

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WILLIAM HARDING COMBINED SCHOOL**

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110358

Headteacher: Mr G. Osman

Reporting inspector: Mr D. Shepherd  
2905

Dates of inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2002

Inspection number: 244289

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Hazlehurst Drive  
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Buckinghamshire  
Postcode: HP21 9TJ

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A. Rogers

Date of previous inspection: Not applicable

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2905	Mr D. Shepherd	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Science French	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are the pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9545	Mr K. Greatorex	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
12000	Mrs B. Iles	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Music	How well is the school led and managed?
31281	Miss M. Kellow	Team inspector	Special educational needs Art and design	
8523	Mr P. Hemingway	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
23566	Mr J. Iles	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	
32136	Mrs L. Brookes	Team inspector	English Religious education	

17709	Mr A. Giles	Team inspector	History Physical education	
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

William Harding Combined School opened in September 2000 following the amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools on the same site. The school is a very large primary school catering for 717 boys and girls aged four to eleven, of whom 58 attend part-time in the nursery and 90 attend three reception classes full-time. The school is currently over-subscribed, partly because a significant proportion of pupils attend from outside the local area. Two departments cater for 40 pupils with statements of special educational needs, indicating either physical disabilities or language difficulties. A further 132 pupils have identified special educational needs at the school, mostly specific learning difficulties or moderate learning difficulties. Overall, the percentage of pupils with special educational needs is average but the percentage with statements of special educational need is well above average. Forty-six pupils speak English as an additional language, 16 of whom are at the early stages of learning English. This is higher than average. The main home languages spoken are Pushtu, Urdu and Punjabi. The socio-economic background of the pupils is mixed but average overall – 40 per cent of pupils come from private houses, 60 per cent from local authority housing. The attainment of pupils on entry to the nursery is below average. The school is experiencing a very high turnover of teachers and difficulties in recruiting them. During the past two years, out of 32.9 teachers, 24 have left the school and 27.2 joined. Of the new teachers four have been recruited from overseas; their qualifications are not recognised in England.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a good school. Good teaching enables children who enter the nursery with below average levels of attainment to leave with average attainment in most subjects. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher, senior staff and governors are clear and focused. The headteacher is supported effectively by his deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- It promotes pupils' personal development successfully and they respond positively by behaving very well and adopting positive attitudes towards all aspects of school
- Teaching throughout the school is good
- Children make a good start in the nursery and reception classes
- Pupils with a variety of special educational needs are integrated very well and make good progress
- The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide clear and effective leadership
- The partnership with parents is effective

#### **What could be improved**

- Assessing the progress made in lessons by pupils of different abilities, especially high attainers, and setting them tasks that reflect the assessment
- Provision for and progress of pupils with English as an additional language
- The strategic management of the school's resources, especially the involvement of senior staff and subject leaders in budget planning and monitoring and evaluating standards and teaching
- The organisation of the timetable to ensure lessons in all subjects are taught for appropriate lengths of time

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE IT OPENED

The amalgamation of the two former schools in 2000 has gone very well and staff now work as a single team. Since it opened provision and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) and in the nursery and reception classes have improved. Following the opening of the department for pupils with speech and communication difficulties in September 2001 provision for these pupils has improved. Subject policies and schemes of work have been revised using the best practices from both the former schools with the result that the quality of the curriculum is now better. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have created a very positive learning environment for the new school and further improvement can be expected. Staff turnover has meant shortages in staff expertise in some subjects, which partly explains why targets set in English and mathematics for pupils in Year 6 have not been met this year.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	n/a	n/a	D	C	Well above average    A Above average        B Average                    C Below average          D Well below average    E
Mathematics	n/a	n/a	D	C	
Science	n/a	n/a	D	C	

*[In order to compare the school's results more accurately with schools with similar intakes, inspectors have taken account of up to date socio-economic data and the very high number of pupils with statements of special educational needs in the school.]*

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage; on entry their attainment is below average but by the time they reach the end of the reception year most children have attained nationally expected levels. In the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 standards in reading and writing were well below average and in mathematics above average when compared to all schools. When compared to schools with a similar intake pupils' attainment in reading and writing was below average and in mathematics was average. Attainment in science was average. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels was average in writing but below average in reading and science. In these tests, girls outperformed boys in reading and writing, but in mathematics a higher proportion of boys attained the expected level. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels at the end of Year 6 was average in science and below average in English and mathematics. Girls outperformed boys in English and mathematics, but not in science. In 2001, the school reached the target it set for Year 6 pupils in mathematics, but fell short of its target for English. The school did not meet the challenging targets set for these pupils for English and mathematics in 2002. Inspection evidence indicates that most pupils in the current Year 2 classes attain average standards in reading and writing. Their attainment overall, though, is broadly similar to that achieved last year. Inspection evidence supports the national data in that standards in mathematics in Years 2 and 6 are average. Standards in English and science for pupils in Year 6 are also average.

Inspection evidence suggests that most pupils make good progress in all subjects in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in most subjects in Years 3-6. The high turnover of staff during the past two years has had an adverse effect of the progress some pupils make. Most pupils make good progress in literacy, numeracy and ICT, but do not make enough progress in French. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. Those with English as an additional language do not make the progress they should. Gifted and talented pupils and boys do not always make the progress of which they are capable.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. All pupils show great enthusiasm for the school. They are very interested and involved in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are courteous, well mannered and show a clear understanding of the impact of their actions on others.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent. Pupils work co-operatively with each other and adults. They show great patience, tolerance and understanding of others.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance improved last year. Pupils attend school punctually enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

Most aspects of the teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are very good. The main strengths of the teaching and learning in Years 1-6 are the teaching of basic skills, the management of pupils' behaviour, the detailed planning of lessons with clear learning objectives and the learning of pupils with special educational needs. The weaker aspects are that teachers do not assess pupils' work well enough in lessons, their expectations of the achievement of some pupils are too low and pupils do not know enough about the strengths and weaknesses of their learning. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well overall. The teaching of English and mathematics are satisfactory. The teaching of ICT is good. However, computers are not used enough in other subjects. The school meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs very well. The needs of pupils with English as an additional language and those of higher attaining pupils are not met well enough.

The high turnover of teachers during the past two years has included the departure of a number of senior teachers for promoted posts. Some of these teachers have been replaced by inexperienced teachers or teachers whose qualifications are not recognised in England. The impact of this is that there is a lack of subject expertise in some classes and in some subjects, such as in literacy, numeracy, ICT, art and French. In these circumstances, it is difficult for the school to ensure that pupils are always making the progress of which they are capable in these subjects.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is broad and balanced and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, sex education and drugs education. A number of day and residential visits add to this provision. Some lessons in Years 3-6 are too long.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Provision for pupils with statements is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is no specialist provision for pupils with English as an additional language. This is unsatisfactory.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Pupils' moral and social development are promoted very well and their spiritual and cultural development are promoted well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school effectively promotes the welfare, health and safety of the pupils in a caring environment.

The school works well with parents and a number of parents help in classrooms.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides good leadership and receives very good support from the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher. The headteacher does not delegate enough responsibilities to senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are well informed and provide good support to the school. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Priorities for improvement are identified accurately, although procedures for implementing them are not organised systematically enough.
The strategic use of resources	Unsatisfactory. The school has not established any provision for pupils with English as an additional language. There is confusion about how much is delegated to subject co-ordinators.

The amalgamation of the two former schools has been well led and managed. The principles of best value have been applied appropriately. Teacher recruitment and training have been handled well. The quality and quantity of learning resources are good in most subjects. There is no water in some classrooms, the mobile classroom in the infant department has no toilet and one Year 6 class is taught in cramped conditions.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and it is helping them to become mature and responsible; behaviour is good</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed</li> <li>• The teaching is good and children make good progress</li> <li>• The school is approachable about problems</li> <li>• The school expects their children to do their best</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons</li> </ul>

Parents attending the meeting and those responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were enthusiastic about the school and believe that it has many positive features. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views about the school. Inspectors do not agree with parents' negative view about the school; a wide range of sporting, musical and cultural opportunities are provided for pupils to enjoy, many of which are run during the lunch period.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 showed that pupils attained below average results in comparison with all schools but average when compared to schools with similar intakes. The Year 6 group in 2001 included 12 pupils with statements of special educational needs, the majority of whom had specific learning difficulties. Higher attaining pupils do not perform as well as they should. Compared to all schools the proportion attaining the higher levels was well below average in English, mathematics and science. When compared to schools with a similar intake, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in science was average, but below average in English and mathematics. The school focuses its attention on lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs with the result that those pupils make good progress and higher-attaining pupils are often set work that is too easy for them. The test results over the past three years indicate that boys do not attain as well as girls in English and mathematics. The school does not analyse the data from tests well enough to identify what aspects of the tests boys find difficult and then plan teaching to correct these weaknesses. This is an issue for the school to tackle. In 2001, the school met the target it set for itself for mathematics but did not meet its target for English. The school set challenging targets in these subjects for 2002 and has not met either of them. Two of the Year 6 teachers are new to teaching in this country this year and are not yet familiar with teaching the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy. This has adversely affected the standards achieved.

2. Results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 show that standards in writing and mathematics were below average and well below in reading when compared to all schools. When compared to schools with similar intakes, standards in mathematics were average and below average in reading and writing. In this group of pupils, five had a statement of special educational need, mainly for specific learning difficulties. These results also indicate that the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was below average in writing and well below average in reading and mathematics when compared to all schools. When compared to schools with similar intakes, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher levels is average in writing, below average in reading and well below average in mathematics. The school has not focused enough on developing the higher order reading skills once pupils have begun to read fluently. Again the attention paid to pupils with special educational needs has been at the expense of the more able pupils, particularly in reading and mathematics. Over the past three years, girls have outperformed the boys in reading and writing but the boys did better than the girls in mathematics. The school has not focused enough on ensuring that in reading and writing the curriculum captures boys' attention and is structured clearly enough to enable their thinking to be extended.

3. The high number of pupils with statements of special educational need in Years 2 and 6 in 2001 means that comparing the school's results with all schools provides an inaccurate picture of attainment since the school has an unusually high number of these pupils. A more reliable indicator of the pupils' attainment is to compare the results with schools with similar intakes using updated information provided by the school. Inspectors have used this updated information. High teacher turnover and difficulties in recruitment have been major factors contributing to these modest standards. This has meant that, in spite of the school's best efforts, it has been very difficult to ensure continuity in teaching and progression in learning against such a background of staff changes. The school has robust and successful systems for trying to ensure continuity and progression in learning. These include linking teachers new to the school with more experienced staff, establishing schemes of work in all subjects and planning in year group teams. The National Literacy Strategy and National

Numeracy Strategy as well as national and local guidance in all other subjects is a major factor in guiding the school in its planning.

4. Children enter the nursery with a wide variety of experiences and prior learning. The attainment of some is average for their age but for many it is below. Overall, children enter nursery with below average attainment. Most make good, and some very good, progress in the nursery and reception classes because of the good and very good teaching they receive and enter Year 1 having achieved the broad range of Early Learning Goals within the Foundation Stage curriculum. Provision and staffing in the nursery and reception classes have improved since the school opened and have had a significant impact on standards. Over time, this will help to raise standards throughout both the infant and junior departments.

5. Inspection evidence indicates that most pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 classes make sound progress and attain average standards in English. Standards in reading in Years 1 and 2 are improving. Some higher attaining pupils in Year 6 could reach higher standards in English than they are achieving at present. In Years 2 and 6, most pupils are very positive about their work and keen to take part in class discussions. They speak confidently and clearly. Many pupils enjoy reading and read a variety of stories well. They have good skills in reading words new to them. There are some very good readers in most year groups throughout the school. Lower attaining pupils are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants. However, many pupils of average and higher reading ability do not read enough in school and their progress in reading is not recorded systematically enough. This holds them back from making the progress they should. Standards in writing, especially of boys in Year 2, are not as good as they should be. By Year 6, most pupils write neatly and present their work at a very high standard. They have a sound grasp of punctuation and, with the exception of history, use their literacy skills well in other subjects. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy well and this is helping to raise standards. With the exceptions of history and religious education, standards in writing are consolidated appropriately in other subjects.

