

INSPECTION REPORT

ASHMEAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110356

Headteacher: Jane Loder

Reporting inspector: Mr J Donnelly
23637

Dates of inspection: 11th- 14th March 2002

Inspection number: 224515

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

© Crown copyright 2002

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

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:	Cole Road Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP21 8SU
Telephone number:	(01296) 484434
Fax number:	(01296) 393425
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Roger Priest
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23637	J Donnelly	Registered inspector	History Physical education	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further
14347	J Lindsay	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils?
21500	G Bassett	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Information and communication technology Equality of opportunity	
11122	D Collard	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Music	
28200	P Stevens	Team inspector	Science Religious education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12641	P Lyseight-Jones	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

4 - 7

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

8 - 10

The school's results and pupils' achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10 - 11

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

11 - 13

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

14 - 15

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

15 - 16

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

16 - 18

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

18

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

18

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

19 - 22

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

23 - 37

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ashmead Primary School caters for pupils aged four to 11. The school, which has a two-form entry with 426 pupils on roll, of whom 204 are boys and 222 are girls, is well above the average size nationally. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is well below national averages. The area is one of very challenging social and economic conditions. There are 69 pupils with English as an additional language (16 per cent), many of whom are at the earliest stages of language acquisition, which is high in comparison to all schools nationally. The main languages spoken at home include Urdu and Punjabi. Four pupils have a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is high at 22 per cent. The school is a rich multicultural and diverse environment. There are a few pupils with very challenging emotional and behavioural needs. The level of mobility, at 51 per cent between Year 3 and Year 6, is high and new arrivals are often very disadvantaged. There are 233 pupils (55 per cent) with special educational needs; this figure is also well above national averages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Ashmead is a very successful school with many very good features. It meets the needs of all its pupils well. Pupils make very good progress overall; pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. They make good progress in English, mathematics and science despite standards being below average in English and mathematics by age 11. Teaching is very good. Leadership and management are very good. As a result, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science and very good progress in confidence and self-esteem as a result of the very high standards in performing and creative arts, particularly dance.
- Teaching and learning are very good, with several instances of excellent practice.
- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent, enabling decisions to be taken which result in improved learning and standards.
- The breadth of learning opportunities offered to all pupils is excellent.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well and the support and guidance offered to pupils are very good.
- Most pupils have very good attitudes and enthusiasm for schoolwork.
- The links with the local community and other schools are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, especially pupils' reading and writing and mathematics.
- Provide swimming for junior aged pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its inspection in October 1997. The staff have worked very hard since that time to address the key issues and most weaknesses successfully. Teaching is now very good and much improved since that inspection when too many lessons were unsatisfactory. Schemes of work are now more detailed. The headteacher has established very good procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and work of the school. This has led to a considerable improvement in teaching and learning overall and as a result standards are rising. Good progress has also been made in developing the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team, staff with other responsibilities and the behaviour team. Subject co-ordinators are leading the development of their subject effectively. The school's capacity to continue to improve is very good. The impact of the rigorous curriculum developments and the high quality of teaching delivered through a creative curriculum will continue to raise standards further.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Despite the low level of attainment on entry children make very good progress in the early year classes, particularly in personal and social development, because of very good teaching. Most are still working towards the nationally expected levels at the end of the Reception Year.

Pupils make very good progress overall. Inspection findings show that the overall progress of pupils aged six to 11 is good in English, mathematics and science.

Standards in art and design, dance and drama are well above average. Standards and progress in all other subjects are at least satisfactory. The trend for English, mathematics and science is broadly in line with the national average, which is a positive picture.

Results in the 2001 national tests for Year 2 pupils were well below average in reading and writing. When compared to those in similar schools nationally reading and writing were below average. In writing standards for pupils in Year 2 have not risen since the last inspection and do not reflect the emphasis the school has placed upon raising standards overall. However, standards in English are still not high enough. Results in the 2001 national tests for 11-year-olds were well below average in English when compared to those in all schools and below average when compared to those in similar schools. However the percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in reading and writing were above national expectations. This is against a background of a very high percentage of pupils with English as an additional language and a very significant movement of pupils in and out of the school in Years 3 to 6 and a high number of pupils with Special Educational Needs.

In mathematics, seven-year-olds made good progress and learned well in the lessons observed. They start Year 1 with standards that are well below average. By the age of seven, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected Level 2 is still below average but nevertheless shows good progress. At the age of 11, standards in the national tests were below the national averages and average in comparison to those in similar schools.

