

INSPECTION REPORT

CAMESTONE LOWER SCHOOL

Kempston

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109462

Headteacher: Mrs Lynne Russell

Reporting inspector: Mr A J Dobell
10373

Dates of inspection: 28th January to 1st February 2002

Inspection number: 242935

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
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Lyn Carmichael
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10373	Mr A J Dobell	Registered inspector	Mathematics. Music. Physical education.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9136	Mr G V Humphrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31175	Mr A A Allison	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage. English. Geography. History.	How well does the school care for its pupils.
7222	Mr A Watson	Team inspector	English as an additional language. Special educational needs. The special educational needs unit.	
21910	Mr G Longton	Team inspector	Equal opportunities. Science. Information and communication technology. Art and design. Design and technology. Religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in Kempston, a suburb to the south west of Bedford. It draws its pupils mainly from the local area which has a mix of rented and privately owned housing. It has the full-time equivalent of 345 pupils on roll from the ages of four to nine, with 24 pupils in the Reception classes attending part-time. This means that it is larger than the average primary school. Eighty one pupils come from minority ethnic groups, including two refugees. This, at 23.5 per cent, is well above the national average. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language (15.4 per cent) is high in relation to the national average and five pupils are in the early stages of learning English. Seventy four pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals which, at 21.4 per cent, is broadly average.

The school serves an area with a lower than average socio-economic background and the learning skills of pupils are below the national average when they enter the Reception class. Sixty four pupils (18.5 per cent) are on the school's register of special educational needs and this is in line with the national average. Ten pupils (2.9 per cent) have statements of special educational needs, which is higher than the national average. The nature of special educational needs includes dyslexia, moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties and autism. The school has a unit for pupils with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties and this is reported on separately in the main inspection report.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a rapidly improving school. It offers its pupils a very high level of support and care and provides them with a stimulating and secure learning environment in which they develop very well as individuals. Standards of attainment are improving although, in 2001, attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 was below the national average. The leadership of the recently appointed headteacher, a number of new teachers and a clearer focus on successful learning are raising attainment well.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. Pupils respond very well in lessons and in the general life of the school. The headteacher has clear views about the school's strengths and areas for development. There is an impressive unity of purpose in the school. Given the rapid progress that the school is making, the high quality of the education that the pupils are receiving, and the school's below average unit costs, the school is giving good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching is very good overall and learning activities are interesting and stimulating.
- There is excellent provision for children under the age of five in the Foundation Stage.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to school and behave very well both in and out of class. The quality of relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, is excellent.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- There is excellent provision for pupils' moral and cultural development: pupils' personal development is very effective overall.
- Parents have very positive views about the school.
- The headteacher has a very clear appreciation of the school's areas for development and there is a very good commitment to further improvement.

What could be improved

- The quality of assessment is inconsistent across the different subjects of the curriculum.
- The roles of senior managers in the school have not yet been decided.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was first inspected in September 1997. Since then, attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 has been erratic, and, in 2001, was below the national average. Evidence from this inspection is that attainment in Year 2 is broadly average.

Since it was first inspected, the school has improved its library and information and communication technology facilities. The quality of the education provided in the Foundation Stage has improved markedly. The planning of the curriculum is now very effective, and the school matches learning tasks to pupils' needs well overall. Arrangements for assessing pupils' progress have improved overall, although there is scope for making them more consistent in different subjects. Links with parents have improved and parents now see the school as 'more parent-friendly'. The leadership being provided by the headteacher and the governing body is now more focused.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	C	B	C	B
Writing	D	C	D	C
Mathematics	E	C	E	D

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

Attainment in the National Curriculum tests has been erratic since the school was first inspected though, in two of these years, there has been a marked improvement in standards. Pupils are now making better progress in the Reception Year and Year 1, so the school is on course to improve attainment at the end of Year 2 and reduce the variations. Attainment is in line with national expectations at this stage of Year 2. At the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, attainment is broadly in line with the national average. This maintains the standards found when the school was inspected previously.

Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and good progress overall in Years 1 to 4. Attainment in speaking and listening, design and technology and music is better than that normally found at the ages of seven and nine. In reading, writing, information and communication technology, art and design, geography, and physical education attainment broadly matches that achieved nationally. At the age of nine, attainment in history is better than is normally found, while, at seven, it matches that normally found. In religious education, attainment at the end of Years 2 and 4 matches that expected for pupils who follow the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language make very good progress in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2, and good progress in Years 3 and 4.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They enjoy their work and are keen to play a full part in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good overall. In class, interesting learning tasks keep pupils motivated, and playtimes are friendly and enjoyable.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are excellent. As a result, pupils develop very well as individuals.
Attendance	In the school year 2000-2001, attendance was slightly better than the national average.

Parents confirm that children enjoy school and that behaviour is good overall. Most pupils concentrate well and work with interest. Excellent relationships have a positive effect on learning. While attendance is satisfactory, a few pupils in most classes are unpunctual, and this disrupts the start to the school day. In the last school year, there were five fixed period exclusions and two permanent exclusions. All these involved pupils from the special educational needs unit.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 and 4
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Good

The quality of teaching is very good overall and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed during the inspection. In the 75 lessons observed, just over half were very good or excellent, just over one third were good, and about 13 per cent were satisfactory. This is a good improvement on the previous inspection. There have been a number of changes in staffing since the school's first inspection including in the last few months and these are having a positive impact on teaching and learning.

The quality of teaching is very good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 and 4. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well in the Reception classes and well in Years 1 to 4. Information and communication technology is taught well and this technology is used effectively to support learning in other subjects. The best teaching is characterised by teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of their subjects, very effective planning for learning, high expectations and very effective teaching methods. Teachers are very skilled in managing their classes and in deploying non-teaching assistants and resources for learning. As a result, pupils make very good progress in the Foundation Stage, and good progress in Years 1 to 4.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality of learning opportunities is excellent in the Foundation Stage and very good in Years 1 to 4. There is very good equality of opportunity, and all pupils are fully included in the school's activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. As a result, they make very good progress in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2, and good progress in Years 3 and 4. There is good provision for pupils in the unit for those with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school makes very good provision for pupils who speak English as an additional language who make very good progress in the Reception classes and Years 1 and 2, and good progress in Years 3 and 4.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is an excellent provision for pupils' moral and cultural development and very good provision for their spiritual and social development. Overall, there is very good provision for pupils' personal development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good educational and personal support and guidance for pupils, and the school is very effective in promoting their welfare.

The school's curriculum is planned with great care and is relevant to the needs of all pupils. Parents and pupils appreciate the quality of care and support that the school provides. The school's links with parents have improved markedly and are now very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher was appointed in September 2001 and is providing clear-sighted and energetic leadership. Some subject managers are excellent but others are recently appointed to their roles and are still establishing themselves.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Under its relatively new and enthusiastic chair, the governing body is rapidly developing its role in shaping the direction of the school. It fulfils its legal requirements well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good procedures for monitoring and evaluating its work and for determining priorities for future development.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its physical and human resources very well. It is effective in getting the best value from its expenditure.

Leadership and management have a clear vision for the school. It is to continue to raise attainment while maintaining the school's good record of care and support and developing the respect with which it is held within the community. Equality of access and opportunity are central to the school's work and all pupils are fully included in its activities. Staff have an impressive unity of purpose in the dedication that they bring to pupils' academic and personal development. The school is very well staffed to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Accommodation is adequate and resources for learning are good overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching is good and children make good progress. • Behaviour is good and children become more mature and responsible. • Parents feel comfortable when approaching the school with concerns. • Children are expected to work hard and do their best. • The school is well led and managed. • Children like school. 	<p>Of the parents who responded to the questionnaire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 per cent question if children are given the right amount of homework. • 16 per cent do not believe that they are well informed about progress. • 13 per cent question if the school works closely with parents. • 30 per cent do not think that the school provides an interesting range of activities outside class.

The school distributed 357 questionnaires and 98 were returned (28.4 per cent). These views represent just over one quarter of all parents and carers. Twenty one parents attended the meeting held before the inspection.

Inspectors support the positive views held by parents. Inspectors judge that the school uses homework well to support learning and most parents at the meeting were happy with homework. Parents believe that links with parents are improving and inspectors agree with those views. Compared with many schools, information for parents is very good. The school provides a good range of activities in music outside class, but is unusual in providing no sporting activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Since the school's first inspection, results in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds have been erratic. In most years, attainment has been at or above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics, but, in other years, attainment overall has been below the national average. In 2001, attainment in reading was at the national average and above the average attained in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. Attainment in writing was below the national average, but matched the average attained in similar schools. In mathematics, attainment was well below the national average and below the average for similar schools. These results represent a decline on the levels being attained when the school was inspected previously. However, that year group was unusually young and included a high number of pupils who had spent only one term full time in the Reception Class. This meant that the year group was less well prepared overall to begin work on the National Curriculum in Year 1.
- 2 In 2001, in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in reading, 83 per cent of the school's pupils attained the national expectation of level 2 at least, compared with 84 per cent nationally. However, only 23 per cent of the school's pupils attained the higher than expected level 3 compared with 29 per cent nationally. In writing, 91 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 2 at least compared with 86 per cent nationally, but no pupils attained level 3 compared with nine per cent nationally. In mathematics, 90 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 2 at least compared with 91 per cent nationally, but only 16 per cent of the school's pupils attained level 3 while 28 per cent attained this level nationally. There was no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.
- 3 Science is not examined in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2. In 2001, teachers' assessments placed the school's pupils at the national average. The proportion of the school's pupils attaining the higher level 3 was judged to be above the national average.
- 4 When they enter the Reception classes, children's learning skills are below those normally found. Because of the very good teaching that they receive, children make very good progress. Most are on course to attain the standards expected nationally in the six areas of learning for this age group by the time they leave the Foundation Stage at the end of the Reception Year. Progress in personal, social and emotional development is particularly good. Children are very well prepared to begin work on the National Curriculum when they enter Year 1.
- 5 Evidence from the inspection is that standards of attainment are improving. The very good teaching which pupils are now receiving in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 is resulting in very good progress in the Reception classes and good progress in Years 1 and 2. As a result, attainment in speaking and listening is above average for pupils aged six and seven for this stage of the school year, and attainment in reading, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, geography, history and physical education is at the level normally found. Attainment in design and technology and music is above that normally found. In religious education, pupils are attaining the standards expected for those following the Bedfordshire agreed syllabus in religious education.

- 6 By the time they leave the school at the age of nine, pupils' attainment is above the level expected in speaking and listening, design and technology, history and music, and at the expected level in reading, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, geography and physical education. In religious education, it is at the level expected for pupils following the Bedfordshire agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress overall throughout the school and achieve well to reach the nationally expected standards by the age of nine. Progress made by pupils in Year 4 has not been consistent, but, at present, they are making good progress. Because of the more focused teaching that is now available and the high expectations that are now evident, the school is in a good position to improve attainment further.
- 7 Overall, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in their learning. Progress is very good in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 and 4 in relation to pupils' previous levels of attainment. They work effectively towards the clearly defined targets in their individual education plans. Pupils benefit from work which is carefully targeted to their needs and provides them with an appropriate level of challenge. Their attainment is enhanced by the effective support they receive from the well-deployed classroom assistants. Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive effective support and make very good progress in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, and good progress in Years 3 and 4. The school provides well for different individuals and groups of pupils so that all have full access to learning opportunities. Pupils who have particular gifts or talents are being identified so that they can receive work which provides them with appropriate challenge and enables them to make good progress.
- 8 The school has introduced the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy successfully and these are having a positive effect on attainment in English and mathematics. Opportunities are taken to practise English in subjects such as history and religious education, and mathematics in subjects such as design and technology and science. However, there is scope for this to be extended and made more consistent. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning in subjects across the curriculum.
- 9 Because teaching is now more focused and targeted to the needs of different individuals and groups of pupils, the school is now in a good position to raise attainment further. In particular, it is in a good position to reduce the erratic swings in attainment levels which have been a feature of the school's results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 10 Pupils' have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and show enthusiasm, interest and commitment in their work. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, and returned questionnaires, confirmed that their children are happy at school, behave well and respect each other and their teachers. They felt that the school promotes good attitudes and values and that their children become mature and responsible individuals during their time in the school.
- 11 In the Reception classes children quickly settle into school routines such as holding up a hand to answer a question. They listen well, share and take turns, and are eager to participate in group play and learning activities. They concentrate on the tasks they are given, show good levels of interest and make a positive contribution to lessons. Good examples of this were seen in music, where children listened carefully and made a real effort in their response to what they were asked to do. Similarly, when

working in pairs to draw a map, they collaborated very well and showed pleasure and confidence when explaining the features that they had incorporated into their imaginary landscapes. Children's personal, social and emotional development is very good.

