of them attain close to average standards in reading and mathematics although their writing skills are below average. This represents good success for the school.
9. Parents are pleased with the progress their children make and inspection evidence confirms their views. Pupils of all abilities and ethnic backgrounds make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs, almost half of the school, are given good support. They benefit from having well focused individual education plans and the staff use these plans effectively to keep a check on progress and to plan work. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly successful in mathematics because of the effective teaching. The staff carefully and accurately identify more able pupils and plan work which is sufficiently challenging for these pupils. They make good progress and achieve well in national and other tests. As a result about a quarter of the pupils achieve standards which are in advance of their age in reading and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 4.
10. Children in the reception class make satisfactory progress overall and good progress in reading and personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the reception year most children achieve the goals expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development and reading. Very few attain the early learning goals in other aspects of communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their attainment is hampered by poor language skills on admission and some lack of staff expertise in using activities to fully extend the children's spoken language through, for example, role-play. However, the basic skills of reading including learning new words and using the sounds of letters to build words are taught well and the children make good gains in this aspect of their work. By the end of the reception year, the children are socially confident and have a good interest in learning. Their positive attitudes equip them well for work in Year 1.

11. Progress in reading, mathematics, science, design and technology, information and communication technology, history, geography and physical education is good due to effective teaching. Progress in writing, speaking and listening, art and design, music and religious education is satisfactory. This variation in the rate of progress is due to the impact of teaching, teachers' subject knowledge and curriculum planning. By the end of Years 2 and 4 the pupils achieve appropriate standards for their age in all subjects except writing and speaking and listening although progress could be better in art and design and music if the curriculum was broader.
12. There are strengths in some subjects. The school focuses well on improving pupils' competence in arithmetic and the pupils enjoy and are successful in mental arithmetic and calculating. The work in science is built around practical experiments and the pupils have a good understanding of how to carry out investigations thoroughly and systematically. History and geography are taught in an interesting way which involves the pupils in finding out information and in referring to a range of information. The school has made good headway in improving resources for information and communication technology and the pupils use computers competently and have secure basic skills. However, the development of pupils' skills in sending and receiving e-mails and using the Internet has been hampered by problems with the equipment. Standards in design and technology and religious education have improved significantly since the previous inspection and these subjects are taught well so that pupils show good practical skills when designing and making models and also have a sensitive and thorough understanding of the beliefs and values of others. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in design and technology when planning, measuring and cutting. They also use some charts and graphs in science to illustrate their work. Pupils apply their literacy skills well when writing about their scientific experiments and recording their work in history. However, they have limited skills in using books for research as the library has a limited stock and an over-reliance on completing worksheets which require short answers inhibits opportunities for extended writing.
13. In summary:
 - The pupils achieve well in almost all aspects of their work.
 - Progress is mostly good.
 - Standards are average in almost all subjects, with the exception of English.
 - Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve well.
 - There are some variations in the performance of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The attitudes of all pupils, including the children in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, are good. Because of the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school, pupils generally behave well and most develop into sensible and sociable members of the school community. They have strong and supportive relationships with each other, their teachers and with other adults who work with them and this creates a harmonious and happy atmosphere in the school. Pupils' good response to these aspects of their development has been maintained well since the last inspection. Attendance, however, is not as good as it was. Although there has been an improvement during the current year, it is not as good as in most schools and is unsatisfactory.
15. Many of the children in the reception class come to the school with limited personal and social skills. Because a significant number of these children come from homes where English is not the first language, they find it difficult to communicate. During their time in school they receive good

support and much emphasis is placed on developing their personal and social skills. As a result, they make good progress and, by the end of the reception year, most are sociable and friendly individuals who get on well with each other. In a physical education lesson, for example, noticing that one child was reluctant to join in, another small girl took her by the hand and helped her to participate in the lesson. They enjoy their time at school and have good relationships with their teacher and with other adults who work with them. Most arrive at school in good time and settle happily into the school day. They take part with enthusiasm in the activities planned for them, responding appropriately to instructions and often listening carefully to each other and to their teacher. Many make sensible and independent choices, but a significant number rely on adult direction and supervision. They understand the routines of the classroom and most tidy up carefully when asked to do so. They often help each other and, because they are consistently taught the difference between right and wrong, they behave well.

16. Most pupils in Years 1 to 4, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, participate in and contribute to school life with enthusiasm and interest. The majority of parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection agree that their children like school and many pupils themselves confirmed this view. They take part in the clubs and many talk with enthusiasm and excitement about the places they have visited and, particularly, the recent residential visit. Most pupils are willing and keen to learn, working hard in their lessons and following instructions carefully. They particularly enjoy the practical aspects of their lessons, for example, carrying out experiments in science, creating interesting artwork and designing clay pots. Their response to their literacy and numeracy lessons is good overall. Many contribute thoughtful ideas to discussion sessions in literacy and enjoy the challenge of the mental arithmetic sessions. They look forward to their lessons in the information and communication technology suite. They follow instructions carefully and are keen to experiment with new techniques. Pupils enjoy their playtimes, making full use of the hula-hoops, skipping ropes, etc. provided, many competing with each other with determination and good humour.
17. Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is generally good. This confirms the opinion expressed by the majority of parents prior to and during the inspection. Because they are usually interested in their lessons and have plenty to do at playtime, they are rarely bored and this has a positive impact on the good standards of behaviour. On occasion, when lessons are too long, particularly in the afternoon when some pupils are tired, they become restless and noisy and do not make as much progress as they could. For example, in a mathematics lesson in the Year 2/3 class and a religious education lesson in the Year 1 class, many pupils were unable to concentrate on their tasks because of the noisy and distracting behaviour of a few pupils. They move around the school in a sensible and orderly fashion and are polite and respectful towards adults. They take appropriate care of the school's and each other's property and are trustworthy. During the current year, one boy has been permanently excluded from school. He was excluded six times prior to the final exclusion for repeated disruptive and, at times, aggressive behaviour endangering himself, other pupils and staff.
18. Because of the good relationships in the school, pupils' personal development is good. They listen to each other's viewpoints in lessons, co-operate well in their tasks, sharing ideas and improving their work as a result. They respect the school and playground rules and follow instructions willingly. Although playtimes are boisterous and active, no unkindness or isolation was observed. Pupils have few concerns about bullying and are confident that the school will help them if they are unhappy. Because the school promotes awareness of cultural differences very well, all pupils understand and accept each other's values and beliefs and racial harmony prevails. Through their fund-raising activities, pupils learn about the lives of others less fortunate than themselves and most develop an appropriate level of understanding and compassion. For

example, pupils raised money for the Bangladesh Flood Appeal, and, through the school council, they organise activities to raise funds for local and national charities. As a result of losing a family member in the destruction of the twin towers in New York, one girl initiated a performance of Indian dance as a means to raise money for the victims of the disaster. Other pupils were keen to be involved and the interest generated resulted in local television coverage of the dance. Pupils clearly understand how their actions may impact on their friends and this motivates most pupils to treat each other with consideration and respect. For example, older pupils are sensitive to the particular difficulties of pupils who are new to the school and feel a responsibility towards them. All pupils have classroom jobs and representatives from each year group play an important role on the school council. Two Year 4 members represent the school at meetings of the Education Action Zone committee and have been instrumental in obtaining funding for school resources.

19. The level of attendance is lower than it was at the time of the last inspection and it is well below that found in most schools. Although the school's good systems to follow-up absence have improved attendance by two per cent this year, it is still unsatisfactory. The school has achieved a significant reduction in recorded unauthorised absence and this is now much better than it was. Although many pupils have a good attendance record, almost a third do not attend as regularly as they should and are missing important elements of their learning. Much of the absence relates to illness, but a significant amount is as a result of family holidays, often for extended visits to pupils' country of origin. This impacts adversely on the continuity of their learning and the overall standards they achieve. Although most pupils are punctual, there are a small number who persistently arrive late, after registration.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The quality of teaching is good. Parental confidence in the quality of teaching is justified by inspection evidence. Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better, and three-quarters of it was good. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. These pupils benefit from effective support and guidance. Bi-lingual assistants contribute much to pupils' understanding and this enables them to take a full part in lessons. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Children in the reception class are taught satisfactorily and the teaching of reading to these children is good. Teaching meets the needs of all pupils. Staff have a good awareness of pupils' backgrounds and abilities and they plan lessons that take into account these factors. As a result, the more able are given sufficient challenge and the teachers' high expectations of their performance ensure that these pupils make good progress and achieve well.
21. A nursery nurse under the guidance of the teaching staff led the teaching in the reception class during the inspection. Communication, language and literacy are taught satisfactorily. The teaching of basic skills in reading is good as there is an effective balance of learning new words, developing strategies to build words from the sounds that letters make, and regular practice and opportunities to listen to a wide range of stories. This was done well in using puppets to illustrate the story of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* as it engaged the children's interest and the puppet encourage them to join in with key words and phrases. Writing skills are promoted well through a good balance of practising handwriting skills and letter formation and providing opportunities for the children to experiment with writing. The teaching of speaking and listening skills is satisfactory but could be improved through the better use of role-play involving adults, more intervention to encourage the use of a wider vocabulary and encouraging the children to talk more about their activities. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is also good. The staff have a good awareness of the needs of individuals and work together well to

provide an environment where the children feel secure. They encourage the children to discuss their feelings and to learn how to play together, sharing toys and equipment. Much is made of the different backgrounds of the children and as a result the children show respect for and interest in different traditions and beliefs. Good behaviour is encouraged through the use of praise and reward. The teaching of mathematical development is satisfactory. There are suitable opportunities for the children to practise counting, matching and sorting. The nursery nurse is skilful in using opportunities such as lining up to develop the children's awareness of words such as *in front of*, *behind*, *next*, *after* and *before*. However, some of the activities are too open-ended and the staff do not intervene sufficiently to move learning on by setting specific tasks such as getting the children to experiment with shapes and measures through practical work. The teaching of number rhymes and games is good and this enhances the children's understanding of sequencing numbers. The teaching of creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. There are suitable resources to support the children's learning and good opportunities for them to extend their physical skills through outdoor play using a variety of equipment. However, developing creative language through role-play does not receive sufficient attention

22. In Years 1 to 4, the teaching of English is good and particularly effective in developing pupils' reading skills. This is because teachers focus on several approaches which include pupils learning new words and also developing the skills of building words from the sounds that letters make. Although the lessons seen were good and sometimes had excellent features because basic skills are taught well, there is insufficient opportunity for the pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills through drama and role-play. Teachers often rely too much on using worksheets which require short and simple responses and this limits opportunities for the pupils to write complex and extended passages. The staff have good subject knowledge and are confident in using the National Literacy Strategy which they use well when planning lessons.
23. The teaching of mathematics is good and the teachers have a good grasp of mathematical ideas and the way to teach them. They make effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy when planning and carefully structure them so that pupils have good opportunities to practise skills taught at the start of the lessons. The teachers make lessons interesting and because the lessons have good pace the pupils' attention is sustained well. Lessons are planned effectively and the teachers account for the different abilities so that the work stretches the more able and is at the right level for the less confident. Teachers expect the pupils to work hard and the pupils apply themselves well. They produce good quantities of work although the practice of completing work on single sheets and storing them in a folder means that tracking pupils' progress is made more difficult. Homework is used regularly to support the learning of multiplication facts. Basic skills in mathematics are taught well and the teachers encourage the pupils to think mathematically by using appropriate vocabulary and also to apply what they have learned when working in subjects such as science and design and technology. In a very good lesson about patterns of number, the Year 1 teacher prepared attractive resources which immediately grabbed the pupils' interest. Her well-focused questions and the provision of extension activities ensured that the pupils were challenged and well motivated.
24. One of the strengths of the teaching in Years 1 to 4 is the consistency between classes and the staff's awareness of what has been taught before and how well the pupils understood. This means that skills, knowledge and understanding are developed consistently and the pupils' learning is good. The teaching of design and technology, history, geography, information and communication technology and religious education is good and the pupils are enthusiastic about these subjects and learn effectively. They apply themselves well to practical work and also show sensitivity in discussing religious ideas and values. The teachers plan thoroughly in these

subjects taking account of the needs of the pupils and match work to their abilities. A strength in the teaching of science was seen in the way the teachers encouraged the pupils to investigate and experiment when making electrical circuits. The pupils persevered with the task and eventually devised their own parallel circuits. The teacher intervened at just the right point with well-focused advice and this moved learning on effectively. Strengths in the teaching of design and technology include the way in which the teachers encourage the pupils to plan their own work, modify their designs and evaluate what they have done. High expectations by the teachers ensure that the pupils are challenged and work hard. The areas for development in the teaching of art and design and music relate to further extending teachers' subject knowledge and providing more guidance so that they build on pupils' previous learning more consistently.