6. Most pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 classes make sound progress and attain standards in mathematics that are average. Their attainment in number is higher than in other aspects of mathematics and is above average, especially in Year 2. Pupils' ability to solve problems is well below average in Year 3, but is higher in Year 5. This is because of the clear, direct teaching given to this aspect in Years 5 and 6. Lower attaining pupils develop a sound grasp of number, but find solving problems difficult. Higher attaining pupils do not do as well as they should in mathematics in Years 2 and 6. Most pupils are developing a good understanding of how to use the skills learned in numeracy lessons in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 drew a bar chart to record their findings from their investigation on how well objects moved on different surfaces. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced well and is helping to raise standards in mathematics.

7. Most pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain average standards in science. They make satisfactory progress and develop a good understanding of the subject. A particular strength of the subject is how well pupils set up and carry out scientific investigations. However, higher attaining pupils do not make the progress they should because too little is expected of them. For instance, they are sometimes asked to copy work from the board into their books rather than write out their findings themselves.

8. All pupils are set annual individual learning targets in English, mathematics and science. These help to focus teaching on these aspects and contribute to improving standards for all pupils.

9. Standards in ICT are rising because the school has now established a computer suite in both the infant and junior departments of the school. Teachers are also increasing their

subject expertise by taking part in the nationally sponsored training programme for ICT. Most pupils make good progress in ICT and standards are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Year 6 pupils are catching up quickly on gaps in their learning. However, overall, computers are not used enough in the teaching of other subjects. Standards in design and technology (D&T) are above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. A strength in this subject is in designing products. Many pupils are less skilled at making products to a good standard, especially in Years 3 to 6. Standards in geography and history are above average in both Years 2 and 6. Topics in these subjects are taught in interesting ways and pupils make good progress as a result. Standards in music and religious education (RE) are average. Standards in physical education (PE) in Year 2 are average. There is not enough evidence to judge attainment in PE in Year 6. Standards in art and design are above average in Year 2, and average in Year 6. Overall, pupils in Year 6 do not receive enough opportunity to develop their skills in art and design.

10. The impact of very good teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs has a significant influence on their overall achievement throughout the school. Evidence from pupils' work indicates that pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. National test results in Years 2 and 6 show that many pupils with special educational needs are achieving well, with some achieving the nationally expected levels. Individual Education Plans for these pupils include clear targets for pupils' learning and indicate a range of appropriate activities to help them achieve them. Pupils' progress against these targets is monitored closely by teachers and teaching assistants, which is a significant factor in helping these pupils make very good progress. Pupils with statements of special educational need make very good progress and those with physical handicaps are looked after very well. The school would improve its tracking of these pupils' progress by using the 'P' level scales for those pupils who cannot be assessed against the National Curriculum levels.

11. Pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language do not receive the appropriate help to enable them to learn English. The progress they make is unsatisfactory. Pupils with English as an additional language who speak English well do not receive enough help to enable them to learn subject specific language, especially in science, and write fluently. Some higher attaining pupils achieve well, but too many of them do not. This is because teachers do not expect enough from them. Too much of their work is copied and some work is not pitched at the correct level. They are often asked to carry out the same tasks as lower attaining pupils. The boys do not achieve as well as girls, especially in English.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. The very positive attitudes to learning, the very high standards of behaviour, the excellent relationships and the effective personal development throughout the school are important strengths that have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

13. Virtually all pupils have very positive attitudes to the school and their work. They show great enthusiasm for what they are asked to do and apply themselves eagerly to their activities. This was illustrated by the Year 2 pupils in their RE lesson when they were totally immersed in the role-play about "The Selfish Giant". Pupils maintain good levels of concentration especially when teachers plan tasks that challenge and motivate them. They take great pride and enjoyment in producing good work and are keen to share their results with others and adults.

14. Behaviour is very good and this confirms the views of parents. When they come to school, in assemblies, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, virtually all pupils achieve very high standards of behaviour. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner despite the

narrow corridors and the cramped cloakroom areas and have a clear understanding of the high standards of behaviour expected of them. In lessons, behaviour is consistently very good and almost all pupils conform to the high standards expected even when not closely supervised. Exclusions are rare and reflect the insistence that unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying or lack of respect for school property.

15. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils with special educational needs are very good. They are happy, well motivated and enthusiastic about school. These pupils have excellent relationships with adults and with the other pupils. The school has very effective practices for dealing with pupils with statements for emotional and behavioural difficulties. Teachers have high expectations of these pupils and are effective in motivating them and engaging them in lessons.

16. Relationships in the school are excellent. Pupils form extremely constructive relationships with each other and with adults. Pupils work and play co-operatively together, demonstrating that they will listen with interest to each other and will try to understand the other person's point of view. This was illustrated many times during the inspection. Pupils show genuine pleasure in the achievements of others. Virtually all pupils act in a mature and responsible way. Throughout the inspection, many pupils constantly showed respect and courtesy to each other, to staff and to other adults including the inspection team. Pupils consistently showed patience, tolerance and understanding for others, including of pupils with physical handicaps.

17. Pupils' personal development is good. The school provides a good range of opportunities for the pupils to show initiative and take responsibility and pupils respond by showing that this trust is well placed. From Year 1, pupils make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development as they perform jobs within classrooms and around the school. For instance, they return registers and tidy up after lessons. As they progress through the school, more opportunities for promoting personal development are provided. Year 6 pupils helped to organise the Junior Sports Day and helped with the Infants Sports Day. They are also involved in fund raising for the Cot Death Society and all pupils are involved with fund raising for other charities.

18. Attendance is consistently satisfactory. There is almost no unauthorised absence. Virtually all pupils are punctual and many arrive early. They come happily to school ready to learn, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

19. The teaching has many strengths and is generally good. Of the 114 lessons observed, the teaching in 52 was good, in 18 it was very good and in 7 it was excellent. The teaching in 34 lessons was satisfactory and in 3 it was unsatisfactory. The teaching is very good in the nursery and reception classes. It is often good in all other year groups. The teaching is generally good in geography, history and ICT. In all other subjects, the teaching is satisfactory.

20. Most lessons are planned carefully and in detail. Plans include well thought out learning objectives that provide a clear direction for the learning. In the best lessons, learning objectives are shared with the pupils and reviewed at the end of lessons. For example, in a Year 6 science lesson, the teacher went through the learning objective at the beginning of the lesson, reminded the class about it when they were involved in their investigation and reviewed their success in achieving it at the end of the lesson. All planning is linked closely to national or local guidance and implements the National Curriculum and RE systematically. Teachers use a variety of approaches in their teaching to help meet the needs of pupils.

These include practical and investigative work in mathematics and science. The management of pupils' behaviour is consistently very good throughout the school and pupils behave very well. Pupils respond so positively to their teachers and other staff because relationships between them are very good. For example, a Year 5 pupil was upset as he entered class one morning and one of the teachers comforted him straight away. Other pupils recognised and appreciated the high level of care given to this pupil and expressed the view that they liked school and wished to please their teachers. Staff want to help pupils and pupils, in their turn, want to please adults. Support staff are used effectively to help pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. As a result of this good teaching, many pupils make good progress. They apply themselves conscientiously to their work and work with considerable interest and concentration. In particular, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, due largely to the high quality of support they receive from specialist teachers of special educational needs and learning support assistants.

21. The teaching is not always as positive as this, and, when this is the case, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable. A general weakness in the teaching is that some teachers do not assess pupils' work well enough during lessons and adapt their teaching to help them learn more effectively. This is often the case with higher attaining pupils. Sometimes higher attaining pupils are set tasks that are too easy for them. This includes copying work in their books from the board and being set the same tasks as lower attaining pupils. This occurred in a Year 5 science lesson on germination. Work set for boys does not always capture their imaginations and is not structured well enough to help them achieve their best. Sometimes pupils with English as an additional language, especially those in the early stages of English language acquisition, are set tasks they do not understand. For example, in a Year 3 numeracy lesson, a pupil whose command of the English language is in its early stages of development was asked to carry out mathematical problems when he could not read the words. Those who can understand and speak English need further help in their writing as they come to grips with the technical language of subjects such as science and mathematics. The school does not provide well enough for pupils with English as an additional language and these pupils do not make the progress they should. A further factor in the teaching is that some less experienced teachers do not have enough subject expertise to teach some topics. This occurs in subjects such as art and design, D&T and PE.

22. The teaching of literacy and English is sound overall, and sometimes, good. In reading, teachers and learning support assistants teach phonics well. They teach pupils strategies for building up parts of words to help them when they read words new to them. They encourage pupils to use clues from pictures and from the meaning of the story also to help them when they are stuck on a word. Lower attaining pupils practise their reading regularly. In most classes, teachers help pupils in their writing by encouraging them to use writing frames that help them structure their writing in a logical order. This is the case in English lessons and in some other subjects, such as when writing up science experiments. This structured support for pupils helps lower attaining pupils, especially boys, to improve in their work. However, greater use should be made of writing frames to help boys in particular improve in their writing. Provision in literacy for higher attaining pupils is not as good as that for lower attaining pupils. These pupils do not appear to read regularly enough or write at an appropriate level for their abilities. The teaching of numeracy and mathematics is sound, and sometimes good. Pupils are taught number systematically and helped to understand mathematical problems through careful explanations and practical activity. For example, in a Year 3 numeracy lesson, a number of pupils were given a word in a problem. The class decided which were the key words to help solve the problems. Those pupils without key words for the problem sat down. In this way, pupils could see what they had to do in order to solve the problem. The teaching of ICT is generally good and many pupils are making good progress in this subject. All teachers are currently being trained under a national initiative in

order to teach computer skills better. This is having a positive effect on the teaching and on pupils' learning. However, with the exceptions of English and mathematics, computers are not being used enough to help pupils learn in other subjects.

23. Very good support is given to pupils with special educational needs. All pupils in the departments are given additional support from learning support assistants and they receive specialist support from specialist teachers particularly in literacy and numeracy. In Years 1 and 2 very good individual support is given to help pupils develop language and numeracy skills. For example, individual pupils have time to read before school starts and they discuss books with the specialist teachers. In numeracy, the specialist teachers give very good support to individual pupils within a group of pupils with special educational needs. In Years 3-6, pupils are set by ability for literacy and numeracy. Teachers are skilled at matching the work to the needs of pupils with special educational needs. They question and prompt pupils in a quiet and patient manner in order that they can show what they can do. As a result of this, teachers plan further learning for these pupils.

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

24. The curriculum is broad and well balanced. It includes all the required subjects of the National Curriculum, RE and the additional benefit to pupils of an early introduction to French. The school provides a full personal, social and health education programme that covers well thought out lessons on sex education and the dangers of drugs abuse. All statutory requirements regarding the curriculum are met. The school has responded positively to the requirement to place English and mathematics at the core of learning without diluting the importance of studying the full range of other subjects. Teachers use a useful planning format for lessons to ensure that the national literacy and numeracy strategies are taught rigorously. Teachers are beginning to ensure that computers are used to help learning in other subjects. The planning and delivery of the Early Learning Goals in the Foundation Stage are ensuring that children make a good start to their schooling.

25. Subject policies and lesson planning in the different subjects pays due regard to the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, there is a lack of clarity in the teaching when some projects in art and design and D&T include learning objectives from both subjects. Teachers make use of the appropriate National Curriculum levels when framing learning objectives for different groups of pupils. Most lessons are structured well and key features of good learning can be identified in plans. These usually include an introduction, an appropriate range of activities and concluding session. The school uses a block timetable arrangement to maximise the use of specialist facilities and a staggered arrangement of playtime breaks. This allows teachers to plan their lessons with considerable flexibility for maximum impact. However, there are some occasions when the large blocks of time prove too long for some pupils to stay on task and maintain full concentration. This occurs in a number of subjects, including science, music and PE.

26. This is a school where all children are given access to the full range of curricular opportunities. All pupils with special educational needs, including those with profound physical disabilities, are given support in developing independence and self-reliance. Priority is given to supporting pupils with statements for physical disabilities in PE and, where appropriate, in other practical subjects, such as science, in order that they gain full access to the curriculum. Other pupils with special education needs are provided with additional activities to meet their learning and developmental needs. Staff use innovative and effective strategies to create this access, some of which are equally suitable when used with all pupils, to promote their learning. Teachers use a variety of pupil groupings, sometimes by friendship, at other times by social or academic aptitude to suit pupils' needs and the tasks in



hand. These strategies are well supported by thoughtful deployment of learning support assistants to ensure all pupils thrive.

27. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are not well served and modifications to their curriculum to suit their needs is not coherently managed. In spite of the help given to pupils to help them in their work, lessons are not always managed to ensure boys succeed. Greater use needs to be made of writing frames to help improve boys' writing skills.