Inspection findings in science show that pupils aged seven achieve standards that are close to those expected nationally in all areas of the subject and often above. Teacher assessments in the national tests in 2001 are below national averages. At the age of 11, standards in national tests were well above the national average in 2001. In comparison with similar schools nationally, pupils' performance is well above average. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the group that year was high showing very good achievement overall.

Pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs make very good progress. The school is well on course to achieve its agreed appropriate targets at Year 6 in English and mathematics in 2002. Over the last five years the trend of improvement is in line with the national trend.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school. They enjoy coming to school and are courteous and very friendly.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in most lessons and around the school is very good. There have been two exclusions this year.
Personal development and relationships	There are very good relationships between the many different races and religious backgrounds represented among the pupils. Personal development is very good.
Attendance	Attendance and punctuality is satisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching and learning are very good overall.

Strengths

- Very high expectations by teachers and very good subject knowledge lead to very good learning of basic skills and facts for pupils with English as an additional language.
- Very well prepared and exciting lessons keep pupils focused on the task so that they learn at a very good rate.
- Good use of support staff, which has a positive impact on pupils' learning especially for those with special educational needs.
- Very good pace and challenge motivate pupils to work with enthusiasm.
- Very good activities that engage pupils well in learning and build on their enthusiasm, so that they make very good progress.

The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception classes is very good. As a result, many of the early obstacles to the children's learning are overcome and they become curious and confident learners. However, because many children enter the school with such a low base, their attainment in language and mathematical skills is still below the expected level by the end of their Reception Year.

Teaching and learning across the school for children and pupils aged six to 11 are consistently good in English, mathematics and science and often very good in art and design, dance and other performing arts.

All pupils, whatever their background and culture and special educational needs are valued and fully included in school life. Pupils with English as an additional language are very well included in the life of the school. This is as a result of many teachers being very adept at making sure they teach their lessons effectively and that all pupils learn well. Literacy and numeracy are well taught across the school.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very good with many excellent features. There is a very good range of interesting and stimulating learning opportunities. There are very good links with the local community and other schools, which enhance pupils' learning effectively. The range of lunchtime and after-school activities is very good. The school does not provide swimming for pupils and therefore does not meet statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good provision, together with good teaching, enables pupils to make very good progress. Pupils are fully included in the life of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The progress of pupils on the initial stages of English language acquisition is at least good and often very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school very successfully promotes mutual respect amongst most of its pupils.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	The school has very positive links with parents overall.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership by the headteacher is excellent. Lines of communication are very clear. The leadership and management of the headteacher and senior management team are very good. The staff are determined to raise standards through good teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have a very clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and recognise the need to improve standards for pupils further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has appropriate expertise in analysing data, to provide information about the progress pupils make and to set realistic targets.
The strategic use of resources	Overall, the budget is used effectively. Accommodation is good overall and learning resources are satisfactory and used well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • Children are well taught. • Their children develop good social skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Homework for Year 6 pupils.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents and judges the range of after-school clubs to be very good and feels that overall the use of homework is satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When children start the early year classes, their attainment is well below that expected for their age, particularly in language and communication skills. Most have had few experiences of the world around them or opportunities to play and use materials creatively. Some take a while to settle because it is the first time they have left parents or carers and therefore they lack confidence. Because many begin from such a low base, their attainment in language and mathematical skills is still below the expected level by the end of their Reception Year. In creative and physical development, most make good progress and are approaching the levels expected of them. Most children reach the levels expected of them in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding. In the lessons observed children make good progress overall, which is an improvement since the last inspection.
2. Results of the national tests in both reading and writing for Year 2 pupils in 2001 were well below the national average. Although they were more favourable when compared with those in similar schools, they were not an improvement on school results in 2000. Results for Year 6 pupils in 2001 were also well below average. When compared with those in similar schools, the results for 11-year-olds are below average. The overall results in English show a continuation of the upward trend nationally. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented. From a low starting point, pupils show good progress over time in English. Evidence from the inspection shows good progress by both seven and 11-year-olds and in both cases pupils are on course to attain standards which are 'below' rather than 'well below' average. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 at age 11 is above national expectations.
3. Pupils' standards in English in the lessons observed are below the national average. The overall progress of most pupils with English as an additional language is good. This is partly due to a range of teaching methods used by some class teachers that effectively support pupils with English as an additional language in coping with the language demands of the subject.
4. Pupils' results in the national mathematics tests for 11-year-olds in 2001 were below average. This was largely because of the high number of pupils with special educational needs in this cohort and a high level of mobility from Year 3 to Year 6.
5. When results are compared with those of pupils from similar circumstances, the performance of pupils in this school was above average in mathematics. Standards in mathematics in the work seen at the end of infant and junior classes are below the national average, which is similar to the 2001 test results. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of infant classes, pupils' results were well below the national average. Compared with results achieved by pupils in similar schools their performance was below average. Results were low because the percentage of pupils reaching at least the level expected of most seven-year-olds was below the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher level was below the national average. There is a significant difference between the results of boys and girls. All teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy to promote learning and plan their lessons effectively.
6. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for science for pupils aged 11 were well above the national average and well above average in comparison with those schools in a similar context (that is: a similar number of pupils entitled to free meals). The percentage of pupils aged 11 who gained the higher Level 5 is also above national expectations. Teachers' assessments of the standards of seven-year-olds show that they were a little below the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are improving in the lessons observed.
7. Inspection findings show that standards are improving in the current Years 2 and 6 classes in English, mathematics and science. The low standards are due to:

- weaknesses in the quality of some teaching in the past;
 - the high percentage of pupil mobility;
 - the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs; and
 - the number of pupils with English as an additional language.
8. The picture is now more positive and the quality of teaching and learning is now very good. However, because the school has a large number of pupils who enter the school after the normal starting date, they have insufficient time to catch up with those who are more established. As a result, their progress is slower and standards are below average. The trend since 1998 is similar to the national improvement.
9. The majority of boys and girls, including those pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language or challenging emotional backgrounds, make good progress in lessons and very good progress over their time at school. This is because the teaching engenders positive attitudes and gives most pupils a good level of challenge in their work, particularly the average and lower-attaining pupils. The school is setting realistic targets for 11-year-olds in English and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum are average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Strengths

- Pupils have very good attitudes to school; they are very enthusiastic and eager to learn.
 - Behaviour is very good in and around the classrooms.
 - Relationships throughout the school are very good.
 - Pupils accept responsible roles eagerly.
10. The attitudes displayed by pupils of all ages are now judged to be very good, an improvement on the situation seen at the last inspection. This has a positive impact on learning as pupils are eager to start their tasks and they persevere well. For example in a Year 5 mathematics lesson pupils settled very quickly to their allocated tasks of adding and subtracting near multiples of 100. They worked in near silence, concentrating very well and making very good progress as a result. Younger children also have very positive attitudes and show a great pride in their finished work. Some pupils in Year 3 were very eager to "perform" the short poems they had worked on successfully in pairs. This admirable enthusiasm and eagerness to learn is also reflected in the fact that 99 per cent of parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire stated that their children liked coming to school. Pupils also participate very actively in other aspects of school life such as the many clubs that the school offers. Some pupils even return later in the day for the gymnastics club such is their enthusiasm for learning.
11. Behaviour is also now judged to be very good both in the classroom and around the school. There is now a more consistent approach to discipline and this has had a very positive impact particularly in relation to older pupils where problems with behaviour were noted at the last inspection. Again, parents are very positive about the standards of behaviour in the school. Some excellent behaviour was seen in assembly by pupils of all ages who listened well to the various speakers whether they were members of staff, other pupils or visitors to the school. There was no evidence of oppressive behaviour during break times and pupils state that when any such incidents do occur, they are dealt with swiftly.
12. The number of temporary exclusions for the last reported year has fallen slightly since the previous inspection and there have been no recent permanent exclusions. A high level of support is put in place for pupils with behaviour difficulties, often using outside agencies so that when a pupil is excluded, it is very much a last resort. The school follows the correct procedures in relation to exclusions.