25. The teachers and other staff have a consistent approach to discipline and they promote good standards of behaviour effectively. There is good use of praise and encouragement which spurs the pupils on to do their best. The teachers use a good variety of methods to motivate the pupils. Groups are often organised so that pupils of similar ability work together. In information and communication technology the more confident pupils are encouraged to help the less able and this engenders a spirit of co-operation. Teachers usually involve support staff very well in learning. This works very effectively with pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language and ensures that those new to the school or at an early stage of English acquisition are fully involved in lessons. Support staff have a good understanding of how pupils learn and they use good questions and offer effective advice and encouragement to assist the pupils' understanding. The school makes appropriate use of homework to improve the pupils' skills in mathematics and reading although there is less consistency in giving spellings for homework and pupils' spelling skills are generally weak.
26. Areas for development in teaching include increasing the pace of some lessons so that pupils do not become restless through over-long introductions. Although the teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' performance, they do not consistently mark the pupils' work and include guidance for the pupils on how they might improve. Marking is rarely linked to pupils' targets. As a result pupils are not always sure of what the next step is in their learning. The teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on pupils' presentation of work. The extensive use of worksheets makes tracking progress difficult and also hampers opportunities for the teachers and pupils to look back at previous work and assess how much progress has been made.

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

27. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum and subjects are taught in accordance with the National Curriculum and locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Links with the local community and relationships with partner institutions are good. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and with English as a second language and the provision for pupils' personal social and health education are good. Since the last inspection the school has made good improvement in the quality and range of the curriculum provision which is now satisfactory. The school now has policies for all subjects. National recommendations and guidelines have been adopted in most subjects and give teachers good support in their planning. These show a progression in skills, knowledge and understanding. Lesson planning and longer term planning clearly identify learning objectives. The school has continued to improve and strengthen all subject areas of the curriculum. The provision for religious education, design and technology and ICT has improved significantly. There is a good ICT suite with a large bank of computers. The subject is well planned, implemented and used effectively to enhance learning in most other subject areas. There is improved provision for religious education and good opportunities for

pupils to learn about and through Christianity and other religions. Pupils in Years 1-4 enjoy an interesting and challenging curriculum. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and follows recommended planning for this age group.

28. The implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies is effective and has contributed to good achievement in English and mathematics. Teachers identify opportunities to develop pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT in their planning of other subjects. In a Year 1 geography lesson, pupils are challenged well to read their plane ticket to South Africa and write in their personal details on the ticket. The over-use of worksheets in English reduces the challenge for higher attaining pupils to respond in a more detailed way when writing to the question. Strengths of the curriculum include investigative work in science and a rich curriculum in geography and history. Although art and music are taught satisfactorily, the range of experiences in these subjects is not as strong as other subject areas. In physical education the provision for swimming has lapsed this year and pupils no longer benefit from learning in this area of activity. The school is aware of the need to develop these curriculum areas to the same standard as other subject areas and has planned for their development.
29. The extra-curricular provision is good. There is an appropriate range of extra-curricular clubs and activities including recorder, violin, choir, Bengali dancing, gymnastics, athletics, rounders and football. Pupils who are gifted and talented at art attend a local Saturday morning art club. The clubs are well attended and provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge, understanding and experience. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to perform their Bengali dancing at local events and festivals. There are regular visits to the local church, park and Bedford museum. The pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 benefit from a weekly Italian lesson. Some pupils in Year 4 attend the children's university and the school plays a leading part in local initiatives to support the able and talented pupils.
30. Equality of access and opportunity is good. The curriculum policy fully reflects the school's commitment to equal opportunity. Individual needs of each pupil are identified and all staff work hard to meet those needs. All staff have been trained to teach English as a second language. The school analyses the performance of different groups of pupils from the wide cultural intake of pupils. Pupils have access to all areas of the curriculum and range of learning opportunities. The provision within and outside the classroom is good. It ensures all pupils have full access to the National Curriculum.
31. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are provided with individual education plans with specific targets to guide their development. Their targets are reviewed regularly and most are updated to ensure pupils make consistently good progress. Support in class is planned so that all pupils take part in the main activities. The school fully meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice for pupils identified with special educational needs. Individual support for reading contributes to the good provision.
32. The provision for personal, social and health education including sex education and attention to drug misuse is good and is covered in science, assembly and circle-time. This area of the curriculum is well considered and planned, and also includes citizenship. There is a school council, which meets regularly to discuss school issues and this contributes to pupils' personal, social and emotional development. There are good links with the local community which make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Visits and visitors enhance learning opportunities. There are regular visits to the local church and church leaders regularly visit the school to take assemblies. The local Asian community regularly takes part in local end of term fairs and celebrations. The local community supports school events and fairs. There are good links with

the local partner institutions. The school works closely with the local Education Action Zone. In providing training. The use of ICT is enhanced by the strong links with Bedford College.

33. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good and provision for cultural development is very good. Throughout the school, teachers make a good contribution to this area of pupils' learning through different aspects of the curriculum. There is currently no system for monitoring the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Since the last inspection the provision has improved as a result of better teaching and learning throughout the school.
34. Provision for spiritual development is good. The school creates a positive family ethos; however spiritual development is not planned for as part of the curriculum. Although there is no overall plan for assemblies they are well considered and fulfil the statutory requirements for collective worship. Simple messages are delivered well and occasionally provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on feelings such as loneliness and fear. Collective worship is closely linked to the main assembly theme. All pupils have a turn selecting and reading a lunchtime prayer. Local church leaders take assembly at points during the term. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore values and beliefs and consider the way they impact on people's lives when religious festivals from a variety of faiths are shared and celebrated. Pupils develop respect and appreciation of the work of others through the weekly celebration assembly. Pupils who have worked well during the week or have shown kindness or consideration for others are recognised and their efforts are acknowledged. The Thank You Certificates and the Good Work Certificates are displayed in the hall. Joy in learning is evident in many lessons, for example Year 1 pupils show real excitement as they board the imaginary plane for their flight to South Africa. The school has not yet developed a system of monitoring teaching and learning styles to ascertain whether pupils are given space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns. This does happen in some lessons but is not consistent throughout the school.
35. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. A clear moral code is applied well throughout the school. All staff are good role models for those pupils who need guidance to ensure they establish a clearer understanding of their responsibilities. Teachers have established a supportive atmosphere in which to cultivate pupils' moral development. Clear codes of behaviour and values are communicated strongly through teaching and other school activities. In Year 1 pupils respond to the 'traffic lights man' and they understand the expectations, for example, 'green' means work quietly without any talking. Behaviour during lunchtime and in the informal play situations is good because the mid-day supervisor ensures a positive, supportive atmosphere on the playground. From the time they enter the school pupils are encouraged to behave sensibly and take care of resources.
36. Provision for pupils' social development is good. During the breaktimes pupils take responsibility for returning skipping ropes and balls to the storage bins in the hall. On the playground pupils interact well with each other in informal play situations. They play well in different size groups developing their catching, throwing, kicking, skipping and aiming skills. They play happily in a range of competitive, co-operative and imaginative games. Levels of co-operation and awareness of the needs of others is good, for example pupils include others in their games. In lessons pupils co-operate well with each other sharing a joint task. All classes receive a weekly lesson based on circle time. There is a school council where pupils have the opportunity to discuss school issues. Many pupils benefit from taking part in extra-curricular activities such as choir and gymnastics. The annual residential camping trip for Year 4 pupils provides a good

opportunity for effective social and personal development. Older pupils are given responsibilities for jobs around the school.

37. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school successfully appreciates and celebrates the wide cultural range of all its pupils. It promotes the traditions of the culturally diverse British society strongly through the effective multi-cultural focus around the school. The school celebrate all Christian and other religious faith celebrations and festivals such as Pancake Day, Eid, Diwali, and Chinese New Year. Pupils from a village school visit for a day to join in with the Diwali celebrations. The library is well stocked with a good range of books from different countries and there are artefacts for all religions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The welfare of all pupils, including the children in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is an important priority for the staff and governors of the school. There are good procedures to ensure that pupils are well cared for and the good relationships between pupils and staff help to create an open and happy environment. The systems for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are good and provide an effective level of support and guidance. In response to a key issue from the last inspection, the school has introduced a good range of assessment strategies which are used well to plan appropriate challenge for pupils of all abilities. The school now provides good educational support and guidance for individual pupils and this represents an improvement since the last inspection.
39. There are good procedures and established practices to govern health and safety and child protection. There are regular site inspections to identify any safety hazards, appropriate records are kept and action taken if necessary. The requirement to carry out formal and comprehensive risk assessment on an annual basis is not currently being met, but, on a day-to-day basis, the staff and governors ensure that the school is a safe and healthy environment. The provision for first aid is good and emergency evacuation is practised regularly. The headteacher has regular training in child protection procedures and ensures that staff awareness of this aspect of care is maintained by its regular inclusion as an agenda item in staff and governors' meetings. The good relationships between pupils and staff encourage communication and pupils understand the need to talk to an adult if they are unhappy. They are taught about the importance of good hygiene and diet and receive appropriate information about sex and the harmful effect of drugs through their science lessons and circle-time. Year 4 pupils are also taught how to administer basic first aid. Visitors come to school to talk to pupils about issues of personal safety. Supervision during playtimes and lunchtimes is very good.
40. The formal systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good and promote an effective level of personal support and guidance. The school has recognised that the level of attendance has been below that of most schools for the last four years and has introduced systems to follow up absence on the first day. This has resulted in a significant reduction in unauthorised absence and an improvement in the attendance level. The computerised system of record keeping enables regular monitoring of individual attendance and identification of any emerging trends or patterns in absence. The school is very well supported by the education welfare officer in its efforts to improve attendance and punctuality. The Education Business Partnership sponsors an award for pupils who achieve a 95 per cent level in

attendance and punctuality and this has contributed to the improvement. The registration process meets legal requirements. The school has good formal and informal procedures for recording and monitoring any instances of unacceptable behaviour. Most incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with quickly and effectively by all members of staff and pupils are taught that bullying is unacceptable. Any particularly kind or thoughtful behaviour is rewarded and pupils clearly understand how they are expected to behave. Neither parents nor pupils raise any concerns about bullying and they are confident that the school will listen to them and help them if they are worried. Pupils record their individual contribution to school life and the community in their record of achievement and this provides an on-going record of their personal development during their time in school.