28. The school provides a varied programme of visits to stimulate pupils' learning. These include short excursions for the younger children to local shopping venues and places of worship. Other visits are arranged for older pupils to museums, art galleries and residential trips to historical and adventure centres. The oldest pupils make a study trip to northern France. All these visits are followed up in class and provide stimulus for much subsequent work. Good use is also made of visitors to the school. These have included local clergymen and the emergency service officers as well as a wide range of people from various health and other support agencies.

29. A significant number of pupils rely on being transported to and from school so the school deliberately attempts to run many of the extra-curricular events during the lunch hour. Even so they provide a diverse range of musical, sporting and cultural events that range from choirs, football matches, computer club and days when the timetable is given over entirely to themes, such as a Greek or Mexican day.

30. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. It is well supported by the varied programme of activities provided by the school both inside and outside lessons. Opportunities are provided for pupils to take responsibility throughout the school. Even the youngest children are expected to help with daily routines such as taking registers to the school office and tidying up after class activities.

31. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. It comes mainly from the programme of assemblies, RE and the use of personal, social and health education. Opportunities for reflection are provided regularly in assemblies and in lessons particularly in English, science and RE where pupils are encouraged to reflect and discuss issues, such as the implications of selfishness and the importance of courage. The school actively promotes the value of each child as an individual.

32. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The expectations within the school are for behaviour to be good and this is reinforced effectively with praise. The school's Code of Conduct is understood by almost all pupils and class rules, drawn up with the pupils, are displayed in all classrooms. Pupils show their understanding of the difference between right and wrong in the way that they behave. Inappropriate behaviour is generally dealt with supportively. Pupils are tolerant of each other and show their consideration for others who experience learning or physical difficulties.

33. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school places a strong emphasis on inclusion. Pupils work collaboratively together as demonstrated by the part they played in fundraising in support of The Cot Death Society. There is good interaction and social behaviour in the playground with many instances seen of groups of both boys and girls of different ethnic groups playing together well. They accept the decisions reached by a consensus within the group. Assemblies are used effectively to promote social issues and citizenship. Lessons are used effectively to help pupils to reflect on the benefits of helping, sharing and being kind to others.

34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils' experiences are improved regularly through visits out of school and by visitors to school. Religious education and personal, social and health education lessons are used effectively to develop pupils' understanding of cultural differences and to help them to accept the importance and value of people from all parts of the world. The awareness of different countries is particularly illustrated by studies of France, Kenya, Mexico and South Africa. The provision of an annual residential visit to France helps to promote pupils' knowledge of the French language and culture and broadens their horizons beyond this country.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

35. The school provides good quality support and guidance for pupils. It effectively promotes the welfare, health and safety of its pupils in a friendly and caring environment. This atmosphere encourages pupils to learn and develop as individuals and promotes their awareness of being citizens. In this large school staff know their pupils well and have a very clear idea of their personal strengths and weaknesses thus enabling them to offer effective counselling and support for them. The knowledge staff have of pupils is supplemented considerably during the additional time that they spend with pupils during the lunch period. All staff show great concern for the well being of pupils. Teachers are sensitive to the particular needs of pupils and consistently monitor carefully their personal development and their ability to cope on a day-to-day basis, especially those with special educational needs.

36. Assessment procedures are generally satisfactory. The school is currently developing its assessment practices but as yet these are not consistent across the whole school. The school uses the Buckinghamshire baseline assessment procedure when children enter school. Their progress is tracked through the use of statutory and non-statutory national tests at the end of Years 2 to 6. However, this data is not used enough to monitor the progress of different groups of pupils or to analyse the strengths and weakness of the curriculum. The use of these tests to monitor pupils with statements of special educational needs and who are not achieving National Curriculum levels of attainment is not appropriate. The school could improve their practice by introducing the national 'P' level assessments for this group of pupils.

37. The school has introduced a number of practices to improve assessment. For example, teachers include learning intentions for lessons that are shared with pupils and, in some lessons, pupils' progress and achievement are assessed against these. However, assessments made in this way are yet to impact on teachers' planning for the next steps in learning. Pupils are encouraged to assess the progress they have made in their work themselves. However, this practice is not consistent in all classes. All pupils are set individual targets for literacy and numeracy but these are not used to support pupils' work in other subjects. The school is keen to develop this work further. Inspectors agree with this priority for the school.

38. The school has an effective system to monitor and promote attendance. Registers are marked speedily, correctly and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. All absences are properly noted and contact made with parents, where necessary, to explain any absence. Attendance figures are properly aggregated and emerging patterns of absence are noted for following up. There was virtually no unauthorised absence recorded last year. The computerised system for recording and aggregating attendance is secure and effective in saving time for the staff. The school has achieved an improvement in attendance figures during the current school year.

39. Staff provide very good role models for pupils in promoting high standards of good behaviour. They speak politely to pupils and each other and relationships between pupils and adults are excellent. Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour

are successful. The school's Code of Conduct is clear and understood by pupils. In addition, class rules devised in consultation with pupils are displayed in each classroom. The consequences of unacceptable behaviour have been made clear and are readily accepted by pupils. The behaviour policy is consistently applied by all members of staff. During the inspection, staff were seen to pre-empt incidents of possible misbehaviour with firm, calm intervention.

40. Child protection issues are handled effectively. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities and are aware of the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused. A committee consisting of staff and governors promotes health and safety effectively in the school. The headteacher and the health and safety committee of governors conduct regular inspections of the premises to identify potential hazards. All staff are safety conscious and watch out for the health and safety of the children; they work hard to maintain an environment in which the well being of pupils is promoted effectively.

41. The school has good links with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are welcome to talk to teachers at any time. Home/school diaries enable parents and teachers to have an ongoing dialogue about issues on a daily basis. This is particularly important for pupils who live some distance from the school and whose parents find it difficult to come to school frequently. Annual reviews of statements show that clear dialogue and consultation with parents has taken place. However, pupils are not yet included in the annual review process although the school is aware that this is a requirement under the new Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs and has plans to include pupils in future reviews.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

42. A high proportion of parents, including those attending the pre-inspection meeting, very strongly support the school and confirm that it has many strong features. Virtually all those responding to the questionnaire agree that their children like school. They believe that the school expects their children to work hard and they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem. They also believe that the school is helping the children to become mature and responsible and behaviour in the school is good. A very high proportion of parents feel that the school is well led and managed, the teaching is good and that their children are making good progress. Inspection evidence confirms these positive views of parents.

43. Some parents responding to the questionnaire expressed reservations about the range of activities provided by the school outside lessons but these concerns are not confirmed by inspection evidence. A wide variety of activities, many taking place at lunchtimes, are available to pupils. They include a number of sporting activities as well as musical and cultural opportunities for the children to enjoy in addition to the many trips and residential visits.

44. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at home and at school is good. Parents and other adults are encouraged to involve themselves in the life of the school and many respond very positively to this invitation from the school. They help in classrooms and around the school as well as on school visits. In addition, parents are very supportive of the work that their children are expected to do at home. There is an active parent-teachers association that raises substantial amounts of finance in support of the school. The school values highly the contributions made by parents.

45. Parents have very good access to teachers. As well as the day-to-day opportunities of talking with teachers when delivering or collecting their children, parents are invited to attend assemblies, curriculum information meetings and special school occasions, such as

concerts and sports' days. In addition, formal consultation evenings that provide opportunities for parents to discuss their children's work are arranged each term.

46. Overall, the school provides parents with good information. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents are informative and meet statutory requirements. Annual reports to parents about the progress their children are making have been improved since last year. They are now computer generated and contain much good information about what the pupils know and can do and the progress that they are making. They also contain targets for future learning although, in some cases, these are too general, for instance when teachers encourage children to maintain their previous progress.

47. The school has built up useful contacts within the local community. These include emergency services, area health personnel and different religious groups, some of which use the school facilities. Pupils transfer to a variety of secondary schools at the end of Year 6. The school has made close links with some of them to help ease the transition as pupils transfer. These links have included using a specialist secondary French assistant to help teach French, sharing study projects and standardising the academic data that accompanies pupils to their new school. All of these contribute to establishing continuity in pupils' learning as they change schools.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

48. The headteacher provides good pastoral leadership and he commands a high level of respect from staff, governors, pupils and parents. The amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools to create a combined school has been managed very successfully. The school aims and priorities for school improvement have been identified accurately in partnership with the staff and governors. These provide a clear direction for the work of the school.

49. There have been many improvements in the two years since the school opened. These include significant strengths in the provision for the Foundation Stage of learning and for pupils with special educational needs. The nursery has improved its provision, and the school now has an additional department catering for pupils with statements for speech and communication difficulties. The priority placed on developing a caring ethos is also reflected in the very good provision that has developed to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

50. The deputy headteacher and new assistant headteacher offer very good support to the headteacher. They work together in close partnership. This partnership approach to both leadership and management is a strength of the school. They discuss school issues regularly and lines of communication with staff are well developed. This has been an important feature to ensure that all staff working on split sites feel well informed.

51. There have been many staffing changes during the past two years as a number of teachers have been promoted to senior posts in other schools or left the school for personal reasons. Recruiting teachers to fill vacancies has been a problem and there has been some discontinuity in teaching with some classes being taught by several teachers in one year. These difficulties have been resolved by recruiting overseas teachers. Inspection evidence shows that this decision has been effective. While the qualifications of these teachers are not recognised in this country they are providing good support to pupils and making positive contributions to the staff. Induction procedures are a strength of the school and new staff feel well supported by other teachers. However, their knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy is not secure as yet. The school's induction procedures reflect the school's caring ethos and commitment to establishing continuity in the provision between each stage of learning. Staff and governors work in close partnership together and the commitment and capacity of the school to improve are good.

52. The management roles and responsibilities of staff have been reviewed since amalgamation. As required with the national performance management procedures, targets for teachers have been set to support their professional development and pupils' learning. Governors play an active role in this process and have a clear understanding of the contribution the process makes to the professional development of the headteacher and teachers. There are plans to extend performance management procedures to include all non-teaching staff in the near future. As a result of performance management teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and of the subjects for which they are responsible. Action plans for subjects have been produced and these indicate the steps that are needed to maintain and improve standards of attainment and the quality of teaching. The development of shared roles to manage subjects is working very well, supporting continuity and liaison between the Foundation Stage, infant and junior departments. This is a crucial element of the successful amalgamation of the two former schools. Staff are confident they will be able to attend the training they need to enable them to fulfil their roles. They are enthusiastic and well motivated but most have not yet had the opportunity to lead and manage training and development in the new school.

53. While the monitoring of teaching has taken place, it is not yet sufficiently well structured to provide a systematic overview to help co-ordinators of subjects other than literacy and numeracy to know when they can observe teaching in their subjects. This is an area for further development.

54. The governors provide good support for the school and meet their statutory responsibilities. Particular strengths are evident in the very good support they give to the financial management of resources. Targets have been set to reduce the large underspend the new school inherited. These funds are being used wisely to improve resources at the school. Inspectors identified a number of accommodation issues at the school some of which the governors should regard as their responsibility for funding. The frequent and regular monitoring of budgets is a feature of the governors' involvement in management issues and their personal strengths in this area are utilised well. The principles of best value are applied appropriately. The weaknesses identified in the last audit report have all been addressed in full and financial procedures are followed very carefully. All funds allocated to the school are appropriately spent. However, at the present time the headteacher manages the school budget and, while small sums of money are allocated to subjects, co-ordinators are not involved sufficiently in making decisions about expenditure in their subjects and other areas of the school. While staff are confident that no request will be denied if funds are available, this lack of delegation and strategic financial management inhibits the rate of improvements in the school. In such a large school, the headteacher cannot be expected to have such a clear, strategic view that is not shared with the school's co-ordinators and most senior staff. This is an area requiring attention.

55. Through careful analysis of test results, governors compare the school's standards with national and local figures. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They recognise they need to correct the weaknesses in the school. This is enabling the school to move forward in a positive and constructive way. The chair meets very regularly with the headteacher and there is effective communication between governors, staff and parents. Committees meet regularly and report back appropriately to the full governing body. Governors attend training to enable them to keep up-to-date and fulfil their roles. They are justifiably proud of the progress the school has made since it opened two years ago.

56. The co-ordination of special educational needs is very good and the co-ordinators in the infant and junior departments carry out their responsibilities well. Monitoring of statements and individual education plans are effective. Learning support assistants are

given appropriate access to training to help them in their work. There is no co-ordinator to support provision for pupils who have English as an additional language and this is a weakness. There is no specific tracking of the progress made by pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds to enable the school to evaluate any strengths and weaknesses in learning or teaching that may require additional support. This is an area for the school to develop.