- 12 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work well together and show high levels of interest. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson, pupils enjoyed the challenge of trying to identify different smells and in a religious education lesson, pupils in another Year 1 class were eager to take part in a whole-class discussion. In a Year 2 design and technology lesson on healthy eating, pupils were highly motivated, collaborated well together and showed excellent attitudes to learning.
- 13 As pupils progress through the school, their interest and enthusiasm for learning continue to develop. They listen carefully to what others have to say and begin to develop some independent learning skills and take some initiative in lessons. For example, in a Year 3 physical education lesson, pupils co-operated well together and showed very good initiative when creating a sequence of movements. In a history lesson, Year 4 pupils became totally absorbed by an investigation into life during World War II and did not want to stop working when the lesson ended, even though it was break time.
- 14 Pupils with special educational needs have a very positive attitude to learning and make very good overall progress towards the targets identified in their individual education plans. There were no examples of pupils with special educational needs being denied access to any aspect of the school's activities during the inspection. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also have good attitudes to learning and make very good progress overall.
- 15 Behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and towards adults, for example holding doors open, standing aside to let others through, and exchanging an appropriate greeting. Staff treat pupils with respect and consideration, and this is reflected in the confidence and trust that pupils have in their relationships with others. There were five temporary and two permanent exclusions in the last school year involving two boys and one girl. All these involved pupils in the school's unit for pupils with emotional, behavioural and learning difficulties.
- 16 Relationships between all members of the school community are excellent. Pupils respect the feelings, values and beliefs of others and have a very good understanding of the impact that their actions can have on other pupils and adults. Consequently, they care for each other and show tolerance. All pupils, including those who find learning difficult, and those who come from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds, are fully included in the life and work of the school. This results in very good integration and a sense of harmony throughout the school.
- 17 Pupils respond well to the good opportunities provided for them to show initiative and take responsibility. Class monitors are selected on a rota basis to return registers to the school office and to help to prepare for lessons and to clear away afterwards. Older pupils help with the preparation of assemblies and act as 'buddies' for newly arrived pupils who have English as an additional language.

- 18 Attendance is broadly in line with the national average. Punctuality in the mornings is satisfactory overall, but a small minority of pupils in most classes arrived late for registration during the inspection week and this disrupted the start to the day. The very good learning attitudes and behaviour found during the school's first inspection have been maintained and make a positive contribution to pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 19 The quality of teaching is very good overall. This is an improvement on the situation reported in the school's first inspection. Then, in 24 per cent of the lessons observed, teaching was very good or excellent, in 74 per cent of lessons, teaching was satisfactory or good, and, in two per cent of lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory. In this inspection, 75 lessons were observed with just over a half being very good or excellent, and the rest being satisfactory or good. Seventy per cent of the lessons observed in the Foundation Stage were very good with the rest being good. In Years 1 and 2, some six per cent of teaching was excellent with 57 per cent being very good, 28 per cent being good and nine per cent being satisfactory. In Years 3 and 4, 30 per cent of teaching was very good, 47 per cent was good, and 23 per cent was satisfactory. This is a good improvement on the quality of teaching found in the school's first inspection. There have been a number of staff changes since that inspection, and six teachers are new to the school since the beginning of this school year.
- 20 In the Foundation Stage, the very good teaching is rooted in a very clear understanding of how young children learn. Teachers and support assistants have created a secure and welcoming environment in which children feel confident to explore and to express themselves. All adults have high expectations for children's behaviour and effort, and stimulate children's thinking by taking every opportunity to question their responses and to encourage them to explain their thinking. Imaginative and thorough procedures for assessment ensure that staff have a secure understanding of the progress that all children are making so that any areas of difficulty can be addressed in the planning of future lessons. As a result of this careful analysis and the stimulating and imaginative teaching that takes place, children make very good progress and are on course to achieve the nationally expected standards by the end of the Reception Year.
- 21 In the rest of the school, very good teaching is most consistently found in Years 1 and 2, although there are also examples of very good teaching in Years 3 and 4. In Years 1 and 2, almost two thirds of teaching is very good or excellent. This high quality teaching is characterised by very good subject knowledge and understanding which results in effectively planned lessons. The learning objectives of each lesson are clearly defined and shared with pupils so that they understand what they are learning and why. In the best lessons, these objectives are discussed at the end of the lesson so that pupils can evaluate what they have learned. Lessons are imaginatively planned so that pupils' interests and imaginations are engaged. Very little time is lost moving from one activity to the next, so that pupils remain focused on their work for long periods. Teachers are very skilled in managing their classes. Excellent relationships mean that pupils are very co-operative, and highly effective strategies for managing pupils are almost unnoticed because pupils and adults are working together in the pleasure of learning. Pupils feel that their ideas and suggestions are valued, so they are eager to contribute to lessons and give of their best. Effective matching of learning tasks to the needs of different groups of pupils ensures that all are effectively challenged and can go on to extra work which challenges them further if they finish their set task quickly. Non-teaching staff support learning effectively. As

a result, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are making good progress in their learning.

- 22 This was the case in an excellent English lesson in Year 2 when learning got off to a brisk start with spelling of words involving the vowel sounds 'ow' such as down, and 'igh' such as might. There was a very clear explanation of how 'igh' constitutes a vowel sound, and how to pronounce 'th' and avoid 'f'. A very clear understanding of how the National Literacy Strategy should be used to improve attainment became apparent as the lesson proceeded. Group work was carefully planned and managed, and, while the teacher worked with one group mainly, she was very aware of what pupils in other groups were doing. During the lesson, the pace never slackened and excellent questioning continually tested and extended pupils' understanding. Very clear explanations ensured that no time was wasted in seeking clarification and pupils were always purposefully engaged. Excellent management of behaviour appeared almost effortless because of the very warm relationships and the teacher's high expectations for her pupils. Many of the same strengths were apparent in an excellent mathematics lesson in Year 1. Here, the teacher's very quiet approach to learning resulted in a highly impressive level of sustained concentration. The teacher's careful use of accurate mathematical language underpinned learning and her very good liaison with support assistants ensured that all pupils were fully included in learning and made excellent progress in the lesson.
- 23 Where teaching is satisfactory, lessons still tend to be well planned and relationships between teacher and pupils are positive. However, such lessons tend to lack impetus. For example, in a physical education lesson for older pupils, so much time was spent as a few pupils got out equipment for the class that the majority became distracted and lost interest. In a Year 2 lesson in information and communication technology, too much had been planned for pupils to do so that they were unclear as to how to proceed. Similarly, in a Year 4 geography lesson, challenging tasks were planned, but the lengthy explanation resulted in some loss of concentration, and then pupils were not totally clear as to what they were being asked to do. These miscalculations result in well planned lessons having less than their intended impact.
- 24 The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. It benefits from the school's successful introduction of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. These strategies are being used well to raise standards of attainment. It is in these subjects that the school is most thorough in monitoring and evaluating the success of teaching and learning. As a result, teaching and learning in these subjects are now more focused, and the steps being taken to improve writing are beginning to have a positive effect on standards. The teaching of science is very good in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. In contrast, the teaching of information and communication technology is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 and 4. As a result, learning in information and communication technology has improved markedly since the school's first inspection. The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is less consistent in other subjects so that there is less clear focus on identifying areas of weakness and raising attainment.
- 25 Overall the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make very good progress towards their targets in Years 1 and 2, and good progress in Years 3 and 4. Teachers pay very close attention to these pupils' individual education plans when preparing lessons so that work is appropriately challenging. In addition, the carefully targeted and good quality support provided by classroom assistants, underpin learning and progress. They work closely with class teachers in planning lessons and in monitoring and assessing pupils' progress to ensure that individual needs are being met. As a result, pupils make very good progress overall in

relation to their previous attainment.

- 26 Teachers and support staff show impressive commitment to pupils who speak English as an additional language so that they make very good progress in their learning overall, and attain standards which reflect their ability. These pupils have full access to the National Curriculum, religious education, and all that the school provides because of the care that teachers take with regard to their learning.
- 27 All adults in the school fully support the school's aim of including all its pupils in all aspects of its work and teachers successfully meet the needs of all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability. Pupils work is marked effectively and homework is used well to promote good learning. The overall quality of teaching is a strength, and the school is in a good position to build on its existing good practice in order to reduce the variations in levels of attainment which have been experienced in the past.

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

- 28 The school provides a very good range of learning opportunities which fulfils all legal requirements. The curriculum is very well planned to ensure equality of opportunity and access for all pupils. This is now a major driving force in the school's work and addresses the key issue from the previous inspection report very effectively. All subjects now have a policy and a scheme of work and these have been updated to bring them in line with the requirements of the most recent version of the National Curriculum. Teachers' planning ensures that learning objectives are clear and are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons, and often at the end to assess if learning has been successful.
- 29 Social inclusion is a strength of the school. All staff and governors make strenuous efforts to include pupils of all levels of attainment and backgrounds in every activity. The school is careful to offer all its pupils, regardless of attainment or ability, suitable learning opportunities within a secure and stimulating learning environment.
- 30 Appropriate emphasis is placed on English and mathematics. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented. In mathematics, very good attention is now given to the development of mathematical language and mental strategies. In Year 4, pupils are set into groups by ability, and this enables teachers to vary the pace of work appropriately. In literacy, the school has introduced extended writing sessions to improve the development of pupils' writing skills. The library has been timetabled to allow all pupils opportunities to develop their research skills.
- 31 There is secure planning of the curriculum in all other subjects, and this ensures that pupils' learning is continuous as they move through the school. Planning uses a two-year cycle where appropriate to take account of the mixed age class in Years 3-4. This is effective in ensuring continuity in learning. Teachers have planned good practical activities and tasks to meet the needs of pupils with different ages and abilities. Those teachers who have recently taken responsibility for their subjects are working hard to improve assessment and bring it up to the same standard. All teachers make good use of information from assessments to guide future planning. For example, from an analysis of science results, teachers identified the need to concentrate more on investigative work. Evidence from the inspection is that this is now having a good effect on improving pupils' attainment.
- 32 The programme of personal, social and health education being offered to pupils is very good. During lessons and in assemblies, pupils are offered a range of ideas

about how to develop themselves, and how to deal with issues that arise in their young lives. For example, the subject of an assembly for younger pupils focused on being friendly to children who come to the school mid-way through the term. By the end of the assembly the pupils understood clearly how important it was for everybody to try to make them feel welcome. Discussion times are used very effectively to allow pupils to develop their own ideas about how they should react to other pupils in difficult situations. The curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The curriculum aims to develop pupils' abilities to relate to others, to work for the common good, to respond to opportunities, challenges and responsibilities, and to cope with change. This supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. The governors have decided not to implement a sex education programme but questions are answered with sensitivity as they arise. Health education is mostly linked to healthy eating and is taught very well, being linked to science and design and technology lessons. Drug awareness is taught effectively through the annual visits of 'The Life Education Centre' bus.

- 33 Staff provide good extra-curricular activities in music. During the inspection, the school choir, accompanied by the school recorder group, joined in an assembly with music they had performed the previous evening at a special event in Bedford to celebrate Education Sunday. Tuition in violin, cello and recorder is available and a large number of pupils take the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument. Pupils also have opportunities to take part in music and drama when they present plays for parents and friends. Provision is satisfactory overall but the range of activities provided is not as wide as those usually seen in a school of this size particularly in relation to games. The school uses educational visits and visitors to the school well to enhance pupils' interest in the curriculum.
- 34 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The individual education plans for pupils who learn more slowly than others in literacy and numeracy are detailed and clearly identify what new skills or concepts should be introduced. Pupils now have specific targets that make it easier for the supporting teaching assistants to measure their progress. As a result of the carefully planned and managed provision, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in the Reception Class and in Years 1 and 2, and good progress in Years 3 and 4. The same rate of progress is made by pupils who speak English as an additional language because of the careful and effective planning for their learning.
- 35 Provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness within the curriculum and through collective acts of worship. Assemblies have a strong Christian content and are held on a variety of themes throughout the year. The setting of the school buildings, surrounded by mature trees and the well-tended grounds, helps pupils to focus on the wonders of nature. For example, during break time, one pupil asked why the daffodils in the sheltered border were almost ready to open in January. Another said that the clumps of snowdrops in the border looked beautiful. Religious education lessons make a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. Pupils have very good attitudes to assemblies, behave very well and participate with impressive reverence. The very good attention given to artistic display throughout the school contributes well to spirituality. The large displays linked to literacy are particularly effective and focus the pupils' attention on the beauty of nature, poetry and well-known stories. Music has a significant impact on spirituality. In assemblies, pupils sing sensitively and listen very quietly to the music of famous composers and music from other cultures as they enter and leave the hall. Those pupils learning instruments are given the opportunity to join with pupils from other schools to perform in special events.