41. The school keeps detailed records and documentation on all pupils with special educational needs. This ensures that staff are knowledgeable about individual difficulties which pupils might encounter and that they receive the appropriate support and guidance. Both within the classroom and in the school staff are effective in establishing a supportive environment where pupils feel secure and can develop their self-esteem and confidence. Pupils receive good support in classes from learning support assistants. There are good opportunities in lessons for pupils to share their work; this contributes to their growing confidence. From an early stage assessments are used effectively to identify attainment, progress and targets for further development. These records enable teachers to identify any problems and plan future targets effectively. The school maintains effective links with speech and language therapists.
42. The school has made good headway in improving the procedures and use of assessment since the previous inspection. On admission to the school the staff assess the children's skills using the local authority baseline. The results of these assessments are used well to identify children with particular learning difficulties and to plan work which meets their needs. There is appropriate analysis of the language skills of children with ethnic minority backgrounds and support is made available to work alongside these children. The staff are experimenting with several ways of assessing work in other subjects and are making satisfactory headway in making these approaches consistent through the school.
43. In Years 2 and 4 the school uses national and optional tests to assess the pupils and provides information for parents about the results. Teachers are accurate in assessing the pupils' performance and there is little variation between test results and teacher assessments. The school makes good use of the local authority guidance on assessing pupils with English as an additional language and uses the information to track pupils' performance. There is regular and good assessment of basic skills in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology and the staff use the information from these assessments to plan work. A particular success in the use of assessment has been the school's response to identified weaknesses in pupils' performance in mathematics. As a result there is now a systematic approach to the teaching of mental arithmetic which is paying dividends in improved performance of the pupils. The teachers keep good records of the pupils' progress in reading and through carefully checking on the pupils' understanding ensure that pupils are reading books at the correct level for their ability. Good notes are kept of the pupils' progress in writing and these assessments are used to plan the next step in learning. The achievements of pupils in information and communication technology are recorded in detail and provide good information about future planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Those parents who expressed a view prior to and during the inspection have positive views about most aspects of school life and value the school's efforts to involve them in their children's learning. This has a positive impact on the work of the school and on the progress the children make. The school has established effective links with most parents, but the impact of parents on the life and work of the school is inhibited by the high mobility factor and the limited language skills of some families. The quality of the school's partnership with parents is similar to that found at the time of the last inspection.
45. The information about the school and about the children's progress is satisfactory. The prospectus and the governors' annual report provide useful and practical information about the school. A significant minority of parents who completed the questionnaire prior to the inspection do not feel well informed about their children's progress. Parents have three opportunities during the year for consultation with staff about their children's progress, and are always welcome to talk to class teachers or the headteacher if they wish for more information. Any parent who is unable to attend these important meetings is contacted and offered another opportunity. Interpreters are provided if required. Annual reports on pupils' progress do not adequately cover each subject of the National Curriculum. The text covers what the children have done during the year, but does not always clearly indicate how well they have done it. Areas for improvement are identified, but these are often too general in content. The good opportunities at the beginning and end of each day for parents to talk informally to class teachers provide an informal channel of communication through which any information or concerns can be exchanged. Parents are kept up-to-date with activities taking place in school through class and newsletters and an outline of what the children will be learning in each class is displayed at the side entrance. From time to time the school invites parents to meetings about different aspects of the curriculum and the work of the school. Unfortunately, these are not well attended.
46. All parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend meetings to discuss the achievement and progress of their children and the school maintains effective links with parents. The parental contribution is identified on the individual education plans.
47. The school recognises the value of the impact of involving parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school and provides a range of opportunities for them to do this. A small number of parents, however, expressed the view through the questionnaire that they do not feel that the school works closely with them. Inspection evidence shows that parents are welcome in the school and are encouraged to become involved. When bringing their children to school, parents have the opportunity to see what their children have been doing in their lessons and this helps them to extend their learning at home. Whilst many parents help their children with their reading and spellings at home, they are not always sure when their children are given homework and, if the child forgets, the homework is not always done. The parents of the significant number of pupils who join the school during the year take time to learn about the school's expectations and procedures and, in the short term, this limits their involvement. Some parents lack the language skills to help their children at home, despite a desire to do so. Several parents help regularly in classrooms with reading and practical activities and many volunteer to accompany the children on visits. Parents were consulted about school uniform and the work of the parent governors contributes effectively to the management and decision-making process in the school. This active involvement by parents has a positive impact on the progress the children make and the school values their help. The parents' association organises a range of fund-raising functions which help to improve the school's resources. The school is open and welcoming and most parents are confident in approaching the school about any concerns, secure in the knowledge that their views will be taken seriously and valued. Not all parents have signed the home/school agreement, however, and many do not fulfil their responsibilities under this agreement by sending

their children to school regularly and on time. These children do not learn as much as they should.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. There has been much improvement in leadership and management since the previous inspection and the headteacher has built a strong team of hard-working staff and governors who have a clear understanding of the school's work. All are committed to further improvement and share a common aim of raising standards. The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection and tackled the issues raised effectively. The school is now well organised, financially secure and has good capacity to build upon its strengths. The leadership by the headteacher is very good and her dedication and single-mindedness have brought about much change and improvement at the school. The school benefits from good management in all aspects of its work. Almost all parents expressed confidence in the way in which the school is led and managed.
49. The headteacher has a good overview of all aspects of the school's work. The provision for special educational needs is managed well and is supported by a very knowledgeable chair of governors. The school has already introduced the principles stated in the new national Code of Practice. There are regular reviews of pupils' progress and good involvement of parents in statutory reviews. The school keeps an up-to-date register of pupils with special educational needs. All statutory requirements are met. The management of the provision for English as an additional language is also managed well and there are good systems to track the performance of the staff and pupils involved. The provision for the Foundation Stage is managed satisfactorily. The school's difficulties in appointing a teacher for this work has now been resolved and the interim arrangements have worked satisfactorily.
50. School administration is very effective and supports the smooth running of the school. There are good systems in place to keep a check on finances, the school's performance and pupil records. The school makes very good use of information and communication technology to support administration and is using data effectively to set and review targets. At the time of the previous inspection the school's finances were not well organised and the school had a deficit budget. There was insufficient link between school priorities and financial planning. This situation has improved significantly and there is now robust financial control and effective management of finances. The school has met the recommendations of the most recent audit report and is in a secure financial position. This has been achieved through careful management of costs including the budget for staffing. Prudent spending decisions regarding the purchase of equipment and the good use of best value principles in purchasing supplies and services have enabled the school to build a surplus as a cushion against falling numbers at the school. The governors have wisely allocated funds to additional staffing and this has resulted in a strengthening of the support for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The school's involvement with Bedford College and the purchase of information and communication technology equipment linked to this support have meant that the school now has a good number of computers to support this aspect of the curriculum. The school has identified improvements to the library as a priority and some of the surplus funds are being used to provide more books to support pupils' skills in research. The school's excellent bursar keeps a watchful eye on spending, informs the governors very well of spending patterns and makes judicious use of the local authority's financial services. The school makes good use of specific funds. For example, the involvement with the Education Action Zone has enabled the school to extend its provision for English as an additional language and to take part in a project to boost the attainment of the more able.

51. The headteacher has introduced a rigorous and effective system of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and this has resulted in much improved teaching since the previous inspection. All staff have targets and these are linked to performance management. The governors have taken a keen and well-informed interest in this aspect of the school's work. The school also sets targets for performance in national and other tests; these targets are realistic and challenging and the school is successful in meeting them. Subject leaders are also involved in monitoring the work of their colleagues and in checking on the progress made by pupils. One of the strengths of the school is its openness to self-criticism and evaluation.
52. The governors now fulfil their statutory responsibilities and take a keen interest in the school. There are good levels of enthusiasm and expertise among the governors. They take seriously their commitments to monitoring the school's work, particularly regarding special educational needs, literacy and numeracy. Governors take part in training and also bring their own specialisms to their work in supporting the school. They have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and are not complacent but keen to move the school forward. However, their role in strategic planning and development is underdeveloped. This is because the school's development plan does not have a sharp enough focus on timescales and measures of success. Although the priorities set out in the plan are correct they need to be more sharply stated and include measurable targets.
53. All staff work together well and this sense of teamwork has a good impact on relationships within the school and on building a cohesive and purposeful unit. The subject leaders share responsibility for the curriculum and where they lack expertise they undertake training and share the outcomes with their colleagues. There are sufficient teaching staff in Years 1 to 4 but the school has had difficulty in recruiting a reception class teacher although this matter has been resolved from September 2002. There is a good number of support staff working as general assistants as well as with pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. They make a good contribution to pupils' progress. Other staff including the caretaker and midday assistants share in the school's positive ethos and work well in the interests of the pupils.
54. The school has good accommodation which benefits the pupils. The use of the outdoor area has improved since the previous inspection and the school now uses the grounds for environmental studies, a wide range of games and for work in science. The reception class has a good outdoor area with good equipment to support physical development. The school's resources are adequate and satisfactory. Shortages of books in the library inhibit some aspects of pupils' learning. The computer suite is used well and there are also a good number of computers in the classrooms. This improvement in resources has led to pupils making good progress in information and communication technology.
55. In view of the pupils' well below average attainment on admission to the school, their good progress and achievement of average standards in almost all areas of the curriculum, the good teaching and the above average costs of educating the pupils, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. In order to build upon the good quality of education and to accelerate the progress made by pupils, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1. *Improve standards in English in the foundation stage and Years 1 to 4 by:

- Focusing more consistently on extending pupils' knowledge of vocabulary through the use of drama and role-play;
 - Providing more opportunities for pupils to write creatively about their experiences, relying less on worksheets and including a good emphasis on correct spelling;
 - Extending opportunities for the pupils to use research skills by making wider use of the library.
- (Paragraphs 4 – 8, 10, 12, 21, 22, 50, 54, 63, 69, 71, 73, 79, 80 – 89)

2. *Improve the use of marking and target-setting so that there is a consistent approach among staff and so that pupils are left in no doubt about what they should do to improve.

(Paragraphs 4, 26, 87, 94, 100)

3. Improve the school's development plan by setting sharply focused targets and incorporating specific ways of measuring the school's success in meeting them.

(Paragraph 52)

4. *Improve attendance

(Paragraphs 2, 14, 19, 40, 59)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

The governors should consider incorporating the following in its action plan.

- *Improving pupils' presentation of work. (Paragraph 26)
- *Improving the pace of lessons in the reception class. (Paragraphs 26, 71)
- Extending opportunities in art and design and music. (Paragraphs 11, 28, 102 – 107, 130 – 134)
- *Extending the use of computers in some subjects. (Paragraphs 12, 100, 105, 130)
- Carrying out formal and comprehensive risk assessment on an annual basis. (Paragraph 39)
- Improving pupils' annual written reports. (Paragraph 45)

*The school has identified these issues in its development plan.

THE PROVISION FOR AND STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

57. The school makes good provision for pupils with English as an additional language and as a result the pupils make good progress. They achieve well given that most of these pupils have limited knowledge and understanding of English on admission to the school. The teaching is good and the pupils are keen and interested learners. This aspect of the school's work is managed well and the additional support provided through EMAG and the Education Action Zone is proving beneficial.