57. There are weaknesses in the cleanliness of the school's accommodation. While the infant department is clean and well ordered the same level of cleanliness is not evident in the juniors. At the time of the inspection, the hall and administrative areas were dirty, surfaces were not regularly wiped and there was a build up of dust and dirt along windowsills, skirting boards and in corners. Some sinks and surfaces are not kept in a clean condition and this is unacceptable as it poses a risk to health. In addition, wall surfaces are scuffed and corners damaged, some door fastenings have not been repaired and other minor elements of repair and maintenance have not been undertaken in a systematic, methodical manner. The school has already taken steps to highlight these concerns. Cleaning arrangements are in need of urgent review. A programme of redecoration is in place but the pace is slow and some areas of the school are dull and detract from the otherwise caring ethos.

58. Some aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory and impact negatively on the progress pupils make. The temporary classrooms in the infant department lack water and toilet facilities. There is a similar lack of water in the junior department's temporary classrooms. Lack of water in classrooms adversely affects learning in the practical subjects, such as capacity in mathematics, aspects of investigative work in science, art and design and design and technology. Classrooms for some Year 6 pupils are cramped. One Year 6 class is too small and lacks suitable ventilation. Learning in a number of classrooms in the junior school is disrupted by pupils needing access to other areas and by noise in neighbouring classes. Suitable specialist accommodation is lacking in areas such as music and D&T. A priority of actions is needed to remedy these shortcomings.

59. Levels of staffing are generally satisfactory. However, high levels of staff mobility impact negatively on standards. Some experienced staff have recently been replaced by inexperienced and staff whose qualifications are not recognised in this country.

60. Resources are good overall but there are weaknesses in the Foundation Stage where some furniture is old and not of the right height for young children. In addition, some musical instruments are old and in need of replacement in Years 1 and 2.

### **The department for pupils with physical handicaps**

61. The school has 20 pupils in its department for pupils with physical disabilities. Pupils' disabilities are wide-ranging and often severe and many pupils require full time support. Priority is given to supporting pupils in PE lessons and in other practical subjects, such as science in order that these pupils gain full access to the curriculum. The support given in class by learning support assistants is very good. Facilities for pupils with physical disabilities and resources for learning are good, although space for wheelchairs in teaching areas in the infant department and in parts of the junior department is limited. All pupils in this department are taught in mainstream classrooms alongside other pupils. The school has very good links with outside organisations, particularly the health service. Physiotherapists make weekly visits to the school and a number of learning support assistants are trained to give physiotherapy to the pupils.

### **The department for pupils with language difficulties**

62. The department for pupils with language difficulties has places for ten pupils. This department is new and, at the time of the inspection, there were twelve pupils within it. The provision for these pupils is very good. The school receives good support from a specialist teacher of pupils with language difficulties who visits the school on a weekly basis to provide guidance for pupils and their teachers. Teachers and learning support assistants work in a quiet, firm manner with these pupils focusing on developing speaking and listening and developing their vocabulary. All adults make much use of praise to motivate pupils and to raise pupils' self-esteem. All pupils within this department are taught in mainstream classrooms.

### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

63. In order to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors, as appropriate, should:

- (1) Match work more closely to the needs and abilities of pupils by:
  - a. assessing the stages of development of higher attaining pupils;
  - b. setting and monitoring progress towards appropriate short-term targets for all groups of pupils;
  - c. including provision for different ability groups of pupils in teachers' short-term plans;
  - d. monitoring and comparing the performance of boys and girls.*(Paragraphs 1, 21, 27, 36, 37, 81, 82, 90 and 97.)*
  
- (2) Ensure pupils with English as an additional language make the progress they should by
  - a. assessing their stage of English language acquisition;
  - b. setting short-term targets for the progress in English of these pupils;
  - c. providing for these pupils appropriate tasks pitched at their levels;
  - d. ensuring these pupils receive suitable adult support.*(Paragraphs 11, 21, 27, 66, 77, 87, 94 and 110.)*
  
- (3) Ensure that strategic leadership and management decisions are taken after due discussion with senior staff and co-ordinators to ensure whole school budget planning takes account of the
  - a. strengths and weaknesses within subjects and other aspects of school;
  - b. outcomes of monitoring and evaluating standards in all subjects.*(Paragraphs 53 and 54.)*
  
- (4) Organise the timetable in Years 3-6 so that:
  - a. lessons, such as those in science, music and PE are taught for reasonable periods of time;
  - b. PE is taught effectively in Years 3 – 6;
  - c. the teaching of French is efficient and pupils make good progress in relation to the teaching they receive.*(Paragraphs 25, 98, 131, 136, 138, 144 and 145.)*

In addition, the school might like to include the following minor issues in its action plan:

- (1) ensure the differences between art and design and D&T are understood by all staff, and that the teaching reflects this.  
*(Paragraphs 21, 25 and 108.)*
  
- (2) improve the accommodation by:
  - a. providing toilet facilities in the mobile classroom in the infant department;

- b. providing water in both mobile classrooms;
- c. ensuring the accommodation for D&T is appropriate in size to ensure efficient teaching;
- d. ensuring Year 6 pupils in the small classroom are taught in an appropriately shaped classroom with clear sight of the board and adequate ventilation;
- e. replacing the furniture in the nursery as appropriate.

*(Paragraphs 58 and 67.)*

- (3) improve the use of computers and ICT skills across the curriculum.  
*(Paragraphs 9, 22, 96, 102, 108, 112, 117, 125, 131, 137, 145, and 150.)*



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	114
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	18	52	34	3	0	0
Percentage	6	14	47	30	3	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	717
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	17

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	40
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	172

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	45

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	51
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	28

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.2
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	49	39	88

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	36	47
	Girls	31	33	38
	Total	65	69	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	74 (n/a)	78 (n/a)	97 (n/a)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	30	45	41
	Girls	31	38	38
	Total	61	83	79
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (n/a)	94 (n/a)	90 (n/a)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	53	54	107

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	35	36	44
	Girls	44	37	45
	Total	79	73	89
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (77)	68 (64)	83 (75)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	39	43
	Girls	38	46	42
	Total	71	85	85
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (70)	79 (66)	79 (78)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	7
Black – other	10
Indian	8
Pakistani	35
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	524
Any other minority ethnic group	9

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	32.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	29

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	539

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60
Number of pupils per FTE adult	7.3

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	1485946.00
Total expenditure	1435276.00
Expenditure per pupil	2031
Balance brought forward from previous year	93043
Balance carried forward to next year	143713

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	24
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	27.2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	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.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	737
Number of questionnaires returned	380

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	35	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	51	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	48	11	3	5
The teaching is good.	57	40	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	43	14	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	24	2	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	42	43	11	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	73	24	2	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	42	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	42	17	3	9

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to the nearest whole number, sum may not = 100

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM AND SUBJECTS**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE (NURSERY AND RECEPTION CLASSES)**

64. Children start school in the nursery in the term following their fourth birthday. They attend the nursery on a part-time basis and join the reception classes on a full-time basis when they become five. Children with summer birthdays have one full term in the reception class while those born in the autumn benefit from three terms. The school follows local education authority guidance for admissions. During the inspection there were 58 children attending the nursery on a part-time basis and a further 90 children in the reception classes.

65. Baseline assessment shows that attainment on entry to school is below average with fewer children than usual attaining the higher levels. Most children attend the nursery or local playgroup before joining the reception classes but a small minority do not. The nursery and reception classes provide a caring and very positive ethos for learning. The staff in the Foundation Stage work as a strong and committed team, skilfully led and managed by the co-ordinator who teaches the nursery class.

66. The teaching observed in both the nursery and reception classes was very good across all the areas of learning. Sometimes, the teaching was excellent. The staff care very conscientiously for the children and they engage very positively in the exciting, practical activities that are planned for them. Children with special educational needs are very well catered for and all, including those who are disabled, play a full role in all the activities with their friends. Activities are very well matched to the children's needs and abilities and provide a good balance of directed and free choice of activity. Teachers encourage children to work and play independently and make decisions. Within this framework, opportunities for children to choose for themselves are good. Activities are of very good quality and make learning fun. The curriculum is varied and well balanced across the areas of experience. Teachers' planning and assessments take into account what the children already know and extend their learning further. Teachers make their assessments through children's day-to-day tasks and use this information to adjust activities, questions and tasks. They receive very effective help from the support staff. This ensures that all children, including the more able, are challenged appropriately in their learning. As a result, the children receive a very positive introduction to school, and by the time they reach the end of the Foundation Stage, they have made very good progress. Most children are likely to meet the levels of attainment appropriate for their age range across all the areas of learning. Children with English as an additional language are taught using the same procedures as are used for those with special educational needs. While these children are mainly bilingual there are occasions when the pace of their learning slows because they are interpreting from one language to another. Support assistants give valuable support but specialist provision is needed for children with English an additional language.

67. A minor weakness in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is that some of the furniture is either of the wrong height or old and in need of replacement. While the co-ordinator has a very small budget, it is not sufficient to enable her to replace the unsuitable items.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

68. The very good teaching ensures that the children's attainment in personal and social development improves considerably during the nursery and reception classes. By the time they enter Year 1 all have achieved the early learning goals in this area. In one lesson, nursery children played games such as 'The Farmer's in his Den'. The children were helped to take turns when playing on the large wheeled toys. In the reception classes, children cooperate well and help each other. They follow the rules of simple games and know why their friends have either won or lost. They care for each other. In their role-play, they show understanding of feelings, such as excitement when going on holiday and fear when confronted by creatures such as sharks! Most children are well behaved, enthusiastic, and concentrate hard. They demonstrate that living things need care. For example, nursery children tend their marigold plants, watering them carefully with adult support. They learn to listen to each other when asking and answering questions and listening to stories. They have opportunities for role-play in the "underwater world" and in areas such as the 'home corner' and 'writing corner'. Teachers create a stimulating environment and atmosphere where each child is made to feel special. The care shown to children with special educational needs is of very high quality ensuring they all have the opportunity to experience the same activities as their friends. Expectations of behaviour are high, routines are well structured and organised and the children are cheerful and eager to please.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

69. Children make very good progress through the very good teaching and most will achieve the expected standards for their age. More able children are supported well and are working appropriately towards the early stages of the Year 1 curriculum. Most are confident to ask and answer questions and those with immature speech, mainly children in the nursery, receive very good reinforcement to correct inaccuracies. All staff use language very well and act as good role models for the children. They reinforce new vocabulary and skilfully ask children questions which require them to use the words themselves. This was evident in the work on solid shapes. Vocabulary, such as cube and cuboid, was used daily and by the fourth day of the inspection, most children could use the terms as they identified the shapes.

70. In all lessons and at play adults work with children, encouraging them to use new, exciting words. Reception children recognise many simple words and phonic sounds at the beginning and end of words. This work is introduced in the nursery and careful labelling draws good attention to the links between speech and writing. Children love story times because teachers read stories with expression. They include children in the rhymes and invite them to think what might happen next. In the nursery children were delighted to hear the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff'. They corrected the teacher's deliberate mistakes with shrieks of delight, reminding her of appropriate words and correcting story errors. One child told the teacher, '*No, they didn't go under the bridge, they went over it. You are tired today!*' This reflects the high level of trust and confidence children have that all their comments will be valued.

71. The children enjoy books and like to talk about their favourite stories and rhymes. Favourites include Cinderella and Jack and the Beanstalk. Younger children state their preference for rhymes such as *Hickory, dickory, dock* and *Twinkle, twinkle little star*. They write their names and most copy the teacher's writing with reasonable accuracy. Some children still reverse letters and need help to form them correctly. Support assistants give very good help to children in this respect, ensuring pencils are held correctly and letters are practised following accurate guidance. Children are beginning to understand sentences and higher attaining children are beginning to write on their own and make good attempts at spelling familiar words. The teaching of sounds is imaginative linking initial sounds to names and objects that children understand well. A wide range of activities is provided to encourage listening, reading and writing.