- 36 There is excellent provision for pupils' moral development and this is reflected in their exemplary conduct. Teachers ensure that the detailed behaviour policy is consistently put into practice both in lessons and at other times of the day. The code of conduct is successfully supported by rules, suggested and agreed with pupils and displayed in the classrooms. There is a successful, positive approach to behaviour management. Staff help pupils to understand the difference between right and wrong and to see the consequences of their actions on others. They create an orderly environment and help pupils to become responsible members of the community. Their awareness of the needs of others is raised when they take part in events to raise money for various charities, such as The Poppy Day Appeal, Children in Need and The National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. Collective worship makes a valuable contribution to pupils' moral values and attitudes. A good example of this occurs in the Wednesday assembly when a group of people from 'The Churches Together' group takes part with readings and drama reflecting a particular issue. A range of these experiences is planned throughout the year.
- 37 Provision for pupils' social development is very good and social skills are developed successfully during lessons, breaks and lunchtimes. The staff have worked hard to build up an awareness of the school as a community where each member is valued and works for the common good. All adults in the school set a very good example to pupils and encourage excellent relationships. Pupils are polite and work and play together well. Pupils are expected to care for their surroundings and to take responsibility for classroom equipment. From an early age, pupils tidy away after lessons with very little prompting by the teacher. Across all age groups, they are encouraged to work in pairs and small groups, and to undertake special responsibilities, for example, by taking registers to the office, helping in the distribution of milk and preparing the hall for assemblies. Their awareness of the needs of others is raised when they take part in events to raise money for charities.
- 38 There is excellent provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils experience many aspects of culture throughout the world in displays around the school. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate their own culture through appreciating artists and musicians and taking part in cultural events. The school provides a good range of cultural experiences through visits to places of interest. For example, pupils visit Kentwell Hall, dressing as Tudors and learning about Tudor music, food, money and weapons. Over their two-year cycle of religious education lessons, they also visit a local temple and a Christian church. In geography and history, pupils learn about their local area and how it has developed.
- 39 The school works hard to promote multi-cultural education through its religious education lessons. The major festivals of different faiths, such as the Divali festival are celebrated in school as well as harvest, Easter and Christmas. Pupils look at the work of famous artists such as Mondrian and Van Gogh. Through history lessons pupils learn about aspects of their own culture such as the Second Great War and its effect on children and about the lives of famous people such as Grace Darling and Louis Braille. There is a satisfactory selection of books in the library that provides material about local and world-wide cultures.
- 40 There are good links with the community which support pupils' learning well. The parent- teacher association raises funds which are used for the benefit of the pupils. There are established links with a number of local organisations such as the 'Churches Together in Bedford' group, members of which participate in school assemblies on a regular basis. There is also a planned programme of visits to museums and other locations of historic and environmental interest.

- 41 There are established links with play groups and nurseries which help to create supportive induction procedures for children and their parents when they are entering the Reception classes. There are very good links with the receiving middle schools, with established curriculum liaison groups and good procedures for ensuring a smooth transition as pupils move on to the next stage of their education.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 42 There is good support and guidance for pupils, and the care taken over their welfare, is very good. Teachers and support staff know and understand their pupils very well and care for their personal needs in a sensitive and supportive way. They monitor their personal development and cater for their individual needs well. Parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting, together with those who returned questionnaires, confirmed that they were pleased with the way in which the school cares for their children and helps them to develop into well-behaved and considerate individuals.
- 43 Health and safety practice is diligent and meticulous records are maintained to ensure that all routines and procedures are implemented consistently. There are good arrangements for the provision of first aid. Child protection procedures are very good and staff are well trained and alert to the needs of all pupils. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer and there are close links with social services and other relevant outside agencies.
- 44 Personal, social and health education is provided through the curriculum and through whole-class discussions. The programme ensures that the development of social skills is incorporated into lesson planning as pupils progress through the school. Personal hygiene is very good and hand washing before meals and after visiting the toilet or undertaking practical activities is an established part of normal school routines, particularly for the younger children.
- 45 The policies and procedures for promoting and monitoring behaviour are excellent. They underpin the very good behaviour and excellent relationships which are evident throughout the school. The management of behaviour is of a consistently high standard throughout the school and rare incidents of poor behaviour, such as bullying or showing a lack of consideration for others, are dealt with very effectively and sensitively. The policies and procedures for promoting attendance and punctuality are good and the school contacts parents on the first morning that an unexpected absence occurs.
- 46 The school actively promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that all pupils, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, ability or learning difficulty, are provided with appropriate personal support, care and guidance. Overall, the procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are very good and ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to develop very well as individuals. This provision has remained a significant strength of the school, as reported after the previous inspection.
- 47 Support for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. Their progress is monitored and co-ordinated very effectively. Relationships with the ancillary services are good. The use of assessment is good in deciding targets in the pupils' individual education plans. Progress is assessed effectively in regular review meetings.
- 48 Similarly, pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported well and

fully integrated into the school's activities. As a result, they make very good progress in their learning overall.

- 49 Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good overall. Initial assessments of each pupil's learning skills take place at the beginning and end of the Foundation Stage. Ongoing assessment of pupils in the Reception classes is of the very highest order. It is very carefully matched to the latest National Curriculum guidance. There are good procedures at the end of Year 2, when the results of the National Curriculum tests are carefully analysed. In addition, the optional National Curriculum tests for English and mathematics are used towards the end of Years 3 and 4 and are also carefully analysed. The school has devised a pattern of ongoing assessment for all subjects to monitor the attainment and progress of all pupils. However, the procedure is not used consistently across all subjects. In English, mathematics and science, the data is used well to track the progress of individual pupils and the year group. It is then used to consider whether there are any differences in the performances of pupils, for example, by gender or in respect of those pupils who speak English as an additional language. This enables the school to identify those who may need extra support or who need greater challenge to attain at a higher level. The assessments are also used to set targets for individual pupils in English. These targets are recorded and are shared with pupils. As a result, pupils know what they have to achieve to make further progress. These procedures are being extended to mathematics. However, systems for using assessment to track attainment and promote further progress is less consistently successful in other subjects.
- 50 The detailed assessment strategy provides relevant information for governors about the school's performance, and for parents about their children. The school uses assessment well to guide medium and long-term planning in English, mathematics and science, for example, in identifying writing skills as a priority for development and so providing opportunities for pupils to develop their extended writing skills. All lesson plans make clear what pupils should know or be able to do by the end of the lesson. These objectives are usually shared with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson and, in most lessons, again, when learning is reviewed at the end of the lesson. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the progress that they are making. The marking of work is satisfactory and is used to guide subsequent lesson planning so that activities are usually matched to the prior attainment of all pupils. However, where teaching is satisfactory rather than good or better, the match of work to prior attainment is less specific and provides less challenge, notably for the higher attaining pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 51 Parents have very positive views of the school. The consensus view of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and returned the questionnaires is that their children enjoy school, make good progress and are well behaved. They feel that the school is well led and managed, promotes good attitudes and values and that teachers are very approachable and provide a prompt and positive response to any issues raised. They appreciate the improvements that have been made to the school over recent years. These have included a new library, a new computer suite and enhanced play facilities for children in the Reception classes. The inspection team agrees with these positive views.
- 52 A substantial minority of parents stated that they would like the school to provide a wider range of activities outside lessons, particularly organised games such as football. The inspectors conclude that the additional activities provided, particularly

during the school day, are satisfactory but agree that it is unusual for a school to provide no organised games and sporting activities. A few parents commented on the range of homework provided. They felt that there is too great a concentration on reading and not enough on writing, spelling and mathematics. The inspectors judged that the homework set provides good support for pupils' learning.

- 53 The school has worked hard to promote a close working partnership with parents and links are very good overall. The home-school agreement clearly defines what is expected of the school, the parents and the pupils. There is a very good induction programme for parents of children entering the Reception classes. The school produces a newsletter and organises regular curriculum workshops for parents. The most recent have covered information and communications technology, literacy and numeracy. There is also a workshop every year for the parents of pupils about to take the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2.
- 54 The quality of the information provided for parents is very good. The annual progress reports provide a summary of the curriculum covered for each subject and a review of pupils' progress for the year, together with a judgement on their learning attitudes. The reports include suggested areas for development in which parents can help their children at home. There are organised consultation evenings for parents every term and teachers are readily available to discuss any problems or issues that might occur from day-to-day. Everyone in the teaching and learning partnership should have a clear understanding of what is expected and what can be achieved.
- 55 There is an active parent-teacher association that organises fund raising and social events plus additional activities for pupils such as disco evenings. A small group of volunteer parent helpers provides regular support in classrooms and with school trips. Overall, the impact of parents' involvement in the work of the school is good and their contribution to their children's learning at school and at home is good. The school has maintained the effective partnership with parents reported after the previous inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 56 The school sees itself as serving its whole community and this inclusive spirit is reflected throughout its work. Pupils are provided with a secure and stimulating learning environment in which they can develop as individuals and learn effectively so as to reach their potential and become valuable and contented citizens. Indeed, a notable feature of this inclusive spirit is the way in which all teachers and many other adults go out into the playground at the beginning of the day to welcome pupils into the school. As well as facilitating communication with parents, this ensures that all pupils feel secure and motivated at the start of their day's work. This is a highly effective aspect of the school's management of relationships and ensuring that all pupils are fully included in all aspects of the school's activities.
- 57 The headteacher was appointed to her post in September 2001 having previously served in the school as deputy headteacher. She has a very clear vision for the school. It is to provide high quality education for all its pupils. She is approaching this challenging objective with single-minded determination, and plans to review all aspects of the school's provision systematically. Any aspect of the school's provision which is not contributing effectively to this objective will be addressed. The headteacher understands that this will take time but her approach in her first two terms is evidence of her very good skills of leadership and management.
- 58 The headteacher is constantly about the school and is a reassuring and secure presence. This includes the unit for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties where she is quick to intervene in support of staff when potentially difficult situations arise. A significant aspect of the headteacher's presence in the school is her systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in English and mathematics. Other experienced subject managers also participate in this monitoring, but its effectiveness across subjects is inconsistent.
- 59 The governing body is giving the headteacher increasingly effective support. It now has a much clearer understanding of its role and responsibilities than was the case when the school was inspected previously. It is more effectively involved in analysing the school's strengths and weaknesses and in determining priorities for future development. It exercises an effective overview of the school's finances. Governors are taking the opportunity for training, and the enthusiastic and purposeful chair and a colleague recently participated in a useful training course. This has contributed to a fuller appreciation of the nature of governance, and a working party has been set up to develop the role of the governing body. In addition, a governor with a specific brief for school improvement has been appointed, and an action plan for the governing body is being developed. The governing body fulfils its legal requirements and is effective in carrying out its role.
- 60 At the time of the inspection, the school had an acting deputy headteacher who is the teacher responsible for Years 1 and 2. There is also a teacher responsible for the Foundation Stage, and another, responsible for Years 3 and 4, took up her post in January 2002. This means that senior managers in the school are in a period of transition. The acting deputy headteacher is providing the headteacher with effective support in strategic planning, in monitoring and evaluating some teaching and learning and in mentoring a newly qualified teacher. However, at this stage, there is no regular meeting of senior managers to analyse the school's work, identify strengths and weaknesses, determine priorities for future development, and monitor and evaluate progress towards them. One effect of this is that the many recently appointed subject managers, including those for English and mathematics, have no structure to induct all of them into their roles and provide them with the means of becoming quickly

effective. Because this is a period of transition, the key issue from the school's first inspection to monitor the implementation of the National Curriculum is only partly being met.