58. Because of the high levels of mobility at the school the number of pupils attending varies almost weekly. At the time of the inspection, 50 of the 76 pupils in Years 1 to 4 had ethnic backgrounds other than white UK heritage. In the reception class 20 of the 37 children had English as an additional language. A third of all pupils attending the school have Bangladeshi backgrounds and most speak Sylheti. Five per cent have Black Caribbean heritage and a similar percentage are Black Africans. A few pupils come from India and have Gujarati as their main language and a small number come from Pakistan. About ten per cent of the pupils have white European backgrounds with the main language spoken being Serbian. The school has been very successful

in raising the self-esteem of Bangladeshi pupils and this has resulted in a marked improvement in the standard of these pupils' work in the last two years.

59. The pupils are taught in mainstream classes and additional support is available through bi-lingual speakers. This bi-lingual support is mainly for Bangladeshi speakers. However, the staff have good skills in communicating with pupils from a variety of backgrounds and make good use of resources to ensure that all pupils can take a full part in the school's curriculum. One of the support assistants is funded through the Education Action Zone. A factor in the pupils' attainment is the low attendance by some groups of pupils. Several families have taken extended holidays during the year and this has resulted in inconsistent progress. The school makes good efforts to support pupils while on long-term absence through providing some homework.
60. The school's work is highly regarded by the parents and they say that it contributes much to the quality of the pupils' education and to making the school a rich and culturally diverse society. Inspection evidence supports these views. There is no evidence of racial intolerance or harassment and the pupils of all races play and work together effectively. Pupils with English as an additional language behave well and understand the school's rules and procedures. They show respect for each other, adults and property. The school enhances these positive attributes through its strong commitment to providing effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Much of the school's work centres around the cultures and traditions of the pupils and in this way positive values are emphasised and developed. The celebration of major festivals and traditions receives high priority.
61. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. All staff have an awareness of the needs of the individual and keep a careful watch on progress. The staff keep good records and use local authority guidance to assess the pupils' performance and use the information to plan the next step in learning. Assessment is good and the staff use the information effectively when planning work. Several approaches in the teaching work well. In a lesson in mathematics in Year 1 the bi-lingual assistant took part in the introduction to the lesson explaining the work in English and Bangladeshi to the pupils who were left in no doubt about what to do. Then in the main activity she used well-crafted questions and good apparatus so that the pupils could understand the principles of number patterns. Similar approaches were used in English lessons and the support staff worked well alongside the pupils explaining the meaning of words and encouraging the pupils to sound out the word in English. In other lessons, the teachers make sure that the pupils understand what is going on and through the use of visual aids and pictures help the pupils to understand. The pupils respond well to the teachers and listen attentively. They are keen to learn and work hard. They regularly practise sounding out the sounds of letters and building words and this increases their confidence in speaking English and in reading. The staff are careful in their choice of reading materials and ensure that the books are interesting and attractive to the pupils. There are good resources for the pupils to read stories in their home language as well as English.
62. Lesson planning is good as the staff use their awareness of how to develop basic skills effectively when organising activities and tasks for the pupils. This works well in lessons such as music when the pupils have opportunities to respond to beats and rhythms. They join in enthusiastically, pretending to be different animals, and the teacher's skilful intervention means that the pupils make good progress. The teacher also uses the pupils' own knowledge of animals so that even those with limited English can make suggestions about the sounds and movements the animals make. The staff value the pupils and their backgrounds and this is reflected in the way in which the staff listen to the pupils' views and encourage them to talk about their experiences. In this way the pupils grow in confidence and competence and take a full part in

lessons. The teachers manage the pupils' behaviour well and are careful to explain conventions and set rules which everyone can understand and follow.

63. As a result of the effective teaching the pupils make good progress and become interested learners who work hard. The pupils make good progress in learning how to read and by the end of Years 2 and 4 have basic competence in reading from a variety of texts. Their limited experience of English inhibits their understanding of some more complex texts and ideas. The pupils make satisfactory gains in writing and although standards are below average by the end of Years 2 and 4 the pupils understand basic conventions such as capital letters and full stops and write in short and correctly structured sentences. Their spelling is weak. The pupils are able to sustain a simple conversation and express their needs clearly. However, they lack a wide vocabulary and this inhibits their understanding of some ideas. Speaking and listening is an area for further improvement and the school recognises the need to provide more opportunities for role-play and drama. Nevertheless the pupils achieve well and are on a par with most of their peers whose first language is English.
64. The pupils achieve well in mathematics and by the end of Years 2 and 4 their attainment is in line with most of their peers and is about average. Some pupils are particularly successful in mathematics and once the concept is explained to them they are able to calculate accurately and quickly. They recognise number patterns and are competent in addition and subtraction. Most know how to solve simple problems using multiplication and division by the end of Year 4. Pupils' knowledge of mathematical vocabulary is below average but they understand and use mathematical signs and symbols well.
65. The pupils achieve well in the other subjects and are on a par with their peers. This is because of the high expectations of the staff. The pupils attain average standards in science and enjoy the practical aspect of the subject, particularly investigating how and why things happen. In design and technology they follow instructions well and are good at designing and making models. They have reasonable competence in evaluating their work. The pupils enjoy using computers and have appropriate skills in word processing, making a simple program to control a programmable toy and in using software to paint and draw. The pupils have an appropriate understanding of history and geography and enjoy these subjects. Some of the lessons are linked to the geography and history of their home countries as well as the locality and this helps to promote an understanding of life in Britain today and the impact of famous personalities and events on society.
66. Underpinning the pupils' successful progress is the effective leadership and management of the provision for English as an additional language. The headteacher and governors give much consideration to purchasing resources and additional staff to meet the needs of the pupils. There are regular reviews of the school's work and finances are allocated suitably. The school makes good use of funds and staffing available through the Education Action Zone and the headteacher monitors the performance of the staff. There are good opportunities for the staff to take part in training and this keeps them up-to-date on new initiatives and resources.
67. In summary, the provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good and makes a good contribution to the pupils' academic and personal, social and emotional development. The staff are capable and knowledgeable and work hard to ensure that all pupils receive a suitable curriculum. The standard of teaching is good, although more opportunities are needed to develop speaking and listening skills. The pupils achieve well and become keen and interested learners who attain appropriate standards for their age in most aspects of their development.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 26 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 21 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 2 | 3 | 12 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 8 | 12 | 48 | 32 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | N/A | 105 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | N/A | 41 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

| Special educational needs | Nursery | YR – Y4 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | N/A | 2 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | N/A | 53 |

| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 47 |

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 9 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 10 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|------|
| School data | 10.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|-------------|-----|
| School data | 0.7 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| National comparative data | 5.6 |
|---------------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| 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)

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | 14 | 6 | 20 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|--|----------|----------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Total | 18 | 18 | 19 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 90 (88) | 90 (88) | 95 (88) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Total | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 85 (88) | 90 (88) | 95 (88) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 4 |
| Black – African heritage | 3 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 3 |
| Pakistani | 2 |
| Bangladeshi | 25 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 35 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 4 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 4 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 26 |
| Average class size | 21 |

Education support staff: YR – Y4

| | |
|---|--------|
| Total number of education support staff | 9 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 225.75 |

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001/2002 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 313,275 |
| Total expenditure | 305,179 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,083 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 34,992 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 43,088 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 1 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 1 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 0 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 0 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 105 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 33 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 70 | 21 | 6 | 0 | 3 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 42 | 48 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 42 | 45 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 45 | 33 | 15 | 3 | 3 |
| The teaching is good. | 58 | 39 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 36 | 36 | 21 | 3 | 3 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 64 | 27 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 52 | 42 | 6 | 0 | 0 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 39 | 33 | 18 | 9 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 42 | 48 | 0 | 9 | 0 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 48 | 52 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 33 | 42 | 12 | 0 | 12 |

* Please note totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were mostly happy with the school's work and particularly impressed with the way in which all pupils, regardless of race, creed and ability were supported and valued.

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

68. Children start full-time in the reception classes in the term after they are four and most have attended part-time either in the morning or afternoon for at least a term before starting full-time schooling. About half the children also have some pre-school educational experience in the playgroup held on the school's premises. Attainment on admission to the school is well below that expected of children of this age. The children have limited skills and knowledge in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and their personal, social and emotional development is also well below that expected for their age. At the time of the inspection 37 children were taught in the reception class with 22 being full-time. None of the children have been identified as having special educational needs. About half of the children have English as an additional language. The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage has changed since the previous inspection and there have been some improvements to outdoor provision. The quality of teaching, the children's progress and the curriculum have been maintained at satisfactory levels. For the last two terms the reception children have been taught by a nursery nurse as the school had difficulty in recruiting a teacher. A teacher has been appointed to take up the position in September. Parents are happy with the school's provision and feel that their children make good progress and develop an interest in learning. A few were concerned about the current teaching arrangements but felt that the nursery nurse was working effectively with the children and the quality of education was not adversely affected.
69. The nursery nurse has received good guidance from the headteacher and other staff in planning activities. There is a suitable policy in place which provides adequate guidance and the school satisfactorily follows the national guidance for the Foundation Stage curriculum. All of the areas of learning are covered although there is room for further development particularly regarding the development of communication, language and literacy skills through role-play. The curriculum contributes well to promoting the children's personal, social and emotional development and the children are suitably prepared for the next stage in their education.
70. Overall, the children make satisfactory progress and good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the reception year most children are on course to attain the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development. However, few will achieve the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. A good proportion of children read well and achieve the early learning goals in this aspect of their work.
71. The teaching is satisfactory with good attention given to personal, social and emotional development. The staff assess the children carefully and accurately on admission to the school and use the information to plan work. Suitable records of progress are kept and parents are also kept well informed of how well their children are making progress. The support given by classroom assistants is satisfactory overall and good in developing reading skills. However, there is not enough focus on developing the children's speaking and listening skills through adult involvement in role-play. The pace of some lessons is too slow and this results in the children losing concentration.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. By the end of reception most children attain the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development and are prepared well to work in more formal situations because the teaching is good. The children get on well together and show much kindness and tolerance of each other. They behave well and understand the rules and procedures of the class. They listen carefully to instructions and are attentive when listening to stories, taking part in musical activities and when working in small groups supervised by the staff. The staff teach this area of learning effectively and achieve an appropriate balance between guiding the children and providing opportunities for them to work on their own or in groups of different sizes. This enables the children to become secure in friendships and to grow in social awareness. Because of the way the school celebrates different cultures and traditions, the children learn how to respect and value different beliefs. The children learn quickly to value each other as the staff set a good example of care and consideration. When working and playing in groups, children co-operate with each other; they take turns in the hospital role-play area and act out parts such as the nurse, doctor or patient. The children are sensible when getting ready for physical education and dress themselves unaided. They also dress appropriately doing activities such as painting. Most children are enthusiastic and keen to explore the activities on offer. They enjoy joining in stories at appropriate times using key words and phrases. The staff keep good records of the children's progress and use the information to plan work and to check on how well the children are improving.