## Mathematical development

72. The children's attainment is average for their age and most children will reach the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception classes. Most count to ten and higher attaining children count beyond. They count forwards and backwards and higher attaining children are beginning to understand the rules of subtraction and addition. Many find subtraction difficult but with practical guidance and suitable activities they are beginning to understand the principles of *more* and *less*. Nursery children learn to practise counting in games such as *What's the time Mr Wolf?* Good progress was made during the inspection as the reception children learned the names of some simple three-dimensional shapes, such as a cone, cube and cuboid. They organised the shapes with adult support by counting the faces and corners on the shapes. This learning was reinforced in art as children made patterns on paper that was then folded to make a cone. A strength in this provision was the way teachers in all classes systematically increased the requirement for children to use the new language and organise their shapes in different ways. This showed that teachers were assessing children's learning and using this information to plan the next lessons. Consequently most children made very good progress using mathematical vocabulary in an appropriate way. Water and sand play help children to understand the difference between *full* and *empty* and *heavy* and *light*. In discussion children often recognised the difference between these terms but found it hard to explain what the differences were. The tasks provided for the children match their needs very well and promote their interest in learning.

## Knowledge and understanding of the world

73. The children's attainment in this aspect is average and they make very good progress because they are taught effectively. Most children will reach the standards expected for their age in this area. They describe their families naming important family members and recognising who is the oldest or youngest. Most know their birthdays and some can say the number of their house and where they live. Nursery children know that seeds grow into plants and need water and sunlight to thrive. They tend their marigolds with pride counting the number of flowers they can see each day. Children use computers with confidence; art work shows their ability to control a mouse to draw and colour in shapes. For example, they controlled the mouse skilfully as they designed fish tank landscapes using the *My World* program. Their *Hungry Caterpillar* paintings and designs to celebrate the royal jubilee demonstrated real flair and careful mouse control. The teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve; through their very good questioning they involve children in all discussion. They encourage children to reflect and explain events in their lives. This was particularly noted during an excellent lesson in the nursery when children explained their thoughts about the characters in the story of water creatures.

## Physical development

74. The children's attainment in this aspect is appropriate for their age and the teaching is very good. Many imaginative opportunities are provided for children to play, practise their manipulative skills and learn to move safely on apparatus in PE lessons. They are beginning to understand how to use space to ensure they do not bump into others. They hop, skip and run. In the playground, nursery children move confidently on climbing equipment, following their leader and understanding the need to take turns. When playing with wheeled toys they sometimes need help to take turns and negotiate speed and directions. The range of wheeled vehicles provides pupils with a good variety of opportunities to promote their physical development. Their manipulative skills are developing appropriately. Reception aged children use scissors carefully and hold pencils and brushes appropriately. In the PE lesson seen, the teaching was outstanding. Activities in this lesson were imaginative and linked to a story that provided an exciting context for learning. The teacher made very good links to literacy and music as the children responded to the story, changing the direction, height and speed of their movements in response to 'underwater' music. Some children still need



guidance to develop pencil control when writing letters and to manage fastenings such as buttons and laces. They work hard at improving their control with their fingers and make very good progress. Teachers ensure that all children participate in lessons. Support assistants give very good support to children who are disabled enabling them to be fully included despite their disabilities. There is good access from the Foundation Stage classrooms to the outside area.

### **Creative development**

75. Most children will reach the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. This is due to the good teaching they receive. Children have opportunities to experience an exciting range of art activities such as drawing, painting, model making and printing. They enjoy painting, and with adult help, develop the skills to hold brushes correctly and make bold use of colour. They also have opportunities to express themselves through music, for example, by painting their responses to the music *Firestarter*. When making models they use glue sticks and tape to join boxes, and straws and paper to construct vehicles. One child chose to make a bus to take her daddy to work and was pleased with herself when she joined two boxes together by herself. Children respond imaginatively to opportunities for role-play, for example in the seaside boat and when playing on the beach. They invent scary stories and most enjoy the company of their friends in these situations. A small number continue to need encouragement to join in with others. Children enjoy singing nursery rhymes and there is provision for using musical instruments. Very good teaching encourages the children's creativity. Careful planning skilfully links these experiences to the other areas of learning. This ensures that the learning environment is vibrant and exciting. The quality of presentation of the work of all pupils recognises the best efforts of all children. This is a significant strength and a mark of the value placed on every child's contribution.

### **ENGLISH**

76. The results of the 2001 national tests for Year 6 pupils were below average when compared to all schools but average when compared to schools with similar intakes. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was well below average when compared to all schools and below average when compared to schools with similar intakes. Girls outperformed boys in English. The below average attainment of higher attaining pupils and the lower attainment of boys are issues for the school to tackle. The school did not meet the challenging targets it set for itself in 2001 or 2002. Results in the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 2 were below average in writing and well below in reading when compared to all schools and below average in these areas when compared to schools with similar intakes. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in reading was below average and well below in reading. When compared to schools with similar intakes, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in writing was average and below average in reading. Girls outperformed the boys in reading and especially writing. The below average attainment in reading and of boys in writing are issues for the school to tackle.

77. Inspection evidence suggests that most children make satisfactory progress and attain average standards in English in all year groups. Many pupils achieve higher than this. Boys still do not reach the same standards in English, especially in writing, as the girls. Standards throughout the school are lowered because of the high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Some of these pupils have very severe learning difficulties and are still in the initial stages of learning to read and write. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and their learning is aided by the sensitive support from specialist staff. This is not the case for pupils with English as an additional language. These pupils do not receive any specialised support and this affects adversely their progress.

78. Throughout the school, standards in speaking and listening are average. Some pupils with special educational needs, especially those with speech and communication difficulties, and some with English as an additional language do not achieve average standards. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers, and to each other when working in groups. They make good progress in listening in some classes where teachers are highly skilled in capturing their attention and explaining learning to them. By Year 2, many pupils are developing increasing confidence in their speaking and listening. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils speak clearly and confidently but some have a limited vocabulary for their age and contribute only briefly to discussions.

79. Standards in reading are average. By the end of Year 2, many pupils use a sound range of skills to decode unfamiliar words. They use cues from pictures to help them understand the stories they read. They can read and then retell stories in their own words, demonstrating a good grasp of the initial features. For example, Year 1 pupils enjoyed Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are*. Most, including some with special educational needs, sequenced their own versions of the story orally or in writing. Some pupils enjoyed re-telling their versions of the story using computers and tape recorders. Higher-attaining pupils read with fluency and expression, conveying the full meaning of the text, and are eager to share their own experiences of reading for pleasure. Some of the pupils with the most severe special educational needs are still working hard to learn basic connections between sounds and letters but are receiving very good support to enable them to improve with this.

80. Most pupils in Year 6 are enthusiastic and independent readers. They have preferences for particular authors and can place fiction books into different categories. Higher-attaining readers are beginning to discuss the interaction of plot and characters and predict how the narrative will develop as a result of their observations of the ways in which characters behave. Their progress in reading is increased by the high proportion of pupils who borrow books from the school library. However, some pupils, particularly the average and high attaining pupils, do not progress as well as they might since they are not monitored sufficiently once they become independent readers, and there is not enough control over their choice of books.

81. Most pupils in all classes attain average standards in writing, and, some higher levels than this. By the end of Year 2, many pupils make sound progress in writing through regular practice, such as by recording news. However, the boys do not make as much progress in writing as the girls. They are not provided with enough structured guidance to help them develop their writing. By the end of Year 2, many pupils use punctuation and speech marks correctly and make good attempts at spelling unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils achieve the higher level of attainment in writing with good paragraphing, vocabulary and punctuation. A good standard of presentation and handwriting are promoted and achieved throughout the school with aids such as layout guidance for letters and ruled sheets to place under pages. The school, quite rightly, is placing as high priority improving the standards of writing further. This should include raising the performance of boys in particular.

82. The teaching of English is sound overall with very good features in Years 1 and 2. Where the teaching is very good, work is well matched to the range of learning needs in the class. Teachers sustain a good pace of work and pupils receive good guidance about the next steps in their learning through marking. Teachers in these classes choose texts carefully to interest pupils and provide a good balance of activities to develop their speaking and writing skills. One very good lesson in Year 2 captured pupils' imagination through a sequence of letters between Greenpeace and a little girl who discovered unlikely animals, for example, an elephant in a shoe-box, in her home. The girl had written to Greenpeace to ask for advice about the care of this animal. As a result of this, pupils were eager to write the next letters to Greenpeace. They gained much enjoyment from the humour of the situation.

Pupils in Year 6 demonstrated their creative writing skills in creating Haiku poems, the teacher building effectively on their interest in Japanese culture through the World Cup. The very good features in the teaching helped pupils in all classes to learn how to read and write more effectively and make good progress in their work. However, the teaching is not always as good as this. Some teachers do not assess pupils' work in lessons rigorously enough and adapt their teaching in the light of this. As a result, some pupils, especially higher attaining pupils, are not working as hard as they can and they do not reach their full potential.

83. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy well. Although appointed relatively recently, the three co-ordinators of English are well-qualified for their role and work effectively together as a team. They analyse test results carefully and pupils' progress is tracked and recorded systematically. However, the monitoring of standards is not yet enabling the school to provide consistently good teaching and learning for all its pupils especially higher attaining pupils and those for whom English is an additional language. Across the school work in subjects other than English contributes to the development of literacy skills although it does not effectively influence writing. This is particularly the case in history and religious education. There are examples of the good use of computers to assist literacy throughout the school, and these are beginning to form part of a clearly thought-out pattern of using computers to help pupils in English. The school has built up a good collection of resources for English, including a broad collection of reading schemes and well-stocked libraries and classroom collections. These include books from other cultures and some bilingual books.

## **MATHEMATICS**

84. In last year's national tests standards in Years 2 and 6 were below average when compared to all schools. When compared to schools with similar intakes, standards in Years 2 and 6 were average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in Year 6 was well below average when compared to all schools, and below average when compared to schools with similar intakes. Girls outperformed boys in mathematics. The school met the target it set for itself in 2001 but fell well short of its target in 2002. Results in the 2001 tests at the end of Year 2 were below average when compared to all schools, but average when compared to schools with similar intakes. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was well below average when compared to all schools and schools with similar intakes. The boys performed better than the girls in the Year 2 tests. The below average attainment of higher attaining pupils and the lower performance of boys in Year 6 are issues for the school to tackle.

85. Inspection evidence confirms that most pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain average standards for their ages in mathematics. A significant number of pupils, particularly in Year 2, are attaining the higher level. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including a significant number with statements, in the current Year 6 is likely to be reflected in a dip in the number of pupils achieving the expected national level. In order to raise standards in mathematics, the school needs to maintain continuity in the teaching and learning. High levels of teacher mobility has made this very difficult during the past two years. For example, there have been ten new members of staff this year in Years 3-6. This includes three changes in Year 6. Two new members of staff were appointed from abroad and they are not yet familiar with the National Numeracy Strategy. These teachers have received support throughout the year to help them meet the requirements of this national guidance.

86. Despite these difficulties there has been an improvement across the attainment targets for most pupils during the past year. Through its monitoring, the school identified weaknesses in the way pupils apply their mathematics knowledge. The local education authority's numeracy consultant has worked to good effect with teachers. The consultant has given demonstration lessons and led staff training sessions. These sessions have focused

on linking questioning to encourage a more rigorous approach to the application of investigative mathematics. In addition, training was also given to ensure the effectiveness of plenaries at the end of lessons. The positive impact of this training can be seen in lessons.

87. Overall, most pupils make satisfactory progress in mathematics. The setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6 enable pupils of similar abilities to have their work broadly matched to their needs. Pupils make the best progress when teachers recognise the full range of abilities within each set and match work for pupils accordingly. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school due to the very good systems for their inclusion in lessons. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is unsatisfactory. Their progress is not tracked well enough and this does not enable their strengths and weaknesses to be identified. This means that they do not receive the support they need to improve. The school is aware of this and has identified strategies to improve provision through the subject action plan for mathematics.

88. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of place value in numbers up to 100 and they solve problems involving addition and subtraction. Their understanding of number is above average and better than their knowledge of other aspects of mathematics. They use coins to add money and give change from 20 pence. Higher achieving pupils confidently use numbers to 1000 and multiply using 2, 3, 4 and 5 times tables. Most pupils understand simple fractions and recognise patterns in number, including odd and even numbers. Less able pupils calculate mentally within 10 and understand the relationship between halving and doubling. Pupils use standard measurements to weigh and measure and name common two- and three-dimensional shapes. Most pupils know the order of the months of the year and can tell the time. They recognise clockwise and anti-clockwise movements. Some pupils extract information presented in graphical form, although this is an area that is less well developed.