13. Relationships and racial harmony in the school are very good at all levels amongst pupils and staff and between pupils. The very high level of mutual respect shown, results in a very happy and harmonious community that is a very good environment for learning. Showing respect for others is inherent in so many aspects of the school and is reflected, for example, in the way pupils speak to each other, hold doors open for adults and pupils, say thank you, listen well to others and respect views different from their own. This was evident when older pupils in a personal, social and health education lesson discussing smoking, also thought of the effects of passive smoking. In addition, during a junior assembly pupils were asked to reflect on how choices they make impact on others. As a result of consistently reminding pupils to think of others, they have a very high level of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
14. Pupils are very eager to take on responsible roles and volunteer readily to help tidy and set up classrooms, act as library, courtyard or litter monitors and serve on the school council. A recently introduced citizenship award has extended the emphasis given to taking personal responsibility for the benefit of others and this is successfully extending the number of responsible roles for pupils to take on.
15. Attendance remains satisfactory overall and is at a similar level to that seen at the previous inspection. Although the number of recorded unauthorised absences is currently very small, there has been a discrepancy in the recording of some of those absences (as was the case at the previous inspection) and so this does not reflect the true picture of parentally condoned absence. A minority of pupils has a very poor attendance and punctuality record and this has an impact on their achievement. Several pupils are taken out of school for extended holidays and again this impacts negatively not only on the school's attendance figures but also on standards.
16. Registration takes place at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions. Lessons now start and finish promptly, an improvement since the last inspection and teaching time is fully used.
17. It is a measure of the teachers' management skills that pupils with special needs, including those with behavioural difficulties, have the same positive attitudes as the other pupils. They respond very well to rewards. Moreover, their behaviour is rarely challenging or disruptive and they learn to co-operate with both other pupils and their teachers. Pupils behave very well in unstructured situations such as playtimes. They are independent and socialise easily.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. Teaching overall is very good.

Strengths

- Very high expectations from teachers and good subject knowledge lead to good learning of basic skills and facts for all pupils.
 - Well-prepared and exciting lessons keep pupils focused on the task so that they learn at a good rate.
 - Good use of support staff which has a positive impact on pupils' learning, especially for those with special educational needs.
 - Very good pace and challenge motivate pupils to work with enthusiasm.
 - Very good activities that engage pupils in their learning and build on their enthusiasm so that they demonstrate very good progress.
19. Teaching and learning are good overall in English, mathematics and science with many very good features. There has been good progress since the last inspection, when teaching was satisfactory.
 20. The quality of teaching and learning in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good. As a result, many of the early obstacles to the children's learning are overcome and they become curious and confident learners. However, because many children enter school from such a low base, their attainment in language and mathematical skills is still below the expected level by the end of their Reception Year.

21. All pupils, whatever their background and culture, are valued and included in school life. This is as a result of many teachers being very adept at making sure that they teach their lessons effectively and that all pupils learn well. Literacy and numeracy are taught well across the school.
22. In English, the quality of teaching and learning is good and is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Planning for the Literacy Hour is consistent across the school. Learning objectives for each lesson are clear and shared consistently with the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should achieve in the lessons. In response to the good quality of teaching, the behaviour and attitudes of the majority of boys and girls are good. Teacher assistants are timetabled to support pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language. They talk to pupils quietly to explain what the class teacher is saying. As a consequence, pupils maintain interest and their learning is good.
23. Teaching and learning in mathematics are good. Lessons seen ranged from very good to satisfactory. High-quality teacher-pupil relationships, good lesson organisation to support all pupils, including those at early stages of learning English and others with special educational needs and a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and how to teach it, are common themes throughout teaching. As a result, pupils engage well with the work they are set, work hard and learn effectively. Very good teaching includes particularly effective behaviour management, planning to rectify learning weaknesses in previous lessons and brisk lesson pace, in addition to the factors above. Where occasionally teaching is satisfactory, despite many good elements, it is because specific factors such as work set is too hard, so that pupils cannot progress sufficiently well.
24. In science, teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and overall the standard of teaching is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations of pupils and good behaviour-management strategies. Planning is never less than satisfactory and good in Years 3 to 6.
25. Classes are well managed and relationships are good. As a result, all pupils want to learn.
26. Lessons are well planned and efficiently run; for example, a pop record used in one lesson engaged pupils well because it drew on the cultural background of many of them. Good preparation, use of pupils' earlier work and clear direction contributed well to pupils' understanding of musical imagery in dance. Teachers took great care to include all pupils in lessons. As a result, it was not possible to identify pupils with special educational needs, those at early stages of language acquisition, or recent arrivals. All pupils learned equally well.
27. Teachers include all pupils in their questioning by directing questions at individuals and phrasing questions accordingly. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive good support from classroom assistants, which enables them to participate fully in lessons. Teachers use praise and a variety of rewards to encourage individual pupils who respond by working harder and so learn more effectively. Teacher expectation is good for pupils of all abilities.
28. The school recognises the need to develop teachers' skills in more effectively assessing pupils gains in learning in the foundation subjects in order to raise standards and the quality of pupils' learning further. Literacy, especially writing, is well taught but the impact on pupils' learning is not yet fully realised. Numeracy and ICT are well taught.