Communication, language and literacy

73. The children, including those with English as an additional language, make good progress in reading and satisfactory progress in other aspects of communication, language and literacy. Boys and girls do equally well in developing reading skills. By the end of the reception year few children attain the early learning goals in this area of learning. The teaching of reading is good and teaching is satisfactory in other aspects of communication, language and literacy. The staff focus well on a variety of approaches to stimulate the children's interest in books. There are daily opportunities to listen to and take part in stories. The nursery nurse provides good opportunities for the children to learn rhymes and songs and this helps to extend their vocabulary. Most children talk about their favourite story but few can recall it in detail and sequence the story correctly. The staff teach the sounds that letters make effectively and the children are beginning to build unfamiliar words. The staff make good use of the school's reading scheme to consistently build upon the children's learning. However, the classroom does not have a focal point for drawing the children to sit and look at books on their own. Most children read and recognise their own name and some other common words. The more able are beginning to use expression when they read and identify written conventions such as capital letters and full stops. The children improve their writing skills by practising forming letters on a regular basis. They enjoy experimenting with making marks using a variety of pens and also pretend to write such things as prescriptions when playing in the hospital role-play area. There are some opportunities for role-play but these activities are not sufficiently guided by adults and the children's play and language during these activities is at a low level. There is insufficient intervention and involvement by the adults in promoting technical and imaginative vocabulary.

Mathematical development

74. By the end of the reception year few children attain the early learning goals in their mathematical development. Progress is satisfactory overall and good in learning to count. Children know and enjoy reciting several number rhymes and also learn effectively through playing with the good assortment of number games available in the classrooms. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers plan varied activities and participate in children's play to encourage use of number language. This is done well at the beginning and end of sessions when the nursery nurse encourages the children to count the number present and at the end of lessons when she uses a wide range of vocabulary to get the children in lines. Because of this the children know words such as *before*, *behind*, *in front of*, *next to* and *after*. The children play purposefully with a variety of equipment and organise small wooden boats sequencing the number of passengers in order. They count reliably to five and the more able count to 20 unaided. The children are keen to please their teacher and respond enthusiastically to new opportunities to learn. They take part enthusiastically in number rhymes and games. The children are beginning to identify patterns through their artwork. Most recognise shapes such as circles and squares but their poor language skills hamper their discussions about the properties of shapes. Some children still confuse colours and this causes a problem when sorting objects. The adults provide the children with suitable opportunities to play and through this approach the children learn about shape, space and measures; however, there is not always sufficient intervention by adults to ensure that the children have really understood what they are doing. The staff encourage the use of positional language during a physical activity outside and they go *under*, *over* and *through* and most children understand these words.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Because of their limited experience of the wider world and poor language skills most children do not attain the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world by the end of the reception year. The children make satisfactory progress overall. They are fascinated by the world around them and take a keen interest in finding out more and more about the world in which they live. Teaching is satisfactory and provides suitable opportunities for children to practise their skills but there are insufficient opportunities for the children to plan their own work and initiate ideas. The staff plan work which is matched to ability and the children's level of experience. Lessons are prepared well and support staff are briefed well on the tasks, although they do not always intervene sufficiently in supporting children with understanding new ideas through explaining tasks in their home language. Some opportunities are missed for children to observe similarities, differences and change. The children have a limited scientific vocabulary and few understand basic scientific ideas.
76. Staff provide the children with an appropriate range of activities to build, construct and join materials together and the children can work with a friend or on their own for a good period of time, concentrating well. They make suitable models using construction toys and make buildings using a variety of blocks. There are some opportunities for the children to observe changes in the seasons through using the school's extensive grounds. The children enjoy looking at living things and observe them closely. They know what caterpillars eat and that they change into butterflies. They know how they have changes since they were babies and also that toys and games have changed over time. Most can chant the days of the week in the correct sequence but some still struggle to do this independently. They talk about their journey to school and most recognise the main buildings in the area. The children make good progress in using computers and enjoy using the computer to write, draw and listen to stories. They are adept in using the mouse and also know that the computer responds to their commands. They select a variety of programs and enter text competently.

Physical development

77. The children enjoy physical activity and benefit from good opportunities to play outside using the school's good range of resources. They also are taught some physical skills in lessons in the hall. By the end of the reception year most children have made good strides in their physical development but few achieve the early learning goals in this aspect of their development. The teaching is satisfactory.
78. The staff make good use of the wide range of resources, including small wheeled vehicles, climbing apparatus, 'small-world' toys, bean-bags, balls, hoops, and bats that give plenty of well planned opportunities for the children to extend their physical skills. The children are good at controlling wheeled vehicles and have a good understanding of space so that they avoid collisions. The children play together well and share toys and equipment. They also work well in a large group in the hall when practising a variety of movements. In these sessions the staff use language well such as 'follow' and 'lead' that are associated with actions and the children respond appropriately. They competently change direction and speed in response to the adult's instructions. They make satisfactory progress in improving other physical skills such as using pencils, crayons and scissors although some find cutting out difficult.

Creative development

79. The school provides an adequate and satisfactory range of activities to support children's creative development. The children make satisfactory progress but by the end of the reception year few attain the early learning goals in this area of learning. Teaching is satisfactory. Singing is good and the children know a suitable range of songs and rhymes. They join in enthusiastically and also know about a variety of percussion instruments which they play mostly in time. The nursery nurse encourages the children to respond to music by, for example, singing the register and the children respond well to this and hold a simple tune. Children enjoy the opportunities for role-play but not enough is made of these opportunities, as adults are rarely involved in working with the children in these situations. The children pretend to be doctors and nurses and use the equipment carefully. They take each other's temperature and measure their pulse. Some pretend to write instructions and prescriptions. Children do not attain the standards expected in art by the end of the reception year. Progress in mixing paints is satisfactory. The children experiment with paint and the more able know how to mix some colours but the majority do not. There is a satisfactory range and variety of art materials to choose from and work with. The children enjoy painting pictures of their favourite stories. Some add good detail to the picture of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* and use colours correctly to paint each part of the caterpillar's body. The children express and communicate their thoughts and feelings by using a widening variety of materials. When finishing painting the children clear away materials they have used but they rely on the adults to store their paintings. The children enjoy playing with mouldable materials and making models using a variety of construction toys and recyclable materials

ENGLISH

80. Results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in reading and writing were in line with the national average and well above average for similar schools. Results indicate that girls perform slightly better than boys. The number of pupils achieving the higher level 3 is also in line with the national average in reading and writing. Over the last five years there has been a steady increase in performance. The results vary as the cohort size is small and the number of pupils with special educational needs and who have English as an additional language is high.

81. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are below average overall in Year 2 and by the end of Year 4. In both year groups there is a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and a well above average proportion have English as an additional language. Pupils achieve well during their time at the school and make good progress in their learning. The progress pupils make in their learning is directly linked to the quality of teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have English as an additional language are appropriately supported and achieve well, they make good progress in their learning. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained and the quality of teaching has significantly improved.
82. By the end of Years 2 and 4 standards of speaking and listening are below average. Pupils in Year 2 listen carefully and respond to the teacher's questions. They willingly answer direct questions, though their answers are generally brief and quietly spoken. Very few pupils extend their answers or develop their ideas. Pupils generally are not confident in speaking across a wide range. When responding to questions most pupils give one-word answers and do not expand on their statements giving examples. In a Year 3 physical education lesson most pupils give brief answers, for example, "Makes you strong" when asked to explain why it is necessary to warm up prior to exercise. A few higher attaining pupils speak clearly in Standard English and give detailed answers. Opportunities for drama and public speaking are limited although there are some good examples such as all pupils having a turn to read the lunchtime prayer. Teachers provide a review at the end of lessons and this is a good opportunity for pupils to explain to the class what they have learnt. Teachers and learning support assistants lead questions and encourage pupils to respond to a range of questions but do not always give them the opportunity to expand on their answers.
83. By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are average. Pupils make good progress in reading and very good progress in Year 1 because the teaching is very good and often excellent. Pupils in Year 2 read appropriate texts, talk about the characters and main events of the story and give suggestions for how the story might develop. Most pupils enjoy reading but only the more able can talk about the books they have read at home. For example, they can talk about their favourite book Harry Potter and their favourite author J.K.Rowling and can explain that they like the books because they are scary. Average pupils are unable to identify any favourite books or authors. Knowledge about books read in school is good. All pupils are able to identify the author and illustrator, talk about the front cover and use the information on the back of the book. Although most pupils read well, are taught to sound out unfamiliar words and know what to do, they are not confident in tackling unfamiliar words. Lower attaining pupils rely on adults to help them decipher difficult words. Referencing skills are unsatisfactory; pupils in Year 2 are unable to explain how to locate books in the library because they do not use the library regularly. Although the library is situated in a central position and is easily accessible for all classes, the school does not make sufficient use of it. During the inspection, however, it was noted that good use was made of information books in lessons such as history to locate information. All pupils have the opportunity to develop and apply their reading skills for practical purposes.
84. By the end of Year 4 standards in reading are average. Higher attaining pupils read confidently and accurately with expression. They list a range of favourite authors and books including Enid Blyton, J.K.Rowling and Jaqueline Wilson. They explain clearly why they like these authors for example, 'Because they make a good job of painting the story'. In Year 3 higher attaining pupils read accurately but not fluently. Average pupils do not always understand what they have read and do not have a clear understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in reading because books are clearly graded for difficulty.

85. By the end of Years 2 and 4 standards in writing are below average. Pupils' spelling skills are generally weak Standards of writing in Year 1 are average. By the end of Year 2 higher attaining pupils are beginning to write imaginatively but sentence structure is not always secure, and capital letters and full stops are occasionally missed when writing independently. Sentences are more secure when responding to direct questions. Pupils are able to develop their ideas and spelling is fairly accurate. Handwriting is consistent in size and shape but is not joined up. In their lesson about the *Selfish Crocodile*, higher attaining pupils in Year 2 write simple statements in speech bubbles to explain the main events of the story. A few higher attaining pupils use full stops, question marks and exclamation marks in their writing. Average pupils cut, stick and sequence the events of the story in the correct order. Lower attaining pupils need adult help to write simple sentences about the story. Poetry is well developed. Pupils in Year 2 write interesting tongue twisters and in Year 1 pupils are encouraged to write colourful and descriptive poetry for example, 'A rocket shoots up into the sky, Neeeeeeeyo, Bang, It's exploding. Pink yellow green sparks, Different coloured sparkles.' Teachers are over-reliant on worksheets and this often limits the amount of written work, as there is insufficient space to write extensively. In Year 3 and 4 lower attaining pupils cut and paste the story of Christopher Columbus in the correct order. Computers are used well and encourage pupils to learn about the story of Carter and the discovery of Tutankhamun from a written text. Higher attaining pupils use information about Tutankhamun to write answers to specific questions about the search. The use of capital letters and full stops is more consistent by Year 3 and 4. Higher attaining pupils in Year 4 use joined handwriting that is consistent in form and size. Lower attaining pupils, however, are not using joined handwriting and the size and shape of letters is inconsistent.
86. The use of literacy skills to enhance other subjects is good. All pupils write their own historical accounts of events such as the Ancient Egyptians. ICT is used well to enhance learning in English. Pupils in Year 2 use the computer to write up their diary of animals, and they use the spell checker to check spellings. No drama was observed during the inspection. This could be used more to improve confidence and clarity in speaking.
87. Teaching is good overall with instances of excellent teaching in Year 1. Learning objectives are identified clearly in the short-term planning. The pace of lessons is good and teachers give clear guidance on how to tackle reading and writing tasks. Time is used effectively and lessons are uplifting, there is a brisk pace and good atmosphere created. Pupils make good gains in their learning and are increasingly able to use the information productively. Teachers give very clear guidelines and open-ended questions are used. The work is generally well matched to pupils' ability; however the over-reliance on worksheets is a weakness. While these can provide a guiding framework for lower attaining pupils they do not offer enough incentive for higher attaining pupils to expand on their comments and answers. Lower attaining pupils, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are well supported by the teacher and learning support assistants who are very aware of their needs. A pupil with a statement of special educational needs in Year 3 manages to sequence events of a visit to the museum in the correct order because she is well supported by a learning support assistant. The quality of marking is inconsistent throughout the school. All teachers mark work regularly but the comments are usually positive and do not always challenge and guide pupils to a better standard of work. There is very good marking in Years 3 and 4 where the teacher manages to give supportive and positive comments but also challenges and provides simple steps to enable pupils to improve their work.
88. The assessment procedures are good. Reading records identify progress and attainment in reading. Teachers assess and evaluate how effective learning is. They identify clear targets for

improving reading and writing. The school is able to track individual progress over time. All teachers possess an assessment file and assessment is used well to inform planning across the school. However, there is no assessment of standards of speaking and listening.