- 61 In spite of this weakness, the school has effective systems overall for monitoring and evaluating its work and determining priorities for its future development. It analyses the results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and the optional tests at the end of Years 3 and 4. Any weaknesses are identified as a result of this analysis, and plans put into place to address them. The outcomes of these actions are monitored and evaluated and any further steps that are needed are then taken. The school improvement plan is a valuable working document which results from careful thought to which staff and governors contribute. It begins with an interesting rationale of its purpose, identifies the priorities for the coming year and how they are to be addressed, and then has outline plans up to 2004. This is a good response to the key issue identified in the report from the school's first inspection to strengthen school development planning over a longer time scale.
- 62 The school uses new technology well. Its use in administration is well developed and effective. It is used well to support learning in most subjects and its use is improving. Pupils have satisfactory skills in using computers and their use of the computer suite is building up these skills well. The school is in a good position to develop the benefits that it gets from new technology further.
- 63 Management is very effective in meeting the needs of different individuals and groups of pupils. Equality of access and opportunity are key aspects of the school's provision, and the school is careful to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to be fully included in all that it provides. The management of special educational needs is very good and the school complies fully with the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Indeed, the school is well prepared to meet the requirements of the new Code of Practice, which will come into effect in September 2002. The school's overall responsibility for the unit for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is managed well.
- 64 The school operates efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Its routines are clearly understood and little time is wasted in lessons or between lessons as pupils move quickly from one activity to the next. Finance is managed well by the school's finance officer and office manager who makes effective use of the local education authority's financial management file. The finance committee of the governing body monitors the budget competently and ensures that it is related effectively to educational priorities. The school's accounts were audited in October 2001 and the report was largely supportive of the school's procedures. Its few recommendations have been put into effect. Funds received for specific purposes, for example, for special educational needs, are used very effectively.
- 65 The school's staff are very well qualified to teach the National Curriculum and religious education and the number of teachers in relation to the number of pupils is about average. There is a good supply of classroom support assistants and their imaginative deployment has a very positive effect on attainment and progress. The school places a high priority on the professional development of its staff, and has effective systems for performance management. There are very effective systems for settling in staff who are new to the school and for newly qualified teachers. The school is a valued contributor to initial teacher training. There has been a high turnover of teachers in the last two years. While the school does not find it easy to recruit new teachers the quality of teaching has been improved by the new appointments.

- 66 The school's accommodation is adequate for the teaching of the National Curriculum and religious education, and staff work hard to create an attractive learning environment by their use of displays, not least those which celebrate pupils' work. The school uses its accommodation effectively. However, some 40 per cent of the school's pupils are housed in demountable buildings outside the main building. While these are in reasonable condition, one double classroom has no toilet facilities, and pupils have to come into the main school for lunch, assemblies and physical education. In poor weather, this is far from ideal. The building is kept in good condition by the site manager and his team.
- 67 Resources for learning are good overall. In all subjects, they are sufficient for the National Curriculum and religious education to be taught effectively, and, in many subjects, resources enable good quality learning to take place. Staff use resources effectively to provide a rich and stimulating curriculum.
- 68 The clear-sighted leadership of the headteacher is putting the school in a good position to go on to improve further. There is an impressive unity of purpose among all adults in the school, and a very clear commitment to continuing improvement. Once there is a clear structure for senior management, the school will be in an even stronger position to build further on its existing good progress.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 69 To improve standards of attainment and the quality of education further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) create a structure for assessment and for tracking the progress of pupils in all subjects which builds on the very good practice in some subjects to ensure that pupils make consistent progress and reach standards appropriate to their prior attainment; (see paragraphs 24, 31, 49, 125, 136, 144, 160, 171);
 - (2) clarify the structure and roles of senior managers in the school with a view to supporting and developing the skills of those subject co-ordinators who are new to their roles particularly in relation to monitoring the quality of provision and the standards that pupils reach, (see paragraphs 24, 31, 58, 60).

The unit for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties

- 70 The provision made for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) is satisfactory, and teaching is good. Although there are places for up to six pupils there are currently three attending. Two pupils are full-time and one attends for mornings only. The pupils' ages range from seven to eight years. The EBD provision effectively provides a safe, secure and stimulating learning environment for pupils. It also makes an important contribution to the development of pupils' social skills. The pupils are drawn from across the county of Bedfordshire and are admitted to the unit after a formal assessment of their special educational needs and emotional and behavioural problems. The school makes every effort to encourage parents to visit the school. The aim of this special provision is to enable pupils to resolve the problems that their behaviour sometimes presents and to integrate them into the mainstream school before they return to another school within the local education authority. The objective is that the inclusive educational spirit the school is providing will give opportunities for pupils to develop social and behavioural skills, supported by an appropriate curriculum, to meet their individual learning needs. The complexity of the problems and the severity of the challenging behaviour presented by pupils who

are being admitted to the unit work against their full integration into the mainstream school. The pupils currently attend some assemblies, physical education, swimming and, music therapy lessons.

- 71 The base for EBD provision is small but well equipped and organised. There is no other room in which 'time out' procedures may be practised or pupils may work alone. Such a room, to cater for pupils who are withdrawn from lessons as a consequence of violent behaviour, would be helpful in catering for the needs of these pupils. There is an effective procedure for gradually inducting pupils into the EBD provision. For example, one pupil currently attends for morning sessions only. All areas of the curriculum are being effectively covered and learning experiences are firmly rooted in the National Curriculum. The staff are well qualified and visiting specialists support them and the pupils. More frequent visits from the ancillary services and an immediate response to support the school staff when seriously challenging behaviour breaks out would be valued by the school.
- 72 The attainment of pupils is very low in relation to the national average. However, as a result of effective teaching, progress is satisfactory. For example, in a science lesson on 'moving and growing' pupils made significant gains in their understanding of bones and joints in the human body. They used the computer effectively to record their findings of an experiment to measure and compare the sizes of the shinbones of staff and pupils in the room.
- 73 Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. For a substantial amount of time they listen well and answer questions. Major disruptions happen on a regular basis when one or more of the pupils loses concentration and presents severely challenging behaviour which adversely affects the learning of other pupils in the unit. In other lessons, pupils respond in a satisfactory manner and make satisfactory progress. Personal development is good. For example, pupils develop good social skills when, each morning, they prepare and share breakfast with adults. On most occasions pupils relate well to the staff who care for them and are courteous towards visitors. Pupils have difficulty in concentrating for any length of time and are easily distracted. For example, during a literacy lesson, when a helicopter flew over the school buildings, pupils' concentration was interrupted and it took staff some considerable time to resettle them into the lesson.
- 74 Teaching and learning are of good quality. Lessons are well prepared. Teaching programmes have targets which effectively meet the specific needs of individual pupils. These targets are incorporated into the pupils' statements of educational need and individual education plans. The pupils' work is effectively assessed as the lesson proceeds. Good assessment procedures are in place and detailed record keeping informs curriculum planning. A good range of teaching methods enables pupils to learn effectively. Pupils are aware of their learning targets, which are displayed in the classroom each day and they strive to do well.

- 75 The management and organisation of the unit are very good. Staff have high expectations of pupils and support staff are used well and understand the daily routines. Pupils are well supported and tasks are carefully explained to them. There is an effective consistency of approach. For example, there is a clear beginning to the lesson, questions and answers give continuity with previous learning and a specific focus enables pupils to learn effectively. Information and communication technology is used well to support the pupils' learning.
- 76 Pupils work in a variety of settings which include one-to-one provision and small group activities. Individual education plans are reviewed regularly. Planning also considers the targets specified in statements of educational need. The EBD provision has effective strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy which follow national guidance. Staff provide an effective inclusion programme for pupils. For example, in a history lesson, pupils empathised with children who were evacuated from their homes during the blitz.
- 77 Pupils leave the EBD provision when they are nine years of age and all relevant assessments and records are sent on to their next school. The co-ordinator visits the new school to prepare for the pupils' transfer.
- 78 Parents are welcomed into the EBD provision and are encouraged to work with the teachers. There is good communication and an end of term report is sent to parents giving details of the progress of their children. Parents are encouraged to participate in annual reviews. Parents share information with the staff when they have concerns or wish to celebrate the success of their children. Annual review meetings, parents' meetings and informal meetings all add to the good relationships which have been established. Parents are able to telephone the school for immediate communication.
- 79 The teacher in charge of the EBD provision, the governors, staff and headteacher work in partnership to create a positive spirit for learning. Effective management ensures clear educational direction and reflects the aims of the school. Financial planning takes account of the needs of pupils. Accommodation is limited to one small room; however, this provides a stimulating environment in which the pupils learn. As a consequence of the regular outbursts of violent behaviour from some pupils in the EBD provision there was a relatively high number of exclusions during the last full school year. This behaviour means that opportunities for integration are very limited so that the school is unsuccessful in meeting the objective of preparing pupils for education in mainstream school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	75
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	36	27	10	0	0	0
Percentage	2.7	48	36	13.3	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.

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)	-	345
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	-	61

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	-	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	-	64

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	53

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	24

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	36	39

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	32	32
	Girls	31	36	35
	Total	62	68	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (88)	91 (90)	89 (85)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	30	32
	Girls	35	34	37
	Total	67	64	69
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (87)	85 (85)	92 (85)
	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	12
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	49
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	207
Any other minority ethnic group	18

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	5	2
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)	16.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	298

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	765,528
Total expenditure	691,281
Expenditure per pupil	1,894
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	74,274

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	357
Number of questionnaires returned	99

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	23	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	42	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	45	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	47	12	3	2
The teaching is good.	63	34	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	43	14	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	30	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	41	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	35	51	11	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	59	37	1	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	39	4	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	33	18	12	20

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

- 80 The range of learning experiences for children in the Foundation Stage (Reception classes) is of the very highest order. Whilst the provision for children in these classes was identified as a strength, the previous report identified the need for a comprehensive curriculum policy statement to support the implementation of the curriculum for children under the age of five years. The school has very successfully and comprehensively addressed this issue whilst implementing the latest national guidance on provision for children in the Foundation Stage. As a result the provision for these children has been improved well. All children in the Foundation Stage, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have a very rich experience in every aspect of their development and this provides a very solid basis for their learning. This applies to those children who attend part-time in accordance with a locally agreed admission policy as well as to those who attend full-time. The Foundation Stage continues to be a very real strength of the school. It is led and managed very well. The leader of the Foundation Stage has a very clear understanding of the learning needs of young children and, very ably supported by teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants, ensures that all children are helped to achieve very well. Teamwork is extremely well established among staff for the benefit of all pupils.
- 81 Teaching in the Reception classes is very good overall. The quality of teaching ranges from good to very good, with 70 per cent of teaching being very good. The consistently high quality of the teaching is a feature of every area of learning. Teachers have a very good understanding of the role of play and child-initiated learning in the development of young children. Together with the learning support assistants, they interact very well with children, for example, by careful questioning and by developing vocabulary to enable all pupils to make rapid progress. Work is planned in great detail to meet the national guidelines for learning (Early Learning Goals). Literacy and numeracy sessions have a very good balance of teacher-directed learning and opportunities for children to experiment, imagine and initiate their own learning. For example, there are telephones for children to make imaginary phone calls or to hold a conversation with another child who is taking on the role of a doctor. The planning for all learning experiences is very thorough. The learning experiences capture the interest and imagination of all children and utilise an excellent range of high quality resources, including the new secure outdoor provision. These facilitate the rapid progress of all children.
- 82 On entry to the Reception classes there is a spread of attainment, but assessments and observations show that the overall level of attainment on entry is below average. This is particularly so in language, literacy and communication skills. The attainment and progress of every child is monitored carefully and in detail. An outstanding feature of the excellent assessment procedures is the regular, weekly time-tabled observation period of about 20 minutes when all staff focus on identified children during an activity session and note their progress in respect of the nationally identified areas of learning. The observations are discussed by staff and are used to guide subsequent planning. As a result, activities are matched very well to the prior attainment of all children. When giving instructions, teachers have very good strategies for ensuring that children for whom English is an additional language understand what is expected and are enabled to complete the activity. Children take books home to read or to share with adults. Overall, children make very good

progress in the Foundation Stage and are on course to achieve the standards expected nationally by the time they begin their work on the National Curriculum at the end of the Reception Year.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 83 This aspect of learning is fostered particularly well and is a strength. Children are encouraged to take considerable responsibility for their own learning. All interact very well with adults and share and work co-operatively with others. This is because of the opportunities provided and the very high expectations of the teachers and the learning support assistants. Children take turns to speak in group sessions and organise their own clothes for physical education lessons or for going home. They know and understand daily routines and share and take turns well for their age. The provision for independent learning is very good. The 'snack' tables are an excellent example of how well children respond to the very high expectations of the adults. When it is their turn they bring their own snacks to the designated table. They pour their own milk and sit quietly, eating, drinking and talking to each other. When a boy noticed that two empty cups had fallen into the waste basket, he reacted immediately by saying 'Oh, these have to be washed up'. He then removed them and placed them in the bucket where cups were placed for washing up. When they have finished their snacks, they identify their names on a sheet of card and draw a line through it to show that they have had their turn. All staff have very high expectations for behaviour and this plays an important part in developing pupils' social skills.
- 84 During the inspection, some of the objects of interest on display related to the Chinese New Year. The Nursery and 'home corners' contain dolls and clothes that relate to other cultures. Within the classes, children who speak English as an additional language are an integral part of the groups and respected as such by all children and adults. All children are very secure and confident. They have many opportunities to explore, experiment and to imagine and initiate their own learning. This enables them to make very good progress towards the achievement of the Early Learning Goals in this area. Overall, the standards being achieved are higher than expected for children at this stage of the Reception Year.