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

29. The curriculum provided by the school is very good with some excellent features. It is one of its major strengths. There have been very significant improvements since the last inspection, which have seen important developments in:

- the school's ability to combine rigorous development of literacy and numeracy with pupils' personal development through creative and expressive arts;
 - the quality, range and relevance of what is provided;
 - the balance in time allocated to subjects;
 - provision for pupils with special needs;
 - personal, social and health education;
 - ICT, which is relevant and fully meets statutory requirements; and
 - links with the outside community, including schools and colleges.
30. These have had a very positive effect on pupils' learning in all the different subjects. They have also contributed to improvements to pupils' self-esteem, attitudes and behaviour. Moreover, pupils steadily develop the confidence to become increasingly independent. Consequently, the school is a happy, learning community where relationships are very good.
31. The curriculum is very rich and wholly relevant to the particular needs of the school's pupils. Planning ensures that pupils experience an excellent balance of academic and creative activities as they move from Year 1 to Year 6. This helps pupils to increase their self-awareness and to learn how best to express themselves. The school develops their speaking, listening and writing through investigations in subjects such as science, geography and history. It also develops their confidence through activities such as drama and role-play in history and religious education. This helps pupils to develop an understanding of other people's feelings as well as of their own.
32. The school takes excellent opportunities to use one subject to develop another. For example, in their study of life in World War II, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made suitcases for children being evacuated in their design and technology lessons and used mathematics to compare the lengths of time they would have taken to reach their destinations. They also discussed and wrote about how the children must have felt. Pupils designed their own air raid shelters and explored elements of music such as pitch and volume when considering the use of sirens. A most imaginative presentation by visitors provided a vivid experience of what it must have been like in the Blitz and physical education included working on marching themes.
33. High quality displays around the school reveal the breadth of the curriculum. They also show the importance teachers attach to English, mathematics and science so that standards of pupils' work and performance in national tests continually rise. Consequently pupils achieve very well in relation to their abilities on entering the school.
34. The curriculum for pupils with special needs is very good. It is one major example of how the school includes all pupils in its work. Funds have been well used to allocate support for teaching and learning in every classroom and the code of practice is fully implemented. There is a considerable amount of movement in and out of the school, but teachers take immediate action to assess new pupils' needs. Where possible, teachers and learning support assistants provide what the pupils need within the classroom. There are very effective systems for liaison between them. However, there is the flexibility to take out individuals or small groups where necessary. Pupils clearly benefit from this, not least because it boosts their self-confidence. The school is aware that it needs to develop the way it meets the needs of those with special gifts or talents.
35. Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. This is an outstanding example of how the school enriches pupils' experiences in order to develop them socially. The activities provide a wide range of exciting and interesting opportunities. Clubs are well attended and include all pupils, regardless of ability or gender. Indoors, there are musical activities such as singing and recorder playing, French, gymnastics, construction, storytelling, drama and dance. Outside, there is a wide variety of sporting activities. The establishment of a school council gives pupils an important role in decision making.
36. Provision for personal, social and health education is excellent. It is treated both as a subject in its own right and as something to develop throughout the day in pupils' work and play. For example, for pupils' personal development, the school not only discusses citizenship with its pupils, but also

uses an innovative award scheme, which acknowledges their contribution to the school community. As part of its pastoral care, the school is planning a project called 'Go', whereby educational psychologists will support pupils with behavioural difficulties. In association with this, governors are beginning to act as mentors. A 'buddy' system provides invaluable opportunities for older pupils to support younger ones in their relationships with one another, as well as helping them learn to read. Another imaginative approach to pupils' social education was to set up hustings during the General Election. Pupils learnt how to stand up for their own beliefs and to be assertive but successfully persuasive. The school pays very good attention to health and safety matters and makes reference to smoking, drugs and alcohol. Science properly includes sex education. The school is working to gain the status of being a 'healthy school'. Pupils themselves have made a good contribution to developing safety awareness by conducting a survey about dangerous parking.