89. Year 6 pupils multiply and divide numbers by 10 and 100. More able pupils calculate multiplication tasks to two decimal places. They understand the relationships between fractions, decimals and percentages. A high proportion of pupils identify prime numbers using factors. Almost all pupils describe the properties of most two- and three-dimensional shapes and the names of different kinds of angles and triangles. Most pupils know how to calculate the perimeter and area of common shapes. Lower attaining pupils complete symmetrical pictures by drawing in missing parts. All pupils use and convert standard measures, recognising that measures can be expressed in a range of ways. There is a growing use of computers in mathematics. This needs to be extended to support the learning of mathematical knowledge and skills, particularly of higher attaining pupils, through investigative work. Pupils are encouraged to record their work neatly and use rulers when drawing mathematical diagrams. The presentation of work is good and sometimes very good.

90. The teaching is satisfactory overall, and sometimes it is good, especially in Years 1 and 2. A strength of the teaching throughout the school is the very good classroom management which is underpinned by very good relationships between adults and pupils. The mutual respect between adults and pupils encourages pupils to ask for help when they lack understanding. Pupils' enthusiasm for their work is reflected in the very good quality presentation of their work around the school. In discussion, pupils talk with pride about what they have learnt and refer to their exercise books for verification of their achievements. Pupils are encouraged to use the correct mathematical language when discussing their work and this reinforces learning in mathematics and in their speaking and listening skills. Teachers modify their language to ensure that less able pupils are not disadvantaged from making good gains in their mathematical development through their lack of skills in language. Imaginative strategies for counting give pupils reliable support to develop accuracy in their work. For example, when challenging a Year 1 pupil to add  $15+5+6$ , the teacher helped the pupil by

talking through the problem, “ $15+5=20$ , keep in your head.” This was followed with the teacher gently tapping six times and counting to give the correct answer. The pupil enjoyed the caring attitude of the teacher and wanted to share the new technique with other members of the class. Teachers support each other and this is clearly illustrated by the efforts of experienced staff to ease and help train less experienced teachers into understanding the rigours of the National Numeracy Strategy. Their success in this work is evident from lesson observations of the relatively new teacher appointments. The quality of marking is good with teachers giving credit for pupils’ efforts and indicating ways in which pupils can improve their work further. A weakness in the teaching is that teachers do not assess pupils’ progress in lessons well enough and plan further work as a result of this.

91. Throughout the school the learning support assistants give very good support to pupils. A strength of the provision is the high quality partnership between the teacher and the assistant. Very good quality questioning techniques extend learning appropriately, particularly for pupils with special educational needs. The test results and regular teacher assessments help to allocate pupils appropriately into ability groups. The assessments are also used to set targets for each group and to predict the outcomes in the national tests.

92. There are three co-ordinators for mathematics – one for Years 1 and 2, one for Years 3 and 4 and one for Years 5 and 6. The co-ordinators are making a positive impact on the development of mathematics throughout the school. Some monitoring of teaching has taken place and there is a commitment in the subject’s action plan for a systematic monitoring programme to develop in the near future. The co-ordinators have organised an evening to help parents understand and take part in mathematical activities their children experience in school. This event was very popular and heightened parents’ awareness of their children’s programmes of work. The evening was a very good step towards a partnership in learning between the school and the parents. A mathematics day for the whole school has been arranged with the purpose of bringing together the infant and junior departments. For example, during this day, Year 6 pupils are to write a mathematics trail for the pupils in Year 1. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented effectively throughout the school. Skills learned in numeracy lessons are used effectively to help learning in other subjects. For example, results in science are sometimes shown by using block graphs. Some of these are produced on computers.

## **SCIENCE**

93. In the national tests in 2001 for pupils in Year 6, the school’s performance was below average when compared to all schools and average when compared to schools with similar intakes. The proportion of pupils attaining high standards was below average compared to all schools and average when compared to those with similar intakes. Boys outperformed girls in science but neither the boys nor the girls attained as well as their peers nationally. In the 2001 teacher assessments in Year 2, standards were below average when compared to all schools and average when compared to those with similar intakes. The proportion of pupils attaining high standards was well below average compared to all schools but average when compared to those with similar intakes. At the end of Year 2, when compared to all schools, standards were average in materials and their properties. They were below average in all other aspects of science.

94. Inspection evidence confirms that most pupils in Years 2 and 6 attain average standards and make satisfactory progress in science. Higher attaining pupils make good progress and attain above average standards throughout the school. Lower attaining pupils, including those with statements, make good progress in science but the standards reached by these pupils are below nationally expected levels. Some pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress in science, but those at the early stages of learning

the English language find some scientific terms difficult to understand. These pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.

95. Pupils in Year 2 learn about aspects of life processes and living things. They understand that plants need food, water and air to grow. They learn about foods and identify those that are particularly healthy. They know that some materials and substances, such as balloons, ice and water, change under certain conditions. They understand the effects of pushing and pulling objects on smooth and rough surfaces and know how to make a simple circuit using wire, batteries and bulbs. In Year 6, pupils understand the importance of the food chain and how it works. They learn about the main organs of the human body and their functions. They understand that different types of soil contain different foods for plants, and that some types are better than others for plant growth. They know the difference between reversible and irreversible changes in materials. For example, that ice is a reversible change and that plaster of Paris is irreversible when mixed with water. They identify natural and man-made materials. They know that rock is a natural material and fibre glass is man-made. They know how to make lights in a circuit brighter or dimmer. They learn about magnets and the effects of friction on moving objects. Pupils in Year 6 are taught about the effects of taking risks with health, such as by smoking, using solvents and drinking alcohol. They also learn about human reproduction and relationships.

96. The teaching of science is sound throughout the school. Some of the science teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good. Throughout the school, pupils learn science by being involved in practical activities and they carry out a significant number of investigations using seeds, different materials, apparatus and equipment. They then write up these investigations using an appropriate scientific format [aims, apparatus used, diagram, prediction, method and results]. Teachers explain scientific terms well. For example, during the inspection, Year 3 pupils were being taught the difference between opaque, translucent and transparent materials. Year 5 pupils were learning about pollination, fertilisation, dispersal and germination of seeds. All this encourages pupils to act like scientists and makes learning meaningful for them. This is a strength of the science teaching in the school. Planning is a further strength in the teaching of science. Teachers plan their lessons well; lessons have a clear purpose, and, in best practice, lesson objectives are discussed with the class. Apparatus for investigations is prepared beforehand and is readily available for pupils to use when required. This saves time and helps pupils to learn efficiently without any interruption to their thinking. Good relationships between pupils and their teachers and other adults help to promote good behaviour. Behaviour is very well managed and pupils respond by adopting a positive approach to lessons and most behave well. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, are supported very effectively in science by specialist teachers and teaching assistants. The format used for recording investigations also provides these pupils with a good structure for their writing. The recording of science provides pupils with some good opportunities to consolidate and extend their writing in the style of scientists. There are also good links to numeracy in science. The results of investigations are sometimes recorded using block graphs, sometimes using computers. Computers are also used for pupils with statements. However, overall computers are not used enough in science.

97. There are some weaknesses in the science teaching. Years 1 and 2 are not taught science in enough depth and their work is not kept together. This makes it difficult for teachers to check on the progress pupils make in science. A general weakness is that teachers do not assess pupils' work in lessons well enough to see if it is pitched at the right level. For instance, in a number of lessons, the work set for higher attaining pupils is too easy and they do not make the progress they should. This was the case in two lessons in Years 4 and 5 where all pupils were asked to copy from the board as the main activity during the lessons. This is an inappropriate and undemanding activity for all pupils, especially higher attaining pupils.

98. Due to staff changes, science is being co-ordinated on a temporary basis by the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The leadership provided by the two temporary co-ordinators is excellent. They have a clear vision for the subject, have identified priorities from the collection of evidence, including analysing test data, and have established appropriate priorities for the future developments within science. All the teachers, including those new to the school, implement the scheme of work that is appropriately based on national guidance. Some lessons in science are too long. For example, in Year 3 a science lesson lasted for two and a half hours. Many pupils were not able to concentrate on the science teaching for such a long time and they became bored. Standards attained during this lesson were not as high as they should have been.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

99. Standards of attainment in art and design in Year 2 are above average and pupils make good progress. In Year 6, standards in art and design are average overall and most pupils make satisfactory progress. In Year 2, pupils make very detailed observational drawings of plants and use a range of crayons to add further detail and colour to their work. More able pupils draw in colour with paint crayons whilst other pupils draw in pencil first and add colour later. In Year 5, pupils' drawings show a good use of line and colour to express movement. In Year 6, work displayed on Aboriginal dreamtime shows attention to detail and good use of colour to replicate the techniques used. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils throughout the school.

100. The teaching is sound overall. In Years 1 and 2, it is generally good and in Year 6 it is generally satisfactory. No teaching was observed in Years 3 to 5. There are a number of strengths in the teaching of art and design. For example, in Year 1, the teacher had a very good range of natural resources available for the pupils to make collage pictures of a landscape. Through careful prompting, the teacher drew upon what the pupils already knew to develop their ideas. As a result, they used a wide range of natural and man-made materials to make pictures as diverse as shark infested seas to a vegetable garden in the rain. In Year 2, pupils studied the techniques used by the famous artist, William Morris, before engaging in their own detailed drawings of plants. However, the teaching is not always as good as this. For example, in one Year 6 class, lack of subject knowledge prevented the development of art and design ideas and skills. Although pupils had done sketches and designs for their work in a previous lesson these were not used to develop their work further. Too much time was spent on low-level activities, such as painting a flat one-colour background to develop their knowledge and skills in art. Their drawings also lacked maturity. From the work seen on display, it is evident that where pupils benefit from specialist teaching they achieve a higher standard in their work.

101. Most pupils enjoy art and design and their attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. In Year 1, pupils worked well in pairs to create a combined picture of the seashore. They gathered materials with the minimum of fuss and respected each other's ideas and views. In Year 2, the pupils talked excitedly about their work offering ideas to each other and praising each other's efforts. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to work independently. For example, a pupil in a wheelchair was absorbed into an art and design activity on a computer with the minimum of fuss. He was allowed to work independently and then integrated back into the lesson with ease. In Year 6, pupils work well in groups and pairs to share out jobs and allocate areas of work. For example, a group of four pupils decided which scenes from the story they would do and who would do them.

102. The curriculum for art and design implements the National Curriculum. The school wisely uses national guidance for its scheme of work for the subject. There are some good links to other subjects in art. In Year 2, there are good links with mathematics and computers

through the use of a paint package to draw symmetrical designs. In Year 3, a history trip to Stoke Bruerne was the stimulus for polyblock prints of canal jugs and castles. The school exhibits in the Mandeville Arts Exhibition each year and all year groups send in entries to this exhibition. Resources for art and design are adequate throughout the school. Overall, computers are not used enough in art and design.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY (D&T)**

103. Pupils in Year 6 produce a wide range of products but to date their designing skills are better than those they need for making. Overall, standards in Year 6 are average. They are particularly adept at responding to design briefs because they are provided with well-structured assignments by their teachers. They make good progress in this aspect of D&T. For example, the pupils received clear guidance by their teachers to help them design items such as torches or new food dishes for other people. Having carried out evaluations and criticisms of existing designs for torches they drew out specific criteria to ensure their own designs met the needs of other users. They produced good quality drawings to explain their ideas and how they intended to make them. It would aid their thinking if they carried out small scale investigations into the properties and uses of the materials they planned to use, especially if they are to do more work with challenging materials such as wood and plastic or projects requiring complex sewing skills. There is no difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls.

104. By the end of Year 2, most pupils produce work that is well above average for their age and they make good progress in D&T. They develop imaginative ideas and produce well-crafted products when carrying out units of work using a range of materials that include textiles, food, card and recycled materials. Confidence gained in earlier projects means that many pupils are rightly ambitious at tackling even quite challenging projects, such as designing sophisticated winding systems using axles, pulleys and cranks when making mechanical toys that are housed in structures from recycled boxes.

105. Pupils in Year 2 use a standard project booklet for developing their ideas, planning the making and evaluating the quality of their finished products. This is a strength and ensures pupils cover all elements of the designing and making process while not inhibiting flair. For instance, pupils showed a wide variety of decorative techniques with textiles, dye and thread as they modelled technicoloured dream coats for Joseph. Pupils gain success in their work by being engaged in smaller practical tasks. For example, one class was using construction kits to work out ideas for their mechanisms prior to selecting the best one for the job. Candid evaluations on completion of projects, and their justified self-criticism during their tasks, indicates that they are always looking to improve and make their designs even better.