Communication, language and literacy

- 85 Communication, language and literacy are developed very well in the Reception classes and permeate all that takes place. The whole of the Foundation Stage area is rich in language stimuli. Staff interact very well with children, asking questions, widening vocabulary and encouraging talk at all times. Children listen appropriately to class stories such as 'The Baby Dances'. They also enjoy listening to stories such as 'The Giant Sandwich' on tape recorders that they operate themselves. They use the book area independently to 'read' books and are gaining a good interest in books and stories. The writing area is very well used by the children. This develops early writing skills as children attempt 'mark making' at different levels and develop their control of writing implements by trying to trace over lines carefully. When children, particularly the more able children, attempt to record for themselves, what they write is usually recognisable. For example, after working with a programmable toy 'Roamer', in the hall, one child wrote 'I tht Roamer was a crocodl' ('I thought Roamer was a crocodile') and another 'Roamer weto baws AD fws' ('Roamer went backwards and forwards'). They are constantly challenged, for example, to retell a favourite story to a friend or to write a letter to a friend. They are also challenged to find the 'blurb' on a book.
- 86 Teachers set targets for the children. For example, on one balloon-shaped card, the

names of children who recognise certain letters are written and, on another, the names of those who can read words such as 'away', 'and', 'go' 'up', 'look' and 'see'. Children are beginning to draw on a list of words that they recognise by sight when reading, and some are beginning to look at the pictures for clues when they come across a word they do not recognise. Most know the sound associated with letters such as 'b', 'a', 'u', 'm' and 't'. Some children write simple words at an appropriate level for their age and there is careful teaching of letter formation. Outside the literacy lessons, teachers provide many good experiences for children to enhance their skills, particularly in listening and speaking. Children make very good progress and overall attainment is about that which is expected of children of their present age.

Mathematical development

- 87 Mathematical development is very well supported throughout the Foundation Stage. For example, children count the number present, with teacher support, during registration. They work out how many are present if two are absent. In one class, five children recognise numbers to 5, nine recognise numbers to 10 and eight recognise numbers to 20. The more able children count to a hundred in tens with the support of the teacher. They learn appropriate mathematical vocabulary such as 'more than' and 'less than', 'full' and 'empty'. They recognise and name shapes such as triangle, rectangle, square and circle. In a good numeracy lesson, one child pointed out to the teacher that a circle has zero corners. Learning about two-dimensional shapes is extended to three-dimensional shapes, and children learn to identify, for example, a sphere and a cube. This learning is reinforced very well during the follow-up activities when children use 'play-dough' to replicate these shapes. Children also made robins using semi-circles.
- 88 There are similar target setting procedures as those used to promote communication, language and literacy skills. When playing outside with large equipment such as the wheeled vehicles, children are encouraged to use everyday words such as 'under' and 'over', to describe position. Most of the children are in line to meet the Early Learning Goals in mathematical development. Some who have been identified as more able are likely to exceed these national expectations, whilst a few, including those with special educational needs, will still be working towards the expected level. Overall, attainment is similar to what is expected for children of this age. Nevertheless, all children make good progress during the year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 89 Children learn about the world around them in a variety of ways. They learn about living things through the 'gerbil tank'. The water tray contains a range of objects that stimulates their curiosity about sinking and floating. Children talk about these to each other and when prompted by adults. They experiment in the wet sand trays to find what happens when, for example, they lift up a sieve they have filled with sand. They learn about building sites because they have had the opportunity to watch builders at work from their window. This is then replicated in a very large and well-resourced sand area, where they can don protective clothing and use their imagination to construct buildings by using large blocks. In a very good lesson, with maps depicting, for example, farms, parks, airports and road systems, the children extended their understanding of place and how maps are constructed. When challenged to work in pairs to design a playground, they incorporated a wide range of features including, in one example, a notice saying that no dogs were allowed in. The current topic, 'All about me' helps them to develop a sense of time and how things change over time. This was clearly exemplified during and after a visit to the classrooms of a mother with a toddler. They also compare photographs of

themselves as babies and toddlers and, with the help of adults, record in chart form when they started to crawl, walk and talk.

- 90 Their understanding of other cultures is promoted partly through religious education. They learn about major festivals such as Christmas and Divali. They also learn about other cultures through, for example, work they are doing about the Chinese New Year. They develop their ability to control a cursor on a screen by using a 'mouse' to draw faces using simple graphics. They learn to give sequenced instructions to make a 'Roamer' move around the hall. Photographic evidence showed that they make biscuits as an introduction to food technology. All children benefit greatly from direct teaching and from the very good opportunities to explore and initiate their own learning. Most of the children are in line to achieve most of the Early Learning Goals in this aspect of development by the end of the Reception Year. However, their knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology is generally above that which is expected for children of this age.

Physical Development

- 91 Children in the Reception classes benefit from the excellent secure outdoor play area and the use of the hall. In a very good session in the hall, two teachers worked very well together sharing both the teaching and the assessment of learning. Children demonstrated satisfactory skills for their age when they moved around the hall in a monkey walk or like a crab. They safely negotiated moving round other children as they moved forwards, backwards and sideways. The teachers constantly stressed the importance of being aware of space and other children to avoid accidents. The teachers also make good use of children to demonstrate for the others how well they can do things and ensure that all observe carefully and comment on the demonstration. One boy said, after watching another taking up a crab position, 'He is like a table'. This was a shrewd comment on the horizontal position of the body, supported by arms and legs. This process promotes self-esteem for the selected children and reinforces learning for the others. Outside there is provision for climbing and swinging, for role-play, painting, and for imaginative play with large toys such as a car transporter, tricycles and push chairs. The children benefit from this provision by being taken out in small groups which are supervised well by learning support assistants, sometimes with the help of parents. In the classroom many opportunities are provided for children to develop their co-ordination skills when manipulating small items such as paste and paint brushes, making items with 'play-dough', completing alphabet jig-saws, manipulating a mouse to control a cursor on the screen and 'writing' in the writing area. Overall, most children are in line to meet the Early Learning Goals in this aspect by the end of the Reception Year.

Creative development

- 92 There are many opportunities for creative development in the Reception classes, and there is evident enjoyment in the way children respond to these opportunities. During the inspection, children made models of buildings using glue brushes carefully to join boxes together. They also made observational line drawings of teddy bears. The teacher helped them by carefully directed questions to focus their attention, for example, on the size and shape of the face. They hold pencils carefully and concentrate well when drawing. They use their imagination well in the 'builders yard' and 'Nursery corners' talking to staff about what they are doing and respond to comments and questions about activities. These opportunities foster speaking and listening skills. One girl asked a boy who had a doll in his arms 'Is your baby ill?'
- 93 Musical opportunities are provided through singing rhymes and exploring sounds made by musical instruments. Children operate a listening centre to play a game where they are challenged to identify the sounds made by different instruments. In teacher-led singing activities, they combined actions with the singing as they pretended to be a marching band, a motor car, or to be swimming or flying. Their interest is such that, after only one hearing of the song, they remembered, with some support, all four verses. They do this as they tap claves, shake and strike a tambourine, strike a tambour and shake maracas with good control. During registration, children sometimes hear the teacher sing their names and they respond by singing 'Here, Miss'.
- 94 Children explore colour, texture and shape when playing in the sand tray or when making patterns using the computer. They mix paints to make other colours and dictate comments such as 'The paint is making the pattern' for the teacher to scribe onto the pattern. The opportunities observed, together with evidence from photographs and displays, shows that the range of extremely good opportunities provided in the Reception classes enables all children to make very good progress in this aspect of their development. They are in line to meet the Early Learning Goals expected of children by the end of the Reception Year.

ENGLISH

- 95 Attainment in English matches the standards expected nationally for pupils aged seven. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection report. The performance of pupils aged seven in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 identified standards in reading as close to the national average and, in writing, as below the national average. Standards in reading are above average when compared with similar schools whilst standards in writing are similar. However, this year group was a below average year group and included a higher than average percentage of younger pupils with less experience of full-time education. Further, they had not had the full benefit of the improved teaching that now exists in the school. Whilst results have fluctuated from year to year, since the school's first inspection, standards of attainment are now rising. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The standard of attainment of pupils in Year 4 is similar to those expected of pupils in this year group nationally. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language, make good progress because teachers know their pupils well and plan work accordingly to meet their needs.

- 96 Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and in Year 4. This represents very good progress from when pupils enter the Reception class where speaking and listening skills are identified as being below average. Throughout the school, teachers use the whole-class teaching part of the literacy hour effectively to engage all pupils in discussion and they constantly seek to improve both the pupils' vocabulary and their ability to reply to questions with extended answers. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were challenged to explain the meaning of 'basking' and one boy replied that it was like 'sun-bathing'. Another pupil explained that 'We don't shed our skin like a snake, but every nano-second we lose a bit.' Pupils were further challenged to identify words in a passage that they were reading for inclusion in a glossary and to provide appropriate definitions. A higher attaining pupil wrote: 'costume – clothes to dress up in'. In a Year 4 lesson the teacher used drama well to help pupils to develop speaking and listening skills. Teachers also take the opportunity to foster these skills in other subjects. In a very good geography lesson, Year 2 pupils were challenged to explain the difference between a picture and a map whilst, in history lessons in Year 4, pupils were challenged to explain how evacuees might have felt. All pupils listen well to instructions, explanations and stories. They also listen well to their peers. The support provided by teachers and learning support assistants gives confidence to pupils with special educational needs and to pupils who speak English as an additional language, so that they contribute orally in class. One Year 2 pupil for whom English is an additional language confidently explained to others that 'A baby snake comes from an egg'.
- 97 Standards in reading are similar to those found nationally. Most pupils are keen to read and say that they enjoy books. The school has a good range of books for guided reading and these are of good quality. Teachers use the guided reading sessions to provide support for pupils. In a Year 3-4 class, a learning support assistant worked with a lower ability group whilst the teacher worked with other groups in turn. Pupils take books home regularly to read and their reading diary is signed by the parent, who adds comments when this is appropriate. Pupils know the terms 'author', 'illustrator', 'title' and 'blurb'. A Year 2 pupil who said that her favourite stories were the 'My naughty little sister' stories was unable to recall the author and added 'I can't remember the illustrator either'. By the end of Year 2, average and higher attaining pupils read with some fluency and usually self-correct when they make mistakes. They know many words by sight and use appropriate strategies to build unfamiliar words from their sounds. They also use the story and picture clues to make 'guesses' as to the meaning of words. Those whose reading is below average also try to build words by using their knowledge of sounds. Their reading, however, is more hesitant and they rarely self-correct. By Year 4, pupils have extended their ability to build unfamiliar words and the better readers are more fluent and read with some expression. They also talk at greater length about the plot and the characters in the story. Throughout the school there is an emphasis on reading for research. Pupils know the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. They know the purpose of the contents page, index and glossary and the average and above average pupils use appropriate strategies to find information in books.
- 98 Standards in writing are average. Following the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, when standards in writing were judged to be below average, the school has identified the need to improve spelling and to provide more opportunities for pupils to write at greater length. Teachers' medium and short term planning indicate these issues are being addressed. Most pupils write legibly and the sizes and shapes of the letters are consistent. Letters are also joined. Some older pupils use a pen rather than a pencil. Pupils tackle a wide range of writing tasks. For each task there is an identified focus such as writing the middle part of a story, for example 'A Boat Trip', by continuing from a given beginning. Pupils also write instructions using bullet points.

To help pupils to improve the quality of their writing, they are given individual targets, usually on a sheet in the front of their book. These targets are discussed with pupils and help them to focus on key aspects of their writing that need to be improved such as to 'join text with a variety of connectives'. This innovation is beginning to help pupils to improve their writing. Spelling is being tackled through homework tasks where all pupils are expected to learn the 'words of the week'. These words are matched to the prior attainment of groups of pupils. In the classroom, spelling is supported by teaching, for example, about compound words, and pupils are encouraged to use this knowledge when spelling words.