89. Management of the subject is good. The subject leader analyses test results and identifies areas of strength and areas for further development. Teaching and learning are monitored and areas for development such as listening skills have been identified. The subject leader monitors planning and pupils' work effectively. All classes have a basic supply of fiction and non-fiction books. Resources are satisfactory but the range and quality of books for the more able are limited. There is a good range of multi-cultural books that are easily accessible for all pupils.

MATHEMATICS

90. Standards in mathematics have improved since the previous inspection and are now average by the end of Years 2 and 4. They have improved since the national test results in 2001 when they were below average at the end of Year 4. The improvement in standards in mathematics over time has been the result of effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy and good teaching. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language are supported well, often through a bi-lingual assistant, and they make good progress. By the end of Year 4 many of these pupils attain the standards expected for their age and this represents good success for the school. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress as their individual education plans and targets are used effectively to plan work which is matched to their needs. Well-focused teaching and careful review of what the pupils have achieved ensures that these pupils make consistent gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding. The school also identifies and provides for the needs of more able pupils. They are set challenging work which stretches their intellect. As a result these pupils achieve above average standards. There are some small variations in the performance of boys and girls from year to year in national tests. However, the small number of pupils involved and the imbalance of two-thirds of the pupils being boys make direct comparison difficult. Generally, boys and girls do equally well.
91. By the end of Year 2, pupils have appropriate knowledge of number and calculate simple addition and subtraction skills correctly. They recognise most mathematical signs and symbols although are insecure in using some mathematical vocabulary and this inhibits their success in solving problems. Pupils have an average understanding and knowledge of space, shape and measures. They identify the properties of shapes and also name them correctly. Pupils enjoy collecting information and use simple charts to tally this information which they then use to make suitable graphs. Some of this work is done on a computer and information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support pupils' mathematical development.
92. By the end of Year 4, pupils have a secure knowledge of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The more able use decimals correctly and understand the relationship between a half and fifty per cent. They measure correctly using centimetres, millilitres and kilograms. Pupils measure accurately and these skills are applied well in lessons in design and technology when they carefully mark pieces of wood and cut the correct length. The pupils have an appropriate knowledge of three-dimensional shapes and understand the relationship between angles, sides and faces. They collect and collate data and use the information to create graphs. They are aware of the differences in style of presentation between pie charts, line graphs and bar charts.
93. The pupils enjoy mathematics and, during lessons, behave well. They listen attentively to their teachers and join in enthusiastically, particularly at the start of lessons when they keenly answer mental arithmetic questions. Pupils generally work hard and produce a reasonable quantity of

work. However, the pupils record most of their work on worksheets which are then collated into a file. The work is not dated and this form of organisation means that checking on the pupils' progress in meeting targets is difficult.

94. The quality of teaching is good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The teachers have good subject knowledge and make effective use of the guidelines found in the National Numeracy Strategy. They organise their lessons well and there is a good balance between discussion, activity and learning through practical experience. In a very good lesson in Year 1, the pupils investigated the pattern of numbers by sorting coloured fish and soon established the pattern of odd and even. They went on to discover a variety of number patterns and the most able clearly understood how to continue a pattern of numbers following the three times table. Pupils are set sufficiently challenging tasks and the teachers explain them well so that the pupils are clear about what is expected. The mental arithmetic sessions at the start of lessons are used well to stimulate the pupils' mathematical thinking. Teachers ask well-crafted questions to check on the pupils' understanding and also encourage pupils to explain the different ways they have found the answer. This approach worked well in the Year 3 and 4 class where pupils were encouraged to check their answers by using an inverse operation. Marking is mainly correction of work and there are few comments included to guide pupils on how they might improve. Marking is rarely linked to targets.
95. The subject leader has a good understanding of the teaching of mathematics through the school and has monitored her colleagues' work. There has been good training on using the National Numeracy Strategy. Assessment is used well to keep a check on pupils' progress and the analysis of test data has enabled the subject leader to identify areas for development in mathematics. These findings have been shared with the staff and have resulted in an improved emphasis on developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary. There are suitable resources to support teaching and learning and the staff also make a number of good quality games and resources.

SCIENCE

96. In the 2001 national assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2, standards were above the national average for pupils gaining level 2, notably in experimental and investigative science, but below the national average for those attaining the higher level 3. Inspection findings in 2002, indicate that the school has maintained the above average standards in experimental and investigative science. In other aspects of the curriculum, standards are in line with national averages. Standards are in line with the national average by the end of Year 4, again with pupils showing good skills in experimental and investigative science. All boys and girls, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their below average attainment on entry at Year 1 to the end of Year 2. Progress of all pupils, including the more able, is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection overall with the school maintaining standards at the end of Year 2. Standards are not as high at the end of Year 4 as they were at the time of the previous inspection when they were above average.
97. By the end of Year 2, pupils have had frequent experiences of experimenting and investigating over a range of topics; for example, how different surfaces affect the movement of vehicles on a ramp or testing the properties of materials such as wood or paper. They correctly predict and test how accurate their predictions are; for example, when exploring how many minibeasts they might find in different parts of the school grounds. When recording their findings they use literacy and numeracy skills effectively to describe their findings in writing or graphs. A group of

pupils spoke to an inspector about their work on electric circuits. They showed a clear understanding of a circuit although they had limited fluency in English. They enjoyed the work and were able to describe the effect on the brightness of a bulb when additional bulbs are added to a circuit. They tried different ways of lighting the bulbs, eventually finding a parallel circuit to make two bulbs as bright as the one on the original circuit.

98. Pupils in Year 1 know about the tastes and textures of different fruit and vegetables, as part of a healthy eating project. They have explored successfully different ways of playing an instrument – plucking, shaking etc. - and recorded the uses and dangers of electricity. They have an appropriate knowledge of living things found in hedgerows and the school grounds. However, there is little difference in the standard of work in Years 1 and 2, as the curriculum is not monitored effectively enough to ensure that there is no unnecessary repetition.
99. By the end of Year 4, pupils have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the science curriculum. They have investigated how and which insulation materials keep things hot or cold most efficiently, explored differences between gases, liquids and solids and learnt about the life cycles of creatures, including humans. They know about gravity and the earth in space. Aspects of drugs education have been taught through the science curriculum, beginning appropriately with how some drugs have a positive effect on humans, and pupils have an appropriate knowledge of harmful drugs. There are topics which are very similar to those in Year 3 such as insulation, skeletons, living things, experiments on sensitivity of the hand; this hinders the consistent development of skills, knowledge and understanding. In Year 3 pupils measure different body parts accurately and they know about the creatures in different habitats such as the ocean, desert and rainforest. They have experimented as to how to separate mixtures such as sand and water, and the effects of water and air resistance. They have also completed work on electric circuits which is similar to that in Year 2. Generally, work in Year 3 books is of a higher standard than in Year 4. This is due partly to the development of the curriculum but also to the fact that Year 3 have a better grasp of scientific vocabulary and ideas than their older classmates.
100. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in Year 1. Experimental and investigative science is taught well. Marking throughout the school is up to date. There are positive comments in some books which encourage pupils in their learning and, in Year 2, there are helpful notes on some work which give the context in which the work was done. Individual teachers occasionally complete work for pupils which does not help them to progress satisfactorily nor take responsibility for their own learning. Much of the work throughout the school is undated so it is not possible to track progress effectively. There is very little evidence of the use of the Internet and other information and communication technology. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge of science and plan work appropriately for the different abilities in the class. They prepare lessons well and make good use of resources. This is particularly effective in providing opportunities for the pupils to learn through investigation. The pupils enjoy science and work hard in lessons. They produce appropriate quantities of work and are keen to explore and investigate. Pupils' learning is sometimes hampered by their limited scientific vocabulary.
101. The school has monitored the results of national tests. There is a process to record what pupils know, understand and can do but assessment is not used sufficiently to set appropriate work which matches pupils' levels of attainment or age in mixed-age classes. The subject leader is developing a portfolio of samples of work matched to different levels of attainment but this is incomplete at present. There has been some satisfactory monitoring of teaching by the subject leader who has provided oral and written feedback to teachers. There are suitable and

satisfactory resources to support the teaching of science. The school makes good use of its grounds to support the development of pupils' understanding of life and living processes.

ART AND DESIGN

102. By Year 2, pupils achieve the levels expected nationally for their age in a narrow range of activities. The school has maintained the standards found at the time of the previous inspection. By Year 4, pupils achieve the levels expected nationally but standards are not as good as those found at the time of the previous inspection when they were above national expectation. There is no significant difference in the achievement of different groups of pupils including boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets because the individual education plans are well focused. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from good teaching and they do equally as well as other pupils. Infant pupils make good progress from below average attainment on entry at Year 1 to the end of Year 2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4.
103. The teaching is good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. In a Year 1 lesson the teacher built on earlier learning effectively. She gave detailed guidance to which pupils listened well and went on to use clay to make a 'thumb-pot' emphasising the use of relevant terms such as 'imprint'. The multilingual assistant worked supportively and effectively with pupils at the early stages of English acquisition to enable them to participate on equal terms with monolingual peers. Pupils enjoyed the session and were excited at the prospect of making a pot although a minority became over-excited. The plan indicated that pupils would experiment with clay but this did not happen and, although the guidance was good, pupils would have benefited from exploring and experimenting with clay prior to making the pots. Staff marked pupils' names on the pots for them which limits opportunities for independence and further exploration with clay; for example, how deep can names be imprinted. Attainment in modelling with clay is above average. Although some pupils needed quite a lot of help, all made a pot with decoration. Individual pupils made accomplished and attractive pots.
104. Pupils in Year 2 use clay to make effective models of Egyptian 'canopic' pots. These involved the use of skills such as moulding the lid over their fists, using clay coils for the pot and marking the lids for decoration. However the misbehaviour of a significant minority of pupils and the disobedience of a few boys disrupted learning. Staff did not handle this effectively and pupils' behaviour did not improve. Staff, notably the bi-lingual assistants, did too much for pupils often taking over the moulding and shaping skills from pupils; this does not aid pupils' progress. The teacher made good links with history and the activity was very relevant to pupils because of this. The introduction and instructions took a long time and pupils were mainly observers for a significant part of the lesson resulting in many losing interest. A discussion with a small group of pupils in Year 2 indicated that they have had a limited range of learning opportunities using a narrow range of materials and resources.
105. Pupils have used computer art programs such as 'Paint' and 'Dazzle' to make patterns, draw pictures for book covers or explore techniques such as painting with dots in the style of 'pointillism'. However the use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped. There are good links with mathematics in the development of pattern. Collage is a frequent feature of the work.
106. Work in books or on display by Years 3 and 4 shows that pupils have satisfactorily used contrasting sugar paper to model faces, explored painting effects to produce pictures of rainbows or amazing journeys, and made basic sketches of Egyptian artefacts and posters using felt tips

and pencils to promote books. A discussion with a small group of pupils in Year 3 indicates that they have had a limited range of learning opportunities. Pupils in Year 3 in the Year 2/3 class do not do the same activities as the Year 3 pupils in the Year 3/4 class, this is unsatisfactory in terms of coverage of the curriculum.