106. Pupils enjoy D&T lessons and respond positively to them. When the teaching is good, pupils demonstrate real tenacity and concentration even when the work was demanding. They often work in pairs and groups where they are especially considerate when listening to each other's ideas, agreeing the best solutions or planning the order to make things. Pupils in Year 2 select and use tools safely and accurately without any inhibitions. More able pupils are willing to take risks or try improbable designs but they are also quick to modify their ideas to ensure success. Evaluations are usually honest about the taste of their food products or the quality of their model making and they relate their work to products they see outside school.

107. The teaching of D&T is sound overall and often good. In the best examples, teachers structure lessons to ensure the pace of learning is maintained. For example, the pace of lessons is brisk when appropriate but at other times pupils are encouraged to reflect and review their work. Even quite busy making sessions with lots going on are well managed to allow pupils maximum independence but staff are deployed to assist, question, challenge and



encourage pupils. Teaching in Year 6 is successful in the designing aspects of the work but the progress made during lengthy making sessions would benefit from being refreshed with short skill developing exercises or introductions to different ways of using materials and ingredients.

108. Teachers plan appropriately using the national scheme of work supplemented with additional projects. When they plan the more commonly used projects they make use of structured recording booklets and supplementary research sheets to help pupils of different reading abilities. Work is marked regularly and often includes helpful comments on how to improve. Sometimes projects feature combined art and technology activities and there is evidence that in these cases some staff can lose focus on the specific learning objectives needed for good D&T. Computers are not used enough in D&T lessons.

109. The subject is managed by two co-ordinators, one of whom increased her expertise by attending a substantial training course that she has put to good use with colleagues. There are adequate resources for most aspects of the work but there is only limited accommodation for working with food.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

110. Most pupils attain standards in geography that are above average in Years 2 and 6. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in geography. Pupils with English as an additional language do not always follow the subject specific language of geography and do not make the progress of which they are capable.

111. By the end of Year 6 pupils extend their knowledge of their locality in Aylesbury. They draw maps to identify the features of the town that attracts shoppers and use this information to identify the range of goods sold in the main shopping area. A very interesting extension of this work is the review of street furniture, such as waste bins, lamps and seats used to improve the appearance of Aylesbury and provide valuable services for controlling litter and providing street lighting. Most pupils understand how rivers and mountains are formed and how they contribute to our lives through leisure and commerce. They build up their technical vocabulary of geography well, for example, meanders, erosion, volcanoes and pollution.

112. By Year 2, most pupils show an increasing awareness of their own locality. They are taken for a walk around their local area and can describe places of which they are proud and those that they believe should be improved. Traffic surveys alert them to the dangers of heavy traffic and provide good links with road safety. Pupils use photographic evidence of features to be found on farms and link this work to the book, Rosie's Walk. Later, on a visit to a farm, pupils have the opportunity of locating the features they have learned about earlier. A study of a contrasting area, Mexico, heightens their awareness of similarities and differences of life further afield. This is exemplified by the work of pupils in Year 2 and the way in which they celebrated life in Mexico. Pupils ate Mexican food and listened to music from Mexico. This helped them develop a strong cultural awareness of life in that country. They were justly proud of the very good quality booklets about Mexico that were produced by every member of the class. These books show that pupils enjoy finding out about other parts of the world and many, with parental help, are beginning to work independently, researching additional information from library books and using the internet to extend learning at school. Overall though, not enough use is made of computers in geography lessons.

113. The quality of teaching of geography is good and, occasionally, very good. In a very good lesson, pupils clearly described the features of their environment that they liked and disliked. The teacher prepared a series of photographs to stimulate pupils to give reasons for their choices and these linked well to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. There was full agreement about the unacceptable level of graffiti, litter and smoke that offends these

pupils. In another lesson, the teacher successfully combined the skills of promoting holiday venues with those of persuasive writing. Another very good example of good quality cross-curricular links was evident in collage work as pupils were preparing to visit the seaside on a school visit. In a good lesson in Year 6, pupils understand the need for monitoring the effect of the sea on our coastlines. The teacher used good quality photographs of the coastline near Scarborough to show the dangers of erosion through the action of the sea. The pupils were very interested in this work and asked searching questions to which the teacher responded very well with good subject knowledge. The very good relationships in the class between teachers and the pupils provide a secure base for promoting good gains in learning. The planning of lessons is a strength of provision throughout the school. Teachers are pleased to share their successes with colleagues and in this way the needs of pupils are very well met through interesting and demanding lessons that promote progression in learning. A start has been made to monitor teaching and this is having a good effect upon the quality of work presented to pupils. Pupils' progress is measured appropriately against the objectives outlined in recent guidance which indicates levels of achievement. This needs to be developed more systematically throughout the school.

114. Pupils look forward to their geography lessons. They are interested in finding out more about places and people at home and abroad. The quality of pupils' work reflects high standards of presentation and pupils are pleased to present their work and explain the areas of study in which they have been involved. Care is taken with handwriting and diagrams are drawn neatly and labelled. The school has a good selection of geography resources in classrooms and in the library. Maps have been painted on playgrounds and these create a high degree of interest and stimulation for pupils. A group of pupils from Kenya have visited the school. They taught the pupils to sing and dance traditional Kenyan songs and dances.

115. The two co-ordinators are enthusiastic about their subject. They recognise the importance of giving pupils opportunities to experience different environments and organise a range of field trips to interesting places. For example, pupils in the infant department enjoyed a day in the forests at Ashridge, which provides a very varied environment for route finding combined with the wonders of the natural beauty of that unspoilt part of the countryside. Residential visits to Woodrow and to France combine good opportunities for learning with provision for the social development of pupils.

## **HISTORY**

116. By the end of Year 6, most pupils attain standards in history that are above average and they make good progress. Most expertly use a range of source material to develop historical perspectives on the Romans and post-1930 Britain. Standards in the written recall of historical facts are satisfactory; they are not as good as their oral responses. In Year 3, many pupils show good research writing describing the features of the Trojan Horse tale and the historical relevance of the Acropolis. These same pupils made very good progress when studying British Civil War incidents, especially relating the cause and impact of battles in Buckinghamshire. Year 5 pupils use primary source drawings well to work out everyday conditions of life in the Mexican Mayan society. They draw conclusions on the "simplicity" of that life and contrast it to other periods in history they have studied.

117. The use and practice of key elements taken from the National Curriculum is an important feature in the high standards achieved. Key skills of interpretation, enquiry and chronology are developed well by teachers. Pupils with special education needs make very good progress in history. They receive excellent support from classroom assistants and carefully considered planning by teachers ensures this level of progress. Computers are not presently consistently used to extend and deepen understanding or as a means of research and independent studying in history.

118. Many pupils in Year 2 achieve above average standards and they make good progress in history. The school makes a good start in laying foundations for pupils to understand the passing of time. Most develop a good sense of chronology and begin to understand historical perspectives, especially through timelines, local studies and stories of famous people. In their studies of Louis Braille, Florence Nightingale and The Great Fire of London they develop an awareness of how things were different in the past. Year 2 pupils compare the differences in fashion, customs and past-times when looking at seaside holidays one hundred years ago. They describe changes in time but, when reflecting on a 'Punch and Judy' show, understand some things have not changed much. Year 1 pupils compare materials needed to build homes in the Stone Age, Viking, Tudor and Victorian periods.

119. Overall, the teaching of history is good, and, sometimes, very good. Most teachers have high expectations of the need for pupils to reflect on the individual and common issues in changes over time. Through stimulating discussion, Year 6 pupils develop good skills of evaluation as they assessed the impact of Princess Diana's work around the world. However, in a number of lessons, the questioning and debating element at the beginning went on too long to the detriment of individually produced written assessments. These unsatisfactory organisational elements of teaching are also a major reason why teachers sometimes run out of time in lessons and do not achieve their stated outcomes. In these cases, pupils do not get enough opportunity to consolidate their writing skills in history. Planned lesson objectives identify the knowledge to be gained and the understanding and relevant skills that are needed to evaluate the reasons why history has evolved. Teachers are also imaginative in their planning using a wide range of teaching resources to support learning. In one lesson, a commercially produced newspaper account of civil war battles had an excellent motivating effect on pupils' learning and writing. Victorian and early twentieth century artefacts have a significant impact on learning in the infant department. Teachers further interest pupils in their history studies using excellent cross-curricular themes. For example, pupils in Year 2 relate their scientific work on materials to historical periods. Year 3 pupils are involved in a Greek Day making food and traditional pots. Year 6 pupils paint watercolour scenes based on a visit to World War 2 graves in France.

120. The two co-ordinators are developing an action plan to give the subject clear direction for the future. A recent audit recognises some of the present weaknesses in monitoring the standards of pupils' work and the teaching in lessons. Termly planning is successful in guaranteeing a very good coverage of the National Curriculum and interesting range of learning opportunities. Trips are organised to Stoke Bruerne, Claydon House, St Albans and France to provide interesting stimuli for learning in a range of historical topics. Present procedures to record and evaluate the progress pupils' make are unsatisfactory. Teachers are insufficiently using National Curriculum levels of attainment to make these judgements.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

121. Since the amalgamation the school has invested in a whole school network with a specialist computer room in each of the two departments. This means that all children use a common set of software that will give them and their teachers access to their saved work from any computer in the school. It is all part of a well thought out strategy to improve children's computer skills and maximise the use of computers in other subjects. Staff have made a good start to the lottery funded ICT training scheme and the move to a common network across the school has reinforced their technical confidence of computers.

122. Most pupils in Year 6 attain average standards in ICT and they make good progress. They are making rapid gains in the gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills on computers. Pupils in Year 6 have not been taught ICT consistently throughout their life in school and so have gaps in their knowledge, understanding and skills. They produce good

work with spreadsheets to test out ideas or make complex calculations. They work patiently and accurately with databases to store and represent information, plan simple control programs and use desktop publishing techniques imaginatively for presenting their ideas and displays. Most can use email confidently and make use of the internet to find out information. For instance, most Year 6 pupils can set up mailing groups and prepare appropriate attachments. They use interactive education websites. They produce good work using computers in English and mathematics in their timetabled computer lessons but they have yet to make full use of it in other subjects. Year 3 pupils quickly learn basic email techniques. Most use desktop publishing to illustrate their work, including book reviews, and enhance displays of poems. All set up and used databases of their classmates' details and they also used spreadsheets in mathematics to work out the variable costs of making yoghurts and toys in an imaginary factory before presenting their answers in different types of graph. Year 5 pupils make good use of an interactive mathematics website to test and reinforce their individual multiplication and addition skills. Most pupils speak with great clarity about how they personally use computers and how they practise similar work at home to save time in school.

123. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are working above the national standard for pupils of this age. They are imaginative users of computers in their ICT lessons and in some of their work in art, mathematics and English. For example, pupils in Year 2 used computers imaginatively to design William Morris style wallpaper after sketching plants and flowers. They use sequencing skills to draw geometric shapes on the computer screen. Many have successfully word-processed poems and added effective graphics to display their science work on how frogs grow. They are confident at finding things out from software programs and CD-ROMs. They guide floor robots and on screen animations, and they use different techniques for presenting their own work with text and graphics. Many of them excel when using graphics programs to create exciting paintings, pictures, patterns and other designs. They confidently select from a variety of different graphical ways to display survey results on family holiday venues and some are able to explain how well they use computers at home.

124. There is no discernible difference between the quality of work of boys and girls, and many pupils with special educational needs thrive when using computers, especially those who have additional ICT provision to help their learning.

125. The teaching of ICT is good throughout the school. Some of the teaching of the younger pupils is very good. Most teachers plan and organise their lessons very well. Lessons have good pace and sufficient rigour. Most teachers give good clear introductions to lessons and provide clear technical demonstrations for pupils. Along with classroom assistants they help pupils effectively as they work on computers. They ask them challenging questions, stimulate ideas and promote further questions. Most lessons concluded with a review of the progress pupils have made and what they are going to do next. However, most teachers are not making full use of the computers located in the classrooms, and the school is not yet using ICT equipment, such as projectors for whole class teaching.

126. Formal assessment of pupils' computer skills is still in its early stages but teachers are already giving good feedback and advice to pupils as they work. They often comment on printouts of work with praise or suggest how to improve it.

127. The subject is now co-ordinated jointly by a member of staff from each department working to a well thought out and agreed development plan. They have been pivotal in helping to build up staff confidence and in raising standards of work in ICT. Their planned strategies to promote greater use of computers in other subjects and to revitalise class based computer work should take standards even higher.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE - FRENCH

128. Two lessons of French were observed in Year 6 and one in Year 5. Pupils' books from Years 5 and 6 provided further evidence, as did discussions with the temporary co-ordinator and teachers of French in Years 3 to 6.