- 99 Skills of literacy are used well and fostered in other subjects, such as history, geography and science. A good example is the World War II topic in which the ability to empathise with evacuees and to write about feelings is promoted well. Information and communication technology plays a significant role in skills' development and in word processing. In a good information and communication technology lesson, Year 4 pupils were challenged to edit text by replacing words in italics with a better word by reference to a thesaurus. Research skills are fostered well by the use of CD-ROMs and the Internet.
- 100 The quality of teaching is good overall. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is very good. In the lessons seen, whilst one was satisfactory, the others were very good and, in one case, excellent. This very good teaching is enabling pupils to make very good progress overall within lessons. In Years 3 and 4, teaching is good overall. In the lessons seen, two were satisfactory and four were good. Almost half of the teaching is now very good or better. This is an improvement since the previous inspection.
- 101 Teachers and support staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. This has led to very good planning by all teachers which ensures continuity and progression in both teaching and learning because activities are better matched to pupils' prior attainment. Where teaching is at least good, the management of pupils is very good, the pace of the teaching is brisk and teachers use challenging questions to enable pupils to recall previous learning and then to extend it. In an excellent lesson with Year 2 pupils, the teacher used these skills to revise and extend the phonic skills of the pupils, all of whom knew the term 'phoneme' by the end of the lesson and were able to identify three sounds in words such as 'down' and 'then'. In the better lessons, too, the activities set for pupils and the whole-class session at the end of the lesson to review learning guide the planning of subsequent teaching to consolidate and extend learning.
- 102 Most teachers have very high expectations of pupils and these, combined with the challenging and interesting tasks set, ensure that pupils work hard either individually or in small groups and usually behave well and, frequently, very well. As a result progress in learning is usually good and, in Years 1 and 2, is generally very good. In a good lesson in Year 4 the challenging drama activity based on the 'Look and Read' programme fired the imaginations of the groups. They all worked well, with the pupils with special educational needs benefiting from the help of a learning support assistant, to plan and enact a scene that they thought might logically follow from the story so far. Each scene was different from the others and followed carefully by the audience. The interpretation by each group of actors was applauded. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of the teaching tends to be less brisk and activities are less well matched to prior attainment. There is less challenge for pupils of above average ability. The library is used well by all classes to foster their research skills. The skills of handwriting are taught systematically resulting in standards appropriate for the pupils' age and in books that are generally neat and tidy. Homework, particularly reading, supports progress well and the home-school reading records are

a useful link between parents and teacher.

- 103 The subject is led and managed well. The new subject leader has a very clear overview of the development of the subject across the school. The school analyses test and assessment information very carefully to identify any gaps in teaching and learning or differences in attainment between different groups of pupils. As a result spelling and writing have been targeted as areas for improvement and strategies have been put in place, not only to facilitate the teaching, but to assess the outcomes in terms of attainment. Procedures for checking pupils' attainment are thorough and used well to make changes in teachers' medium term and day-to-day planning so as to meet pupils' needs and in tracking pupils' progress to inform target setting. Assessment procedures are now good and have some very good features. Assessment has improved since the previous report when it was identified as being generally sound. The school is resourced well with an ample supply of good quality storybooks and non-fiction books. These are attractively displayed in the library and in classrooms. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development, notably through displays and by fostering an interest in and love of literature.

MATHEMATICS

- 104 In the National Curriculum tests in mathematics in 2001 at the end of Year 2, the standards attained by the school's pupils were well below the national average, and below the average attained in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. This was significantly worse than the results attained in 2000 which were marginally above the national average. The year group which took the tests in 2001 included an unusually large proportion of pupils who were young and had spent less time in full time education in the Reception Year. It also contained an above average proportion of pupils who spoke English as an additional language.
- 105 Evidence from the inspection is that pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving the standards that would be expected nationally at this stage of the school year. The school expects attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 to improve significantly in 2002. Evidence from lessons observed and from an analysis of pupils' work during the inspection suggests that the school has good grounds for this expectation. High attaining pupils have a secure understanding of number, of shape, space and measures, and use mathematical language with understanding. Secure understanding was demonstrated when pupils were asked to suggest different ways of arriving at 10, and one pupil suggested 'minus 100 plus 110'. There is a good understanding of number, which teacher assessments suggested was relatively weak in 2001. Average and lower attaining pupils have a level of understanding which is appropriate for their age, but are more inclined to error, and work is less neatly presented.
- 106 Pupils in Year 1 are making satisfactory progress and attaining at a level appropriate for their age. Again, there is evidence that pupils have a secure understanding of mathematics and are not simply repeating exercises mechanically. For example, a high attaining pupil is adept at putting in missing numbers in problems; this indicates a good level of understanding. Average and lower attaining pupils are less accurate and less neat, with a tendency to write numbers such as two and five backwards.
- 107 Pupils in Year 4 are at the level expected for their age at this stage of the school year. Higher attaining pupils have a very secure understanding of number and space, shape and measure, and handle data skilfully, being able to represent statistics in graphical form and to interpret information from graphs. They work with an

impressive level of accuracy. Average and lower attaining pupils tend to be less accurate and less neat. Pupils in Year 3 have made good progress since they took the National Curriculum tests in 2001. There are examples of careless errors in all ability groups, and of a slow pace of working when work is accurate. In Year 4, attainment and progress are improved because pupils are placed in sets by ability, so that teaching and learning are more accurately targeted to the appropriate level.

- 108 Pupils have very good attitudes to mathematics throughout the school and these are a major factor in promoting attainment and progress. They are motivated by the interesting lessons and by the challenge of the work they are asked to do. Work is graded according to the ability of different groups of pupils so that all can recognise that they are making progress. As a result, they work with interest and maintain concentration for long periods. Pupils show good initiative in their approach to problems and are often innovative in suggesting solutions. They waste no time in moving from one activity to the next and are always ready to get on with new tasks. They support each other well. In consequence, pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in their learning overall.
- 109 This good progress is underpinned by very good teaching in Years 1 and 2, and good teaching in Years 3 and 4. Teachers have very secure subject knowledge and understanding and use the National Numeracy Strategy confidently to raise attainment. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher had high expectations of her pupils, and these resulted in a high level of concentration and sustained effort. She had provided interesting and challenging learning tasks so that pupils were keen to continue working because their imagination was engaged. While the lesson moved at a brisk pace, the teacher took time to ensure that understanding was secure and her skilful questioning confirmed this. She had a good awareness of activities in different groups, and set targets if she was moving off to another group, such as, 'I'll be back in five minutes to see how much you have done'. She used the plenary session at the end of the lesson well to test what pupils had learned and to reinforce their understanding.
- 110 Similarly, in a very good lesson in Year 4, the teacher's very clear expectations, rooted in her very secure understanding of the subject, ensured that all pupils understood precisely what they were doing and why. She used pupils very effectively to explore the concept being learned, and was not afraid to allow a pupil to make an error so as to be able to reinforce a teaching point. Equally, pupils were confident enough to make the error without feeling foolish or embarrassed. As a result, progress in learning was improved for all pupils. She had very effective questioning skills to test and extend pupils' understanding. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace because of the good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults, and because everyone was totally co-operative in the work that they were doing.

- 111 In satisfactory lessons, pace tends to be slower so that concentration is more difficult to maintain. As a result, elements of inattention and disruption develop which are not evident in other lessons. In consequence, learning is less secure and pupils make less progress.
- 112 Work is marked regularly and thoroughly and frequently includes encouraging comments. However, opportunities are missed to include comments which indicate how attainment can be improved. Homework is used well to promote learning.
- 113 The curriculum is carefully designed to cover all areas of the National Curriculum. There are good examples of other subjects being used to reinforce learning in mathematics. For example, results of science investigations were presented in the form of bar graphs. These are examples of information and communication technology being used successfully to support learning in mathematics. The subject manager is relatively new to her role but has already established a system of half-termly tests in order to track pupils' progress. These exercises are beginning to identify areas of learning which need reinforcing. Individual targets are in place in mathematics for all pupils to try to raise standards. The subject manager has not had an opportunity to monitor planning or teaching and learning, since these tasks have been undertaken by the headteacher.
- 114 Attainment in mathematics is more secure than the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 appear to suggest. The National Numeracy Strategy is being used well to support learning. The school is in a good position to raise attainment further and make it more consistent.

SCIENCE

- 115 For pupils aged seven in 2001, teachers judged that the proportion reaching the expected level 2 was close to the national average while it was above the average at the higher than expected level 3. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 attained standards similar to those expected for their age. During the inspection, pupils' practical and written work showed that they are on target to achieve at least the national average in Year 2 by the end of this school year and Year 4 should reach a satisfactory standard for their age.
- 116 Pupils move from the Reception classes with a good knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They build effectively on this knowledge in Years 1 and 2. There are carefully planned opportunities for them to use their investigative skills and to extend their scientific understanding. For example, they learn how to sort food into fat, sugar, protein, vitamins and carbohydrates. Pupils investigate sound, planning an experiment which carefully uses the headings: 'what I plan to do', 'the materials I shall need', 'what I think will happen', and 'what really happened'. This gives the pupils a firm foundation on which to plan further investigations. During the inspection, all the Year 1 pupils were observed investigating the five senses. After very good introductions by their teachers, pupils carried out five different experiments to investigate the senses of sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. Pupils begin to realise the importance of thinking carefully before jumping to conclusions.
- 117 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 build on the good work done in the earlier years. The national programmes of study are covered well over the two-year cycle and appropriate attention continues to be given to developing investigative work and extending the understanding of scientific language. Pupils study magnetism and carry out experiments to determine which objects attract or repel. In their study of forces, pupils experiment with toy cars on an inclined plane with different surfaces. They

make graphs of the distances the car travels, thus linking their studies with their mathematics lessons. During the inspection, a Year 4 class was observed discussing how to experiment and record their results after studying the human skeleton. Armed with measurements taken of the bones of the rest of their families as homework, pupils planned their experiment to measure similar bones of pupils in their group. Using this information, pupils planned to answer five questions. For example, do children have shorter thighbones than adults, or are male and female measurements of elbow to wrist the same. In the second half of the lesson pupils discussed their results in a very sensible manner and planned how to record their findings, finally deciding a graph would be best. Overall, improvements in science attainment are largely due to the increased opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves through experimentation and research, and to recognise the impact of scientific discoveries on our everyday lives.

- 118 During the inspection, the quality of teaching was never less than good and, in over half the lessons observed, it was very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and lessons are carefully prepared to match the requirements of the National Curriculum. The teachers share what is to be learned during the lesson with pupils, so that they understand the purpose and relevance of their work. Skilful questioning is used to check pupils' scientific knowledge, to develop thinking skills and to extend their understanding of scientific language. Teachers ensure that proper safety measures are in place. For example, while dealing with food, pupils were very careful to wash their hands before taking part in the activities. The very good teaching has a significant impact on the quality of learning and is reflected in the attitudes of pupils, who are eager to learn. They handle equipment and resources with care, help each other and take pride in the presentation of their work. Pupils show interest, enthusiasm and excitement when involved in practical activities. Pupils who have special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language are given work suited to their abilities, always linked to the whole-class curriculum and supported well by teachers and teaching assistants. As a result they make at least good progress in their learning.
- 119 The teacher with responsibility for the subject provides very good leadership and has a clear commitment to raising standards throughout the school. She has drawn up a policy and a new scheme of work which ensure that the curriculum is well planned according to the latest national guidelines. Very good assessment systems are in place. An analysis of pupils' work has been carried out across the school, and strengths and areas for development have been reported back to teachers. The teacher with responsibility for the subject monitors teachers' plans regularly and therefore any problems are dealt with quickly. The staff are constantly linking science to literacy through reports of scientific investigations and to mathematics through recording results in graphs and tables. Information and communication technology is being used increasingly as pupils improve their skills in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

- 120 It was only possible to observe one art lesson during the inspection. However, displays of work in classrooms and corridors, an analysis of pupils' art work in their sketch books, photographic evidence, and especially discussions with pupils from all the year groups, indicate that pupils reach the standards expected nationally by the ages of seven and nine, and a significant number attain higher standards.
- 121 Year 1 pupils look into a mirror and draw their face. From the image, they use a range of tools to sculpture a model of their head. All pupils work hard to achieve the effect they want and are prepared to try again if not satisfied with the results. Year 2 pupils had prepared a very large picture of 'Elmer the Elephant'. They had also looked at the work of the artist Mondrian and produced pictures in his style, effectively combining their skills in information and communication technology to present the finished work. During discussion, they were particularly pleased with their drawings of the class Christmas tree. Years 3 and 4 pupils joined together to construct a large snow scene complete with very good cut out pictures of moving figures such as skiers on the hills and skaters on the lake. Pupils combined their information and communication technology skills effectively by using the digital camera to take pictures of their animal models. Pupils produced very good drawings of fruit sliced into two showing that their attention to detail was improving as they moved through the school. Year 4 pupils practise their observational drawing and produce pictures of vases of spring flowers, which not only improve their skill in art but also contribute to their understanding of spirituality. Pupils also carried out an experiment under the title "What can we see through our window", the window being a small cardboard cut-out which they fixed carefully over a chosen area of a larger picture. Pupils were challenged to enlarge this and pay particular attention to the fine detail. Pupils had also linked artwork with their history lessons making a Viking plaque, using their skills of tracing and printing to help in the production of their work.
- 122 Pupils work with enthusiasm and take pride in their work. They are keen to begin tasks and show care and attention to detail. They sustain their concentration over long periods and always behave well. Work is always finished and presentation is good. Pupils in Year 4 discuss their work constructively and value the opinions of others.
- 123 It is not possible to come to a judgement on the overall standard of teaching, but in the lesson observed it was very good. However, from all the evidence available it is obvious that teachers plan together very well and use the scheme of work to ensure that each lesson has a very clear framework covering the elements of art and design. Teachers have aroused interest in and enthusiasm for art. The lesson observed provided very good learning experiences for pupils and they were encouraged to work independently and develop their own ideas. Teachers often integrate art activities into other subjects but also provide opportunities for pupils to develop skills and creativity. Class monitors provide valuable assistance by helping teachers to prepare resources before each art lesson.
- 124 There is a clear scheme of work that provides good guidance for the staff in promoting a systematic programme of skill development throughout the school. Arrangements for the assessment of pupils' work are being developed through pupils' sketch books, which are passed from year to year, providing a very good record of pupils' improving skills. During discussion, Year 4 pupils enjoyed looking at the pictures they had produced four years previously and were pleased to see the improvement in their work. This stimulated them into further effort to improve their work.