107. There is very little evidence of work on knowledge, understanding, appreciation and evaluation of skills and techniques; for example, sketching or the work of different artists. This is an area for development. The organisation of the subject is developing but not yet fully in place as the subject leader has little time to carry out the role alongside her class teaching and other subject leadership roles. She is knowledgeable about the curriculum but this is not reflected in the opportunities planned for pupils throughout the school. The scheme of work is not yet in place and staff plan from different schemes. There is no assessment system in place. There is no monitoring of teaching.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. Standards in design and technology have improved significantly since the previous inspection and statutory requirements for the subject are now met. Pupils gain much from their lessons in design and technology. They enjoy the practical work and teachers stimulate pupils' interest by providing challenging opportunities for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills when planning and making models. By the end of Years 2 and 4 standards in design and technology are in line with those expected of pupils of this age. Because the teaching is effective, pupils make good progress. This is true for pupils with special educational needs who have good individual education plans and those who have English as an additional language who receive effective support through well planned teaching. Pupils make consistently good gains in improving their skills and techniques as the teaching focuses on building upon previous learning very well.
109. By the end of Year 2 pupils have good techniques in using a variety of materials to make effective models. They carefully plan their work and modify their plans. In Year 1 they build moving vehicles and use a good range of techniques to fasten together a wooden frame to make a robust chassis and then ensure that that axles run free so that the wheels turn smoothly. They decorate their model vehicles attractively. The pupils are successful in recognising key features of packaging. They disassemble packages and re-assemble them to see how the manufacturer has ensured that the packaging is robust and suitable for the contents. Pupils show a good understanding of this process and work with care. The teaching is good because it encourages the pupils to see design and technology as a process involving a good range of skills which serve a purpose. The pupils respond with enthusiasm to the subject and work hard. They carefully draw plans and make satisfactory use of their literacy skills when making notes about the process. They also use their numeracy skills well when estimating and measuring.
110. The pupils' skills and techniques are developed well in Years 3 and 4 and by the end of Year 4 standards are average. The pupils think carefully about the purpose of their design. When making good picture frames they take into account who the frame is for and make good use of decoration to make the frames attractive. They are good at cutting wood to the appropriate length and use their measuring skills well. Having completed a frame they add a picture woven using a wide variety of fabrics and produce stunning work of good quality. Pupils evaluate their work appropriately and comment on how they might improve it.
111. The subject has been co-ordinated and developed very well since the previous inspection and staff follow good guidance and a scheme of work. The policy is helpful in guiding staff on how

to develop skills and techniques consistently. The teaching is good because the teachers are clear about all elements of design and technology and understand how to develop pupils' skills and techniques. Teachers make good use of the resources available and plan work which stimulates the pupils' interest and imagination. There is a good emphasis on promoting numeracy skills through the use of accurate measuring and in using a variety of tools which require accuracy. The pupils have used their literacy skills appropriately to write instructions and to evaluate their work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and also know how to improve the pupils' skills in using tools such as saws and give guidance about health and safety.

112. The teachers set challenging tasks and this aids effective learning. The pupils respond well and enjoy the practical nature of the subject. They take good care of tools and equipment and also are careful when recording their plans to use labels and diagrams of sufficient detail. The teachers manage behaviour well and expect much from the pupils. Behaviour in lessons is good and the pupils work hard and concentrate well. Through their use of control technology the pupils are making satisfactory headway in using computers to support their work in design and technology. They understand that a series of instructions can control an action and are beginning to think of this in relation to making models.

GEOGRAPHY

113. Standards in geography are in line with what is expected at the end of both Years 2 and 4. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained but the quality of teaching has improved.
114. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a secure understanding of a map as a view from above and of the need to use a map key. They correctly draw a map of their route to school identifying the main features. Pupils can describe their route to school accurately. They demonstrate a good awareness of their own locality because they are taken for walks around the school and local area. Year 1 pupils enjoy taking *Peter the squirrel* for a walk around the school grounds and then on a trip to Bedford Park identifying the main features such as the lake. Pupils develop an appropriate awareness of direction and following a route as they complete their walk. They are able to mark in features on an outline plan and photographs are used well to show the different features. Year 2 pupils write independently about the town of Bedford and the main geographical feature, the river. Pupils write about the function of a river such as its role as transport, power and water supply. They develop an awareness of localities beyond their own as they use a world map to show where different food comes from. They complete an accurate weather log reinforcing their work in numeracy.
115. The progress in developing skills, knowledge and understanding from Year 1 to 2 is clearly evident. Pupils in Year 1 draw natural school features such as the hundred-year-old tree Victoria. They record what they see on a walk around the school wildlife area. They know the equator runs around the centre of the world and is an imaginary line. Year 1 pupils enjoy getting ready for their simulated aeroplane journey to South Africa. This stimulating lesson contributes to pupils' developing knowledge of other localities, for example they know they are likely to see elephants and rhinoceros in the safari park. Excellent planning contributes to the effective learning. There is great excitement as pupils write their own tickets and take an imaginary journey to South Africa. They are encouraged to take off their seat belts when they land in Johannesburg. The video is well used and introduces pupils to the city of Johannesburg and the safari park. The video helps pupils learn that the giraffe eats leaves from the top of trees.

116. By the end of Year 4, the pupils correctly identify and write about different features of the town of Bedford. They have suitable understanding of recycling and write about pollution and the threat to water. Literacy, numeracy and ICT skills are used well, for example pupils in Year 4 conduct a sports survey linked to their work on leisure and recreation and they interview residents from a local village. They research information about animals generic to different parts of the world such as Mediterranean monkeys and Asian black bears. Pupils write well about other contrasting locations such as Bangladesh and Tenby. Their writing about Bangladesh includes samples of Bengali writing and pupils draw Bengali artefacts. Pupils work on connecting routes, for example the shortest route from Sheffield to Liverpool.
117. The quality of teaching and learning is good with instances of excellent teaching in Year 1. The teachers plan and structure their lessons well and move them along briskly. In the excellent lesson the teacher is enthusiastic and has high expectations of behaviour and involvement and pupils respond well to this. Lessons are interesting and fully involve the pupils in an inter-active way. Assessment is carried out at the end of a unit of work. The use of assessment to inform planning is not sufficiently well planned to match individual needs. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but the quality of marking is inconsistent throughout the school.
118. The subject leader leads the subject well and she has developed a progressive scheme of work that covers all aspects. She has not monitored the quality of teaching and learning but monitors planning and pupils' work. Resources are satisfactory to support teaching and learning.

HISTORY

119. Standards in history are in line with what is expected at the end of both Years 2 and 4. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, achieve well and make good progress in their learning. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained but the quality of teaching has improved.
120. By the end of Year 2 pupils understand the difference between 'then' and 'now.' They write about going to school in Ancient Egypt and compare it with school life today. They record that very few Egyptian pupils could read. Pupils demonstrate an increasing sense of chronology and they all complete a time line about Marie Curie. They write well about how people travelled in the 1890s and 1910. They accurately describe and contrast the clothes of rich and poor Roman people. There is a strong focus on history around the school. Pupils in Year 1 write thoughtfully about things that have changed during the life of the Queen Mother. They write knowledgeably about the Great Fire of London and produce attractive chalk drawings of the fire. Pupils are encouraged to write independently about famous people such as Florence Nightingale and they respond well to this challenge. Comparisons between the past and present are used well, for instance Year 1 pupils are encouraged to compare washday in the Victorian times and washing facilities today.
121. Good progress is continued through the school and local history is used well to reinforce learning. Pupils apply their literacy skills well to historical writing. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 identify historic monuments in Bedford such as the statue of John Bunyan. They write about Bunyan's life and his time in Bedford jail, and explain why he wrote *Pilgrim's Progress*. By the end of Year 4, pupils have developed a sound understanding of the importance of original sources. They effectively research information about local people such as Thomas Whiteman who lived in 1721. They know he became known as Black Tom because at one time he was a highwayman and robbed the mayor of Bedford. Pupils know that the area around their school is known

locally as the Black Tom area. Pupils draw a time line showing the history of their school from 1893-2002 making good use of their numeracy skills.

122. Literacy, art and information technology are well used to enhance learning in history. Computers are used well to research information, for example pupils in Years 3 and 4 research information about Carter and the discovery of Tutankhamun. In all year groups pupils write independently about historical events. Photographic evidence indicates that pupils look and learn from artefacts. Visits to the local Bedford museum enhance pupils' understanding about Victorian times.
123. Teaching is good overall. History has a prominent focus around the school. Lessons are well planned and good use is made of a variety of resources. Good input from learning support assistants ensures that all pupils including those with special educational needs and for whom English as an additional language make good progress. Questions are used well in lessons to check pupils' understanding and develop curiosity in studying artefacts and sources of evidence. Lessons are well organised with good opportunities to learn about and demonstrate factual knowledge about the ancient Egyptians. Pupils are highly motivated and respond enthusiastically to the tasks. Year 3 and 4 pupils are engrossed when researching information from a CD-ROM about Egyptians. Lessons contain a variety of interesting tasks and this contributes to the good attitudes pupils have to their learning.
124. Subject leadership for history is good and makes a suitable contribution to pupils' learning. The subject leader has developed the subject effectively and ensured computers are used to enhance research work. All teachers assess the work covered at the end of each term. There has been no monitoring of teaching and learning. Resources are satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

125. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 4 are average. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. The improvement is due to much improved resources, better teaching and an improvement in teachers' subject knowledge. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teaching assistants and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in learning basic computer skills because skills are sometimes explained to them well using their home language. Progress in using these skills in other subjects is satisfactory. However, pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to refine their skills in subjects such as science, art and design and music.
126. By the end of Year 2 most pupils have a secure understanding of basic word processing. They know how to use a variety of keys and functions to change the font, size, colour and alignment of their work and are beginning to use information and communication technology to present their work attractively. The pupils understand that computers are used in a wide variety of contexts such as the supermarket when scanning goods. They know how to input data and instructions to control a simple programmable toy and through this work learn to appreciate estimates of distance and angles of turn. The pupils enjoy using computers and have an appropriate knowledge of a variety of tools when drawing and writing using computers. They make suitable use of their literacy skills linked to word processing to present their work.
127. By the end of Year 4, pupils' skills in word processing are appropriate for their age. They understand that the computer is a useful tool in drafting and editing their work. They know how to use several of the computers' tools such as the spell check and are also reasonably familiar with some of the function keys. However, lack of equipment means that pupils have limited

skills and experience of communicating using the Internet and electronic mail. The pupils very much enjoy using computers and are good at sequencing instructions to control movement on screen. They use their literacy skills well when solving problems as they negotiate through the levels of the crystal rainforest. They also make good use of numeracy skills to create a program which designs a crystal. Pupils make good progress in using the computer to collect and collate data and create a graph.