129. The school teaches French in Years 3 to 6. In Years 3 and 4, the teaching is informal and takes up 15 minutes at the end of one day each week. This teaching is oral and consists of listening and speaking. It includes learning common words such as numbers and answering their names. In Years 5 and 6, one lesson a week of French is taught. In Year 5, this lasts for twenty minutes and in Year 6 for 50 or 60 minutes depending on whether it is taught during the morning or afternoon. This includes written French as well as listening, speaking and responding. By the time they leave the school, most pupils know how to speak and write in French, for example, numbers up to 60, their address, date, days of the week, colours, fruit and some other food, the weather, seasons and months of the year. They respond in simple sentences and write sentences about, for example, the weather, date and their birthdays. This provides pupils with a good basic introduction to the learning of French.

130. Changes of staff have meant that the specialist teachers of French have now left the school and the subject is being taught by non-specialist teachers. Staff changes have had the effect of interrupting the progression in pupils' learning. To their credit, the current teachers of French have continued with the school's scheme of work and this is helping pupils make progress. The scheme of work follows appropriately national guidance for teaching French in Years 3 to 6. Provision of French is appropriate for pupils of this age and the teaching gives good guidance to pupils to ensure they understand what is being said. This is especially the case for average and lower attaining pupils. However, higher attaining pupils could make more progress. Their standards are lower than they should be.

131. French is being co-ordinated on a temporary basis by a Year 6 teacher. At present, no monitoring or evaluation of standards and the teaching takes place. Standards and the quality of teaching are unlikely to rise until the staffing and leadership of the subject are secure. An issue for the school to consider is whether it is beneficial to introduce pupils to French in Year 3 when they repeat this work at the same level year after year. At present, pupils' attainment in Year 6 does not reflect the amount of time allocated to the subject. Computers are not used enough in French.

132. The annual residential visit to France provides the pupils with a valuable opportunity to practise their speaking and listening skills in France. Pupils in Year 6 benefit from being taught by a French assistant who teaches in the school one afternoon a week.

## MUSIC

133. Most pupils make sound progress in music and standards overall for pupils in Years 2 and 6 are at levels expected for their ages. Singing is tuneful and pupils enjoy singing. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have learned a wide repertoire of songs which they delight in singing. By the end of Year 6, most sing in rounds, understand the importance of maintaining the pace and tempo in two part singing and, in discussion, make good links to the cultures from which songs have originated. For example, in Year 6 the pupils showed good understanding of songs from World War 2. Good links are made to literacy and numeracy as the pupils compose their own lyrics to match the rhythm of the tune. The majority of teachers use specific subject vocabulary well and in good lessons this language is reinforced consistently enabling pupils to use the terms in their responses. In Year 2, the pupils learned the terms *crescendo* and *diminuendo* and, by the end of the lesson, related the symbols accurately to the words. They also raised and lowered their voices to the conductor's directions, responding appropriately to the symbols and signals. Standards in playing pitched

and unpitched instruments and in composing are below average. This is because many teachers do not have enough expertise to teach these elements of music well. Some pupils benefit from being taught musical instruments, such as the violin, by specialist music teachers. Pupils make good progress in these lessons.

134. The music curriculum is based on national guidance and published materials are used to provide appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum and guidance for staff. The co-ordinators have been in post for a short period of time and have revised the school scheme of work to enable non-specialist staff to develop greater confidence in teaching music. A useful action plan has been developed that indicates what actions are needed to make improvements and raise standards. The co-ordinators offer good support to staff but have not yet had the opportunity to lead staff training or to monitor teaching and learning. Time has been allocated for this to take place during next term. Music has not been a priority subject for development since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools two years ago. An audit of resources has shown the range of instruments is adequate but some instruments are old and in need of replacement in Years 1 and 2.

135. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and mainly good in Years 3 to 6. Good features were observed in Year 6 and in lessons and singing assemblies led by one of the co-ordinators. Staff are most confident when teaching singing. Consequently this aspect of the subject is a strength throughout the school. Pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to sing songs in lessons, hymn-singing assemblies and in school performances. There is a large school choir that sings frequently at community events, for example, carol singing in the local shopping centre and when representing their school at the Royal Albert Hall. The teachers make good use of rhymes such as *Insey Winsey Spider* to enable pupils to concentrate on applying new skills and terminology to familiar lyrics. Teachers are less confident when introducing percussion instruments and pupils do not have enough opportunities to play musical instruments.

136. Where the teaching was unsatisfactory, weaknesses in behaviour management resulted in pupils losing concentration, calling out and showing some disrespect to their teacher. The teacher did not have sufficient depth of subject knowledge to sustain the pupils' interest and motivation throughout this rather long lesson. As a result, the lesson objectives were not achieved in full. In addition, a high proportion of pupils have special educational needs, some for emotional and behavioural difficulties. While they were all included in the lesson, more thought was needed to ensure they were confident to perform musically in front of their friends. In aspects of music other than singing, some teachers feel inhibited to use percussion instruments widely because the open plan design of the building means that other classes are disturbed by the noise created. Inspectors agree this presents a problem and steps to adjust timetabling and make greater use of the hall could alleviate some of these concerns. There is no dedicated area to support the teaching of music. Teachers do not spend enough time showing pupils how to compose music; this aspect which requires further staff training. Teachers are generally less confident when teaching pupils to compose, record and perform music. Sometimes, lack of expertise causes teachers to take too big a jump and not to be able to teach the next steps in learning. This leads to a slowing down of progress. Despite these weaknesses in the teaching, pupils enjoy music and most behave very well, concentrating hard and persevering in their work. In Years 2, 4 and 6, good attention is given to pupils with special educational needs and those who are bilingual to ensure their full inclusion and understanding of technical terms.

137. Opportunities to appraise music are built into lessons and also during times when the infants and junior departments meet for assemblies. Pupils respond very positively to this aspect and describe the thoughts and feelings the music evokes. Pupils enter and leave the hall to music that provides time for quiet reflection. The youngest children in the nursery and reception classes dance and paint to music such as *Firestarter* and this enables them to begin

to begin to understand how music enables people to express their thoughts and feelings. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' personal, social, spiritual, moral and cultural development. Computers are not used enough in music. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION (PE)**

138. There is not enough evidence to form judgements about standards of attainment by the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 5, most pupils have made satisfactory progress. However, the progress pupils make is not always related to their previous learning. For example, in Year 5, many pupils do not always successfully remain focussed on the subject of the lesson, sometimes because lessons are too long. They are asked to repeat tasks that are not always challenging them; many are pitched at consolidating in a repetitive way previously learnt skills. In a striking game, fielding and hitting practices improve and consolidate pupils' skills but the most able do not extend the range and extent of their skills in these activities. Similarly, in a tennis lesson, all pupils were expected to perform similar tasks. Games' playing, with strategies and tactics, is under-developed.

139. By the end of Year 2, most pupils attain average standards when compared to national expectations. Year 1 pupils have good control when co-ordinating the use of rackets and balls. In dance, Year 2 pupils creatively change shape and speed of movement when interpreting music representing movement of mini-beasts. There is insufficient emphasis placed on the need for pupils to be independently involved in the planning and evaluation of their work.

140. By the end of Year 2, most pupils make satisfactory progress in PE. They have access to a good range of PE activities and sporting opportunities. All pupils are fully involved in their learning. Some exemplary behaviour and concentration help pupils to increase their focus and practise to improve their skills. Year 1 pupils practice a range of racket and ball skills to help their physical control. The most able pupils in Year 2 are not always able to practise at appropriate levels of difficulty and often just consolidate previously learnt skills.

141. Pupils with special education needs make good progress throughout the school. They enjoy physical activity and respond positively to teaching instructions, often developed just for their need. Their progress is improved because teachers use key vocabulary to develop the necessary basic skills to play and perform.

142. Standards of teaching are satisfactory overall. Where teaching is best the planning for the development of pupils' skills is good. Appropriate emphasis is given to the use of subject specific language in helping pupils master techniques. Relationships are very good and this promotes pupils' very positive attitudes to their learning. Teachers enjoy positive relationships with pupils with special educational needs and they generally make good progress.

143. However, overall, teachers do not sufficiently challenge pupils to plan activities to develop further their understanding of games' tactics. Assessment and further refinement of the quality of their work, especially of higher attaining pupils, are often missing, especially through oral discussions. Present planning does not contain explicit references to the expected learning outcomes for pupils at all levels of ability. Teachers do not involve pupils enough in the planning and evaluation of their work.

144. A good whole school scheme of work based on national guidance helps teachers prepare a range of interesting and motivating practices that pupils react well to. However, in the long lessons for the older pupils not enough of these activities are planned to prevent

inactivity and boredom. This illustrates a lack of subject expertise in teaching PE by some teachers.

145. The two curriculum co-ordinators have completed a useful audit of needs for improvements in PE. An action plan has also been developed to correct the weaknesses identified during this audit. They have a clear focus for the future development of the subject throughout the school. They receive continual professional development to aid this. There is an understanding of the present inconsistent provision and rigour for the monitoring of planning and teaching standards. There is insufficient tracking and evaluation of standards achieved as pupils pass through the school. For example many pupils in Year 1 have above average ability in racket skills but arrangements later in the school fail to challenge this level of ability. The timetable arrangement for pupils in Years 3 to 6 creates an unsatisfactory breadth and balance of activities. They receive one lesson of PE each week resulting in a lack of continuity in learning in each element of the programme of study. Computers are not used enough in PE.

146. The good range of extra-curricular activities remains an important strength of the school and contributes positively to pupils' learning. Many pupils participate and compete in school clubs, local school leagues and competitions out of school. Talented pupils are encouraged and helped to attend local centres of excellence. These activities significantly improve pupils' attitudes to the subject and standards achieved.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE)**

147. Pupils reach broadly average standards throughout the school and their achievements over time are satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. This is because they are supported well by their teachers and learning support assistants and are encouraged to take an active part in most lessons. Higher-attaining pupils could achieve more. This is because the work set for them is often too easy; they could be challenged with harder work in some lessons, particularly in their written work. Many lessons provide pupils with good opportunities to develop their understanding of the significance of religious experiences and this helps pupils of all abilities to make steady progress in the subject. Boys and girls work well together and are equally involved.

148. By Year 6, most pupils have extended their knowledge and understanding of world faiths and understand aspects of a broad range of social and moral issues in a religious context. They show they have the ability to consider both sides of an argument and to present their views orally and in writing. Written work shows some originality of thought with a 'Letter to God' and some interesting ideas on their perceptions of how God looks.

149. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the special nature of religion, particularly in relation to Christianity. Most recall elements of the Christmas and Easter stories. They are beginning to develop a satisfactory understanding of stories from other faiths, for example, by comparing Christian and Hindu creation stories. Literacy skills are consolidated because pupils are asked to write down their ideas about religious stories and events. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are developing an understanding of the actions and feelings of characters in stories and can reflect on the meaning of these stories and the effect on their own lives. For example, puppets were used to tell the story of The Selfish Giant and pupils took part enthusiastically in subsequent role-play. This illustrated that pupils had understood the main message from this story.

150. The overall quality of teaching is generally satisfactory with some good features. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and most lessons are taught with enthusiasm. Lessons are prepared well and have a clear focus. This brings out very good



responses from pupils. For example, in an excellent Year 3 lesson pupils learnt about a variety of customs and symbols in Hindu weddings in a clear and focused way. This interested the pupils and they were very keen to learn about these weddings. Marking is often focused on helping pupils learn about the key elements of RE. Overall, teaching in RE, including visits to places of worship, such as the mosque, makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils with special needs are supported well by adults helping them to structure their work and responses so that they can play a full part in lessons. However, pupils' work shows that too many poor quality worksheets are used in the teaching. Many of these require pupils to carry out undemanding tasks. This prevents pupils, particularly higher-attainers, from making the progress they should in RE. Overall, marking does not indicate to pupils what is good about their work and what needs to be improved. Computers are not used enough in RE.

151. The management of RE is good. Planning ensures good coverage of the Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for RE, a revised version of which was introduced in school in January 2002. However, in some year groups it is not designed appropriately to match pupils' understanding. For example, pupils in Year 3 struggled to understand the concept of arranged marriages and the qualities that influence how boyfriends, girlfriends and partners might be chosen in future years. The school is building up a good collection of resources although some, such as religious artefacts, were under-used during the inspection. The monitoring of teaching and learning is developing and features appropriately in future plans for the subject.