- 125 The present teacher with responsibility for the subject has been in charge for a little over one term. However she is well qualified and is giving support to staff if required. The school has a satisfactory range of materials for art, which are stored effectively and are easily accessible to all staff. Teachers use materials with care, and appropriate attention is given to safety when pupils are using tools. Assessment is in the early stages of development and is not yet making a satisfactory contribution to attainment and progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 126 Pupils' attainment in design and technology is above that expected at the ages of seven and nine. This is a similar result to the previous report. During the inspection, evidence from observing lessons, discussion with teachers and pupils, and evidence from planning and displays show that pupils' skills in designing and making develop very well as they move through the school. Pupils' learning, including pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, is very good across the school.
- 127 During the inspection, pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 were observed in lessons designed to encourage pupils to eat more fruit and vegetables. Year 1 pupils prepared a fruit kebab. They used a wide variety of fruits, peeling and slicing them after due consideration of hygiene. Pupils used their designs made the week before well to assemble the kebab before packaging it in plastic to take home. Pupils in Year 2 designed an imaginative "face on a paper plate" using a range of fruit, some of it coming from overseas. Most pupils could name the fruits. Although Years 1 and 2 follow a similar programme in the two-year cycle of the curriculum, the Year 2 pupils cover the subject in more depth. Their work becomes more organised, and different targets are set for each ability group of pupils.
- 128 Design and technology supports other subjects very well. Year 2 link with their history project to design and make toys of the past. In their study of famous people from the past they make medals similar to the one presented to Grace Darling. During the inspection, Years 3 and 4 had just begun a series of lessons on pneumatics and had collected many things which relied on pneumatics for power. Pupils intended to discover how they worked. The same classes had linked their science lessons with design and technology by making good model skeletons as part of a study of the human body.
- 129 Photographic evidence showed that Year 4 had used large construction kits to design and build bridge structures, using the school hall to allow enough room for their models. One of the highlights of the school year is The Summer Holiday Challenge when pupils are given a specific "design and make" task to accomplish during the summer holidays and their entries are judged at the beginning of the autumn term. In 2001 the pupils were challenged as follows, "You are challenged to make a model, a drawing, a banner, a sculpture, a recipe, a collage or anything which tells us about your holiday". There was great interest in the competition and photographs of the entries showed that many pupils reached very high standards.

- 130 During lessons, pupils' attitudes are very good and they work sensibly together, sharing equipment and tools well. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on designing and making a face with fruit, pupils chatted very quietly about the project and were more than willing to help each other, sometimes making suggestions to improve their partner's work. They also know the importance of hygiene during food preparation. They are interested in their work and sustain concentration and strive to improve their work. Their behaviour is always good and they show respect for their peers, adults and resources.
- 131 The quality of teaching observed was always good and, in over half the lessons, it was very good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and this allows them to plan work which builds sensibly on skills which have been already learned. Teachers ask pupils to evaluate their work and suggest ways in which it could be improved. In the lessons observed praise and encouragement were used effectively, helping to motivate pupils and sustain their interest.
- 132 The experienced teacher in charge of the subject provides very good leadership and is keen to promote design and technology throughout the school. A detailed policy and scheme of work is in place. Plans include assessment procedures which are used well to guide the next stages of learning. The teacher in charge has been given the opportunity to monitor teaching and learning. Resources for learning are good, used well, and are easily accessible.

GEOGRAPHY

- 133 Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment match the standards expected of pupils at this stage of Year 2 and Year 4. The school has maintained the standards identified in the previous report for pupils in Year 2. The standards of attainment in Year 4 cannot be compared with the previous inspection report as there was no clear judgement about standards at the end of Year 4.
- 134 By the age of seven, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of place and early map skills. They mark their route to school accurately on a street map. They draw maps of the classroom and of the school. On a street map of the local area, they identified important features, such as churches, shops, the fire station, and marked their location using a colour coded key. Through a study of an island home they compare Kempston with a different locality. They extend their knowledge and understanding of the world by identifying places on a map of the British Isles and on a map of the world visited by a soft toy (Barnaby Bear) taken on holidays by staff, pupils or friends. By the age of nine, pupils compare and contrast Kempston with other localities including villages in Mexico and India. They distinguish between the human and physical features of the environment and know how people can affect the environment. They also research countries such as Italy. This learning is promoted through the use of secondary sources such as books, maps, photographs and a computer search engine. Information and communication technology is used well to support learning and videos and CD-ROMs are available for a number of topics. Mapping skills are promoted through the use of computer programs such as 'Map Detectives'. The progress and achievement of all pupils is good.
- 135 On the evidence of the analysis of work done by pupils, the three lessons observed and the very detailed medium and long-term planning, teaching is at least satisfactory. In the one lesson observed in Year 2 teaching was very good. In the two lessons seen in Years 3 and 4 one lesson was good and the other satisfactory. Where teaching is good or better, it features detailed planning, based on the very secure knowledge and understanding of the teacher, good use of resources and challenging

activities that are matched well to the prior attainment of all pupils. This ensures that the progress made by pupils within the lesson is also at least good. In the very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher captured the interest of the pupils through very effective questioning. This enabled all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, to contribute something of their previous learning about an island home to the discussion. When asked what a 'human feature' of the environment is, a pupil responded with 'Somebody has put it there.' Learning was then extended by further questions that enabled all pupils to understand the difference between a picture and a map. One boy said that 'A map shows you it from the top.' Written tasks matched the prior attainment of pupils in the three groups. In a review of the activities at the end of the lesson, the teacher was able to assess the very good learning that had taken place.

- 136 Assessment has improved since the previous report. The school has developed good strategies to record the attainment of all pupils, including the use of concept maps at the beginning and end of topics, though these are not yet used consistently across the school. The marking of work does not include comments that will take pupils' knowledge and understanding forward. Work is usually presented neatly and legibly.
- 137 The subject is managed and led well. The subject leader has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. The school follows the latest national guidance so that there is improved continuity and progression through the topics studied. Resources to facilitate the teaching of the selected topics have been purchased and are good overall, though slightly better for Years 1 and 2 than for Years 3 and 4. This has improved the learning opportunities for the pupils by ensuring that resources facilitate the delivery of the National Curriculum. The curriculum is enriched by visits. The subject leader monitors planning to ensure that the pupils are taught the essential geography skills in teaching that fosters knowledge and understanding. An evaluation of the planning is written and reported back to the teachers by the subject manager. The school is instituting a programme for the observation of teaching in all subjects. Planned, structured observations such as these identify the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of a subject and subsequent action can then lead to higher attainment by pupils. The school is in a good position to improve further.

HISTORY

- 138 Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment match the standards expected of pupils at this stage of Year 2 and are higher than those expected at this stage for pupils in Year 4. In the previous inspection, standards were found to be above those expected nationally in both Year 2 and Year 4. The lower standards in Year 2 reflect a different year group of pupils, including more pupils who speak English as an additional language. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in all year groups.
- 139 By the end of Year 2, pupils have begun to develop a sense of the past and its differences from the present. Through their study of the topic 'Toys' they are aware of changes over the past 100 years. They learn key vocabulary including 'then', 'now', 'old', 'new', 'chronological order' and 'time-line'. They recall the main events in the lives of people such as Grace Darling and Neil Armstrong. In Years 3 and 4 pupils learn about the Vikings. They know, for example, where they came from, how they dressed, what they ate and drank and about their burial ceremonies. Through their studies of World War II they have a good knowledge and understanding of living

conditions and what it was like to be an evacuee.

- 140 Pupils have good attitudes to history. They listen attentively, are keen to respond to questions and concentrate well on the set tasks. When challenged in a Year 4 lesson to use a computer search engine to investigate the similarities and differences between a wartime home and now, or to find the advantages and disadvantages of being an evacuee, each group of three pupils was totally involved and absorbed in the task. This resulted in very good progress in the learning of all pupils. Behaviour is never less than good and is often very good.
- 141 On the evidence of the analysis of work done by pupils, the four lessons observed and the very detailed medium and long-term planning, teaching is at least satisfactory. Teaching and learning in the one lesson observed in Year 2 were good. Of the three lessons seen in Years 3 and 4, teaching and learning in one were satisfactory and in the other two were very good. All teachers manage their pupils very well and support the learning of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language by working with them themselves or by deploying learning support assistants to work with them and by checking that they are sure of their task. Some activities are planned well to match the needs of pupils with different levels of ability, but this provision needs to be more consistent.
- 142 Teachers have a secure level of knowledge and understanding of the subject which promotes learning well. Resources were used well in a Year 3 lesson on World War II where pupils were intrigued by the good selection of gas masks, and this interest led to very good progress in their learning about evacuation at the start of the blitz. Good questioning skills enabled pupils to express their feeling about evacuation. In a good Year 2 lesson, learning was promoted well through providing opportunities for two pupils, in turn, to go into 'role' as Neil Armstrong and be questioned by the other pupils. This enabled the teacher to assess pupils' learning both in relation to history and to their speaking and listening skills. In this lesson also, pupils consolidated skills learnt in art and design and design and technology by making their own 'Diddy bag', as the astronauts had, into which they placed drawings of those items they would have taken on the space flight with them.
- 143 In the Year 4 lesson where teaching was satisfactory, the pace was sometimes brisk and the teacher promoted learning well, for example, by asking pupils to imagine what it would feel like for an evacuee to be the last in the line. However, the same written task was given to all pupils. The task matched pupils of average attainment best. Pupils of lower ability, including those with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language, were supported well by the teacher. However, there was insufficient challenge in the task for the more able pupils. This lesson did promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in the school very effectively. A statement by the teacher that some evacuee children were rejected by foster parents when it was found that they were Jewish brought gasps of disbelief.

- 144 The subject is led and managed well. The scheme of work is based on the latest national guidance with some additions and adaptations to meet the needs of the school better. The scheme of work ensures continuity and progression in learning with a good balance between knowledge and skills. The school has devised good procedures for assessing attainment and progress, including the use of concept maps at the beginning and end of each topic. This is an improvement since the previous report. However, these are not yet used consistently by all teachers. Resources, including information and communication technology resources, are good for the teaching needed to meet National Curriculum requirements in the selected units of study. This is partly because resources loaned by the School Library Service and educational visits also support teaching and learning in history. The subject leader monitors teachers' planning to ensure that the pupils are taught the essential history skills together with teaching that fosters knowledge and understanding. The subject leader has also planned to examine work completed by a sample of pupils later this term. The school is instituting a programme for the observation of teaching in all subjects. Planned, structured observations and scrutiny of pupils' work such as these identify the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of a subject and subsequent action can lead to higher attainment by pupils. The school is in a good position to achieve this.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 145 There has been significant improvement in information and communication technology since the previous inspection. Weaknesses identified in the previous report have been addressed successfully. As pupils become more confident in using computers, information and communication technology is now beginning to be used frequently alongside other work in other subjects to support learning. Evidence gathered from lesson observations and discussions with pupils and teachers indicates that pupils' attainment at the ages of seven and nine is broadly in line with national expectations, with almost a quarter of pupils reaching higher levels.
- 146 Year 1 pupils make very good use of the computer suite when divided into two groups. One group works with the class teacher and the technician, who gives very good support to the group. They learn the various functions of the keyboard and concentrate on using capital letters in the correct place as they type and print their name. The learning support assistant supervises the other half of the class who experiment with different types of print size taken from newspapers and magazines showing pupils how capital letters are used in everyday life. Halfway through the hour-long lesson pupils change over and experience both activities. Towards the end of the lesson the teacher discusses what has been learned with all the class, linking the work in the computer suite very effectively with their work in the classroom. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language are fully included in the lesson, and make good progress in their work. Dividing the class is particularly effective at this age as it allows pupils to receive very good support in the suite. Several pupils who have computers at home are quite confident, but many others need a great deal of help and encouragement. Year 1 teachers make very good use of computers to help pupils' literacy development. In one lesson, pupils were taking turns to select words from a word bank and place them correctly in simple sentences.
- 147 Year 2 pupils work together in the suite but the teacher divided the class skilfully to provide maximum opportunities for pupils to have quality time on the machines. While she worked with half the class, who learned how to control a programmable toy, the other pupils used the arrow keys and the numbers on the computers to plan a route on a map, making an important link with their geography studies. Working in

mixed ability pairs, pupils helped each other to make good progress in the lesson. Towards the end of the lesson pupils showed the others how they had programmed the toy to turn through ninety degrees.