128. The teaching is mostly good. It is satisfactory in applying computer skills to work in other subjects. Teachers have benefited much from good training and competently use computers to plan and prepare work for the pupils. The more competent teachers make good use of technology in some lessons. The improved resources in the school have a positive impact on the rate of pupils' progress and the pupils enjoy using computers and work hard. They get on well together when tackling tasks and often share ideas. They work independently and show a willingness to experiment with new software. The pupils give clear and accurate explanations when talking about their work. During lessons the teachers achieve a good balance between direct instruction and allowing the pupils to select their own way of doing things. Teachers use correct terminology when teaching and this encourages the pupils to develop a secure understanding of technical terms. The staff place a good emphasis on encouraging the pupils to use correct terms and the pupils are competent in this.
129. There is a good policy for the subject and all staff including support assistants follow the scheme of work consistently. The support staff are fully involved in lessons in information and communication technology and contribute much to supporting pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Teachers keep good records of the pupils' progress and use the information well to plan the next programme of study. The school has good resources and has benefited much from the support of Bedford College in raising standards at the school.

MUSIC

130. Standards in music, including singing, are in line with national expectation by the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Broadly similar standards were reported at the last inspection. There was very little evidence of composing and appraising throughout the school and this is an area for development. ICT is not used sufficiently to support the subject. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make good progress in Years 1 to 2 from below average standards on entry to Year 1 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4 in performing and listening. Individual pupils sing very well, tunefully and musically and have enough confidence to perform in front of the whole school. The teaching is satisfactory overall and there is some good specialist teaching.
131. Pupils in Year 1 know about pulse in African music and the attainment of many in this aspect of their work is above average. They are very quick to pick out the pulse, work together well and learn from one another. The pupils enjoy music making and are able to mark the pulse through clapping, tapping feet and marching - maintaining the pulse while doing these actions. They use instruments well to mark different pulses related to animal movements. Lessons are planned well; there is good teaching of slow/fast pulse which linked well to earlier work on a text involving a tortoise and buffalo. The teachers emphasise the use of correct terminology. Pupils are keen to improve their musical skills and concentrate well; they work hard and practise hard to improve.

132. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have had limited learning opportunities and these relate mostly to singing. However, they satisfactorily play instruments for characters in 'Hairy Scary Castle', for example, bells for the rat. They also sing songs such as 'Knickerbocker' and 'Hello Mr Sun' with an awareness of humour and rhythm. The pupils clap the beat of their singing appropriately and some are competent and confident in using expression. Pupils from Year 3 use percussion instruments satisfactorily, sing quite well, and were confident to sing as a group to an inspector when their singing grew better as they sang.
133. Individual pupils have opportunities for tuition for violin or guitar. The peripatetic violin teacher provides good teaching, making the learning fun which encourages pupils to join in actively. The pupils follow simple notation accurately and improve their playing with practice. Pupils in Year 4 learning to play the recorder in an extra-curricular club show good skills and much enthusiasm. They are able to hold a tune and play in harmony. They practise regularly at school and at home, learn to play together, keep in time, hold a tune and move their fingers with dexterity. They are able to perform confidently in front of the whole school and talk about their attainments.
134. There are inadequate opportunities to develop skills in performing with tuned instruments, composing and appraising pupils' own work and that of famous composers. There are extra-curricular clubs which enhance provision. The recorder and choir clubs are available to all who are interested but only a few pupils take up these opportunities. In a singing assembly, the majority of pupils were mostly observers of peers playing instruments or singing. They were not very involved and became restless. Singing, even of the oldest pupils, was inconsistent in quality. Pupils understand the concept of singing in three parts but are not yet able to perform this challenging activity.
135. There is no subject leader currently. There is no overall scheme of work or assessment system. There is no monitoring of teaching. However, all staff have taken part in some training and they show a willingness to further develop the curriculum. The school has appointed a subject leader for music to take up responsibility next term.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. Standards of attainment in physical education by the end of Years 2 and 4 are broadly in line with what you would expect for pupils of this age. All pupils including those with special educational needs and pupils who have English as a second language make good progress in their learning as they progress through the school. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained.
137. By the end of Year 2 pupils' co-ordination is well developed. Pupils in Year 2 make satisfactory progress in developing their ability to control and hit a small ball on a racket. Most pupils can balance a ball on their racket. Higher attaining pupils demonstrate good control and can hit the ball continuously up or down for ten or more times. Average and lower attaining pupils only manage to do this once or twice. There is evidence of effective previous learning because all pupils know and understand how and when to use an under-arm throw. Pupils are sometimes over-challenged in the task and this results in the pace of learning slowing down as many pupils struggle to achieve. For many pupils the activity of receiving a flying ball and hitting it back to a partner is too challenging as they cannot yet make contact with a flying ball. Higher attaining pupils who find the task easy are not always sufficiently extended in their learning with more challenging tasks. Spatial awareness is less well developed because the teacher asks all pupils to walk the same way around the hall. Knowledge and awareness of the effect of exercise on the body is limited. Pupils respond with words like 'strong' when asked to explain the effect of

exercise on the body. Teachers often suggest improvements to their performance but pupils' ability to suggest improvements to their own and others' performance is limited.

138. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress in gymnastic activities. They roll across the mat in a variety of ways with long thin stretched shapes and curled tucked shapes. Jumping skills are developing well as pupils start to extend as they jump off the trestle table. Pupils show confidence in their movements and higher attaining pupils turn as they travel along the bench. Climbing, curling and stretching skills are developing well. The pace of learning could be better if more effective methods were used during the lesson, for example pupils standing in queues of up to seven waiting for a turn on the apparatus. This reduces the levels of activity during the lesson and the amount of practice time. Pupils are not learning to get out apparatus and develop safe lifting and carrying skills because the teacher puts the apparatus out for the pupils while they watch.
139. By the end of Year 4 standards in gymnastics are in line with those expected nationally. Resilience is well developed and pupils attending the gymnastics club know an appropriate range and vocabulary of gymnastic movements. Higher attaining pupils perform handstands and forward rolls with good levels of control. Their ability to explain the importance of warming up before physical activity and to know and understand the benefits to health and fitness of physical activity is often limited because teaching in this area is not emphasised regularly enough. Standards in athletic activities are average. Pupils run and throw with well-developed co-ordination; most pupils successfully aim the beanbag into the different hoops. Higher attaining pupils, however, are not always fully stretched in the running and travelling activities. There is no incentive to improve the speed or distance and this results in pupils completing the activities in a relaxed style. Pupils' ability to evaluate and improve their performance is developing but could be stronger. In the athletics lesson in Years 3 and 4 pupils are given responsibility to put out their own equipment following a plan. This makes good links with geography skills and encourages independence.
140. Pupils have had no experience of swimming this year despite the fact that there is a school pool next to the school. The school have had a problem finding a lifeguard for the sessions. Pupils make good progress in learning Bengali dances. Observation of the lunchtime activity and video evidence show that boys and girls enjoy the dance and achieve well. The pupils capture the characteristic style of the dance with their head and hand movements. Higher attaining pupils change direction and include a double kick step. Pupils with statements of special educational needs perform well in this group alongside others. The pupils respond well to the music and have performed at local events. During the gymnastic club pupils have the opportunity to practise gymnastic skills and work towards recognised gymnastic badges and awards. The club is well attended and pupils make good progress learning new gymnastic skills.
141. Teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Lessons are usually well planned and appropriate teaching points are given to guide improvement in skills. Teachers have sound subject knowledge generally; however some teachers need to update their knowledge on safe exercises for warming up prior to activity. In some gymnastic lessons, the organisation and methods used mean seven or more pupils queuing to use one piece of apparatus. This slows down the pace of learning and activity time in the lesson. Attitudes are good and pupils enjoy their physical education. Better use of assessment to inform planning would ensure all pupils are appropriately challenged and tasks are planned to meet the needs of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils are not always challenged by the activities in the lesson.

142. The teaching of the skills of numeracy and literacy to enhance learning in physical education could be better. Teachers do not challenge pupils enough to evaluate their own and others work and suggest ways to improve. In athletics, opportunities to measure and record scores are missed. There is no evidence that ICT contributes to the subject.
143. The subject leader is satisfactory. Resources are satisfactory; the school has very good outdoor facilities for physical education. The extra-curricular activities such as gymnastics, Bengali dancing, football, netball, athletics and rounders enrich the curriculum provision. The school must try to ensure pupils benefit from the nearby swimming pool and that this activity is included in the curriculum.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

144. By the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils' achievements are similar to those expected in the agreed syllabus followed by most schools in Bedford. The school has improved standards found at the time of the previous inspection by the end of Year 2 and maintained them by the end of Year 4. Pupils with English as an additional language, make good progress from below average standards on entry at Year 1 to the end of Year 2 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs also benefit from careful explanations using simple vocabulary which helps them in understanding religious ideas and concepts. Statutory requirements regarding the teaching of religious education are now met.
145. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a growing knowledge of the stories of Jesus, for example that Christians believe He is the Son of God, that the Last Supper on Maundy Thursday had important significance and the meaning of parables that Jesus told. They have visited a local church to support this learning. They also know about signs and symbols in Christianity and Judaism such as 'The Flood' and why Passover is celebrated by believers of Judaism. Staff emphasise well the meaning of faith to different people and avoid a superficial approach to beliefs. However, some worksheets are rather simplistic and require the pupils to respond in a few words and not challenge them to think about reasons, for example, why Sikhs do not cut their hair. Writing skills are below average even when the content is relevant. There are examples of good work in higher attainers' books; for example, extended writing about the baptism of Jesus.
146. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a good understanding of the meaning of faith in people's lives. They know about aspects of Judaism such as family life, the synagogue, and famous people from the Old Testament such as Ruth, Moses and Jonah. They also know key facts in the life of Jesus and other New Testament characters. The pupils appreciate some of the similarities and differences between Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. There are examples of very good activities such as the expectation that pupils give New Testament references when learning about what sort of person Jesus was or rewriting the Lord's Prayer in their own words to show their understanding of the meaning of the prayer. Throughout the school there is good coverage of different beliefs and faiths.
147. The teaching is good and is relevant to the pupils. The pupils respond well and contribute their own knowledge to making the subject interesting. Pupils in Year 1 focused on Islamic places of worship, building on work on Christianity and Sikh places of worship. As Islam is the faith of about a third of pupils in the class the teaching was very relevant. The teachers also make good use of visits and visitors to bring the subject to life. Pupils talked knowledgeably about a Sikh visitor who had discussed the Sikh place of worship with pupils and their visit to the Christian church. The teaching was good and the teacher used the bi-lingual assistant and pupils who

believe in Islam to tell peers about the mosque. Discussion is often lively and well informed and the teachers capitalise on the pupils' own knowledge. Pupils are interested, enthusiastic and join in lively discussions. The bi-lingual assistants contribute much to lessons in helping the pupils to understand new ideas by discussing them in the pupils' home language and also support the pupils in their writing.

148. Throughout the school the pupils have a good awareness of the importance of prayer in some people's lives. They write good prayers for lunchtime and rules for how to behave in places of worship. Most pupils concentrate well and show reverence when writing prayers, although a few, mainly boys, lose concentration and disrupt others. The pupils know about festivals such as Ramadan, Diwali, and Advent. A video of the Diwali festival shows that the school planned a wide range of activities - dance, music, cooking, art and craft - which involved the whole school. This project did much to develop knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and contributed positively to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
149. The headteacher is the subject leader and she has had a good impact on raising standards in the subject over time. However more remains to be done in developing a system of assessment and in monitoring the teaching. The school has improved upon the unsatisfactory provision found at the time of the previous inspection and addressed the relevant key issue effectively.