- 148 A Year 3 class made very good use of the computer suite to assist their learning in literacy. Using the very good resources provided, they first of all practised their reading, using a passage on the computer which repeatedly used the word “nice” many times. The pupils were then given the task of replacing this word with more interesting ones to improve the quality of the whole piece. Very good provision of separate work for different groups enabled pupils to attempt tasks well suited to their ability. The more able pupils thought of words themselves while others were given banks of suitable words from which to choose. During the lesson, pupils became much more confident in replacing text on the screen. In common with many lessons observed throughout the week, pupils were given an extension exercise to complete as soon as they had finished their work. In this case, pupils had to think of an ending to the story and type it on to the screen.
- 149 Year 4 pupils carried out a similar exercise but used a thesaurus to help to improve their text. The more able pupils were challenged to use words to create an “atmosphere” as they learned the power of good prose. Almost half the class reached a very good standard of work, being able to use their computers very competently. In this lesson the learning support assistant and the computer technician gave valuable help to those who found the work difficult. As a result all pupils made very good progress in their learning and all were included fully in the lesson.
- 150 A feature of all lessons was the very good use of the time available. Pupils are ready to begin work immediately the lesson starts. When they work on computers they have very good attitudes and obviously enjoy their work. Behaviour is consistently good and pupils concentrate on the task in hand. They work co-operatively in pairs or small groups and are always willing to help each other if required. All pupils listen well to their teachers’ instructions and watch carefully when teachers demonstrate new work. This has a significant effect on the good progress that they are making.
- 151 The quality of teaching is always at least good and, in over half of the lessons observed, it was very good. Teachers now have good subject knowledge as a result of the work of the teacher in charge and the help that the school has received from the local education authority staff. Teachers have spent many hours after school with the teacher in charge, becoming familiar with the software they are using in lessons. Their confidence in teaching information and communication technology has improved significantly since the previous inspection. The most significant impact on progress is the teachers’ explanations, which are usually very clear, and the pupils’ ability to listen and watch well. Often the teachers involve the pupils themselves in demonstrating different features and this boosts their self-esteem. Teachers, learning support assistants and the computer technician give very good support to pupils with special educational needs and pupils who speak English as an additional language. This enables all pupils to be fully included in the lessons and they make very good progress in their learning. Teachers make good use of listening posts, tape recorders and CD-ROMs. For example, Year 1 pupils enjoyed using their listening posts when listening to sounds during a science lesson on the senses. Year 4 pupils rearranged letters to support their spelling lessons making the word “house” from the letters “suohe”. Younger children in the Reception class take turns listening to the story of 'The Giant Sandwich' on tape.
- 152 The subject is very well led by the knowledgeable and enthusiastic teacher in charge

of the subject who was appointed at the beginning of the school year. There is clear guidance to ensure that work builds on pupils' previous knowledge and understanding. As pupils' skills improve they are becoming more confident in using information and communication technology in other subjects. The computer suite is a good resource. It is timetabled effectively and used well by staff to give all pupils as many opportunities as possible to improve their skills and gain in confidence. Assessment opportunities are being improved to record the pupils' improvement in developing skills. The school is well placed to reach the new expectations in information and communication technology by the end of the school year in line with the national targets.

MUSIC

- 153 The school has a strong musical tradition and pupils throughout the school benefit from a rich and varied curriculum in music. As a result, attainment in music is above that normally found for pupils at this stage of the school year in Years 2 and 4. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, make good progress in music. The requirements of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are met well and the scheme of work in place results in the systematic development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding.
- 154 Whole-school singing in assemblies is good. Pupils sing tunefully and have a good awareness of rhythm and dynamics. The style of singing reflects the meaning of what is being sung. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 also benefit from a weekly singing session which is thoroughly enjoyable, but in which they are constantly reminded of the requirements of good singing. Some 50 pupils in Years 3 and 4 belong to the school choir, which enables them to develop their skills and techniques further. They learn that making music is enjoyable, but that, to be successful, it requires effort and discipline.
- 155 A number of teachers teach recorder during lunchtimes. Some 37 pupils from Year 2 take advantage of this opportunity, as do about 40 pupils from Years 3 and 4. Tuition in violin and cello is also available for pupils in Years 3 and 4, and 16 pupils are learning the violin with a further four pupils learning the cello. Pupils then have the opportunity to experience performance conditions both in the school in assemblies and such events as Christmas concerts and out of school in local churches, the Bedfordshire Music Festival and in events such as the annual 'Fiddle Fiesta'.
- 156 By Year 2, pupils sing accurately and have a good recollection of songs learned previously. They recognise the sounds of different instruments, for example, trumpets, trombones and drums from a recording of Schubert's 'Marche Militaire'. They identify the moods that different pieces of music evoke. For example, the march made them feel happy and bouncy, while an extract from Benjamin Britten's 'War Requiem' resulted in suggestions of 'cross monsters' and 'a stone giant'. Pupils have a secure appreciation of rhythm and successfully maintain a pulse using different percussion instruments.

- 157 By Year 4, pupils are aware of such musical terms as crescendo and diminuendo. They quickly sing a new song to a taped accompaniment and have a good memory for the words. They quickly identify that there are four beats to a bar in this song, and different groups clap or use percussion instruments to emphasis the first beat of the bar, the first and third beats, or all four beats. They make intelligent suggestions as to why it is more difficult to clap the first and third beats in the bar than the first beat, or all four beats.
- 158 The range of activities in lessons results in pupils approaching music with interest and enthusiasm. Their good concentration results in good progress in the different learning exercises. There are good examples of initiative and pupils respect each other's ideas and contributions.
- 159 The quality of teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and was very good in the lesson observed in Year 4. Many teachers have a personal interest in music and their own expertise contributes well to learning. Teachers use the scheme of work well to provide interesting lessons which move with good pace. Good resources are used effectively so that the quality of learning is good. Classes are managed well. Because of the good relationships which exist, this effective management of pupils appears almost effortless, as pupils and adults join together in the pleasure of learning through music making.
- 160 The subject is managed very effectively by an experienced, enthusiastic and highly competent teacher. She gives her colleagues effective support in their teaching, and ensures that pupils have wide musical experiences which include visiting musicians coming into the school. She does not have the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning but tries to track attainment via taping different classes at work. Assessment of progress is in the early stages of development and is inconsistent. There is some use of information and communication technology to support learning, but there is scope for this to be developed further.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 161 Attainment matches that which is expected nationally for pupils aged seven and nine. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall. The high standards identified in the report from the school's first inspection have not been maintained, although there are examples of above average attainment and progress in some classes.
- 162 During the inspection it was possible to observe gymnastics in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 3 and 4, although long-term planning demonstrates that the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are covered over the year as a whole. Pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of high and low body positions and some show good initiative in moving in high and low positions. Some girls perform good cartwheels and one girl does confident handstands. Pupils use apparatus with confidence and a satisfactory level of skill. By Year 4, about two thirds of pupils swim at least one width, and attainment in swimming is about that expected for this age group. In gymnastics, pupils have a good understanding of stretch, curl and arched positions and are innovative in moving in these positions. They understand what is meant by symmetrical shapes and have satisfactory skills in moving in these shapes.

- 163 Overall, pupils have good attitudes to physical education and a good awareness of the need for safety. One Year 2 class was highly impressive in the safe way in which pupils took out and returned apparatus. However, in another lesson for older pupils, getting out apparatus took up so much time that pupils lost concentration and the lesson lost its impetus. Attitudes and behaviour were very good in swimming and this contributed positively to attainment and progress.
- 164 The quality of teaching is good overall, and ranges from satisfactory to very good. The very good lesson in Year 2 had very good safety awareness and very clear explanations so that pupils always knew what they were doing and why. The management of the pupils was excellent and was based on the relationships between pupils and between pupils and the teacher, and the skilful use of praise. There was excellent use of pupils to demonstrate particularly good techniques. Where teaching was satisfactory in a lesson for older pupils, the management of pupils was insecure at times, and there was some ignoring of instructions which created potential safety hazards. The time taken to get out the apparatus resulted in pupils losing concentration and valuable learning and teaching time being lost.
- 165 At the time of the inspection, the subject manager had only been in the school for three weeks and had had no time to have an effect on the quality of provision in the subject. She is aware that there are no opportunities for sports or games activities outside lessons and that the school is unusual in this respect. Resources for physical education are adequate overall, although some are out-dated. With a new subject manager in place, the school is anxious to improve attainment in physical education to the high levels identified in the school's first inspection when this subject was a strength of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 166 The observation of lessons, displays of work throughout the school and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that pupils are attaining the standards expected for those following the Bedfordshire agreed syllabus for religious education. Pupils' learning is very good overall. Those with special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language are well supported so that they make progress in their learning in line with their ability. Work is adapted to suit their needs and additional help is given with the language from their teacher or learning support assistant.
- 167 Pupils in Year 1 learn the story of the creation, reflecting on the beauty of the world and understanding the need to look after it. This makes an important link with the pupils' own efforts to look after the school's grounds. During the inspection, as pupils came in from the playground they were seen to enjoy looking at the snowdrops and hyacinths growing near the door. Pupils were given an opportunity to decide what they would like in a wonderful world. Some thought friends were important while others wanted sunshine every day or lots of animals. While they worked quietly, thinking of their answers, the teacher played very quiet music and this created a peaceful learning environment which the pupils appreciated. In the second half of the lesson the teacher read the story 'Dinosaurs and all that rubbish'. This helped pupils prepare a list of all the things they would not like in their wonderful world.

- 168 Year 2 pupils compared the Christian ceremony of baptism with the Sikh naming ceremony. A representative of the Sikh temple had visited the school and explained the ceremony showing the appropriate artefacts required and this had stimulated the pupils' interest. They remembered many facts from that lesson which showed how much they had appreciated the opportunity to meet him and hear at first hand all that was involved in the ceremony. A feature of the lesson was the well-taken opportunity to include pupils of different faiths and make them feel special, raising their self-esteem. The teacher made very good use of a Sikh pupil's knowledge. He was invited to give the whole class the benefit of his experience and pupils appreciated the information.
- 169 Pupils in Year 4 study Judaism and Jewish family life. Again very good use had been made of a pupil's first hand knowledge. A pupil had brought artefacts and ceremonial clothes to explain their significance to all the class. They were very appreciative of his efforts. In an inspector's discussion with Year 4 pupils, they showed a good knowledge of the Jewish Religion and had enjoyed learning about a boy and girl's Bar mitzvah and Bat mitzvah. Pupils are also familiar with stories from the Old Testament, for example the story of Abraham.
- 170 Discussions with pupils from all age groups indicated that very good attention is given to celebrations such as Divali and the Chinese New Year as well as the Christian festivals of Christmas, Easter and harvest. Videos and photographs of the various celebrations showed that all pupils are given equal opportunities to take part and many parents support the events.
- 171 The quality of teaching is very good. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They use precise, specific language in their discussions with pupils in order to increase their vocabulary in a systematic way. Pupils are later questioned and encouraged to respond. For example, Year 1 pupils were thinking of objects which were special to them. The teacher had constructed a very special box for pupils to store the precious things that they brought from home safely, which they were going to use to explain to other members of the class why they were special to them. Pupils are well motivated and are able to work in small groups with minimum supervision. They are managed well and have very good relationships with their teachers. In the lessons observed, behaviour was very good. Pupils respected each other's work and took great care of resources, including artefacts. At the end of each lesson there is a short period when all the class gather together to discuss their work and to reflect on their achievements.
- 172 The management of the subject is very good. The teacher responsible for the subject is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has worked hard over the last three years to implement the policy and scheme of work as well as organising staff training. Religious education lessons make a significant contribution to spirituality and to the very good spirit which exists in the school. Resources are good, very well catalogued and readily available to all staff. Assessment has been introduced but the teacher in charge intends to improve the system. She also hopes to arrange more visits to stimulate the pupils' interest in religious education.