37. The community makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning. One outstanding project has been the establishment of the environmental area at the heart of the school's site. This involved many local people and businesses and is having a major impact on the curriculum. Here there are areas for learning such as the wildlife pond and areas for recreation such as a playhouse and bicycle track. There are areas to relax in, such as woodland and areas to develop pupils' ability to perform such as the drama theatre. All these are surrounded by attractive environmental features, including planted areas, sculptures and topiary. There are also links with the local youth church, which contributes to assemblies and the school encourages pupils to support well-deserving charities.
38. The school's links with its partner educational institutions are good. It works collaboratively with the secondary schools in order to make the transition as smooth as possible for the pupils. This importantly includes matters involving special educational needs.
 - The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, and social development.
 - The provision for cultural development, including preparing pupils for life in a multicultural society is good.
39. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is now judged to be very good and the school has successfully developed an ethos where pupils can flourish, whatever their academic ability, through the arts, including dance and drama. Assemblies concentrate on understanding and respecting others and reflecting on how choices affect others. A visiting Christian theatre group encouraged pupils to use their talents well, whatever they shone at. In religious education lessons, pupils were made aware of the deeper meanings of Easter and were given opportunities to reflect on other religions' celebrations such as Eid. Pupils are encouraged to have an appreciation of, for example, the beauty of spring and the joy of singing. Whilst the provision is very good, the school acknowledges that a formal daily act of collective worship does not always take place in each class.
40. The school now makes very good provision for pupils' moral development and this is reflected in the very high standards of behaviour seen by pupils of all ages. From the time they enter the school, children are taught right from wrong and to understand that everyone should be treated equally and with respect no matter what their background or religion. Before one assembly, a small quantity of money had been deliberately left where pupils would see it and it was consistently handed in to staff. This reflects very well the high understanding that pupils have of a moral code. The behaviour policy is well understood by pupils and they are eager to behave well for positive reasons rather than for fear of the consequences. Adults are very good role models in the rapport they have with pupils that shows respect but firmness and pupils respond very well to this.
41. There is still very good provision for pupils' social development. The benefits of teamwork are promoted at an early stage of their learning and continue throughout the school. A Year 3 class learned first hand about working together when small groups were set the task of building a free-standing tower using ten sheets of newspaper and three pieces of sticky tape! The teacher emphasised the benefits of communicating well, helping each other and contributing ideas and skills. Pupils who need help developing their social skills can get support from within the school

through the pastoral head and from outside agencies such as the school nurse and the new initiative of the "Go" project. A sense of social responsibility is also enhanced through the school council where representatives discuss whole school issues such as the acquisition of benches for the playground. As a result of this very good provision, pupils are learning to become co-operative and useful citizens who celebrate others' achievements and develop very good relationships with each other.

42. There has been some improvement in the opportunities for pupils' cultural development and the provision is now considered to be good overall. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in cultural events such as the Choral Spectacular at the Royal Albert Hall and taking part in local dance festivals. Visits to the Natural History Museum and the RAF. Museum enhance learning as well as provide for cultural development. A residential visit to France for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is planned to enhance an understanding of European culture. The school does reflect the multicultural society we live in through studying different religions, celebrating Asian dance, using colourful ethnic fabrics on displays and visiting the local mosque but there is not yet a strong focus on monitoring this aspect of the curriculum to ensure the effectiveness of what is done throughout the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school has very good procedures for ensuring the care and welfare of its pupils.

Strengths

- The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good.
 - The school provides very good educational support and guidance for pupils of all ages both from within and in the use of outside agencies.
 - The great majority of parents feel that the school helps their child to become mature and responsible.
 - The school monitors behaviour very well and actively promotes good behaviour.
 - It has been very successful in eliminating oppressive behaviour through careful monitoring.
44. Unusually for a primary school, a senior member of staff has been appointed as the pastoral head and she has responsibility for child protection procedures and the support and guidance of pupils including behaviour issues. The school has a good comprehensive policy for child protection based on local authority guidelines. The policy also contains a section relating to the physical restraint of pupils. Training for all staff members, including support staff has been arranged to take place very shortly. The school liaises very closely with outside agencies such as social services and the school nurse when necessary. The nurse visits the school on a fortnightly basis and also offers counselling support for pupils. There are a large number of adults trained in first aid procedures and the appropriate records are kept for any accidents and illnesses. All health and safety checks, such as on electrical and fire equipment are carried out as required.
45. The school has satisfactory systems in place for monitoring and improving attendance. A computerised system is used and the attendance figures are checked regularly by the head of pastoral care, as well as by the education welfare officer. The school has recently reviewed the way it authorises absences and as a result, is now more rigorous in noting unauthorised absences. Where pupils have poor attendance rates or a significant number of late arrivals, the education welfare officer will become involved if the school's own action does not achieve results.
46. There are very effective systems in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. As a result, the school has been very successful in reducing oppressive behaviour to a minimum. The behaviour policy is currently being reviewed but nevertheless still provides a clear indication of the standards of behaviour expected within the school. A behaviour team involving representatives from different year groups meets regularly to discuss any major issues and to share good practice to ensure consistency. This has had an important impact on pupils' learning, as much less teaching time is lost resolving disputes and dealing with disruptions. Records are kept of any incidents of poor behaviour, by the class teacher in the first instance and by senior management in more serious cases. The school keeps appropriate records of any racist incidents and deals with the very small number that do occur swiftly and appropriately.

47. Monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development is now carried out very well by the school and is more consistently done than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have personal targets from when they start at school in addition to academic ones and their personal development is particularly well supported by the way staff know their pupils very well. As a result, they are sensitive to any changes in their circumstances and ensure that the right level of support is put in either from within the school or from outside agencies or projects. A recent new initiative, the "Go" project is designed to put in an extra layer of support for particular pupils and several governors have also recently undergone training to enable them to act as mentors to pupils. Personal development is also monitored through the annual progress report that gives a rating for attitudes to work and other areas of personal development. Regular circle time sessions and personal, social and health education lessons also assist teachers in monitoring and supporting personal development.
48. The sound procedures for assessment are much improved since the last inspection. At that time not enough use was being made of the information that was being gathered. This is no longer the case. The assessment co-ordinator has collected data from a range of tests and teachers' records and has analysed these in some detail. Records of progress help inform the planning for both individuals and groups of pupils and its success is demonstrated particularly in the accurate setting for English and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Most of this work has taken place during the last two years, so assessment prior to this was less accurate. As a result the targets for the Year 6 pupils in 2000 were set too low and were surpassed by a large margin. The targets for this year are very close to the expected outcomes and demonstrate how effectively assessment procedures have improved.
49. Teachers know pupils well, they are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and have accurate information readily available to help them plan work at the correct level. Despite the improvement there is still more to be done. Few records are kept of subjects other than English, mathematics and science so teachers cannot be certain that they are pitching tasks at the right level in other subjects. A start has been made on collecting examples of work but it is too early to see the impact within the progress that pupils are making. The systems for marking are better developed. There is a clear and simple whole-school system that works well. This, linked to the use of lesson objectives, is helping teachers to plan small steps in learning and to reinforce those that are not fully understood. In this way, the progress that pupils are making can be regularly checked. As yet, the tracking of pupils is at an early stage; it is more advanced when using the results of national tests. These have been compared year on year and graphs show that progress has been, at least, good. Individual pupils have been highlighted for extra support should they have failed to meet up to the expectations set for them. This has successfully addressed their need.
50. The school checks pupils' attainment as soon as possible after they enter the school. In this way, special educational needs are identified at an early stage. Thereafter, the school takes great care to be fully aware of pupils' progress. Records about them are more detailed and lead to individual plans which are meticulously maintained and discussed with parents. These include targets for learning and others related to personal development, including behaviour, where necessary.
51. The school has a very positive attitude towards inclusion. There have been no incidents where equal opportunities have caused concern during the week of the inspection. The school's policy is comprehensive and the teachers and staff follow this guideline in practice, very effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school works very well with parents overall.

Strengths

- Parents have very positive views of the school.
- The school works hard at involving parents in the life of the school.

- Parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning overall with some very good input in particular areas.
53. The evidence from the pre-inspection questionnaire and the parents' meeting shows that parents have very positive views of the school. They are particularly pleased with how much their children like coming to school, how approachable the staff are and the standards of teaching. The one area where a small minority feel that improvements could be made is in the amount of homework that older pupils receive. However, the judgement of the inspection team is that overall the use of homework is satisfactory.
54. The headteacher and her staff have worked hard to maintain the good relationships seen at the time of the last inspection. There are frequent invitations and opportunities for parents to play a role in the life of the school and when they do become involved their contribution is very effective. For example a group of parents have become involved in the Year 3 reading project and give valuable time and support that has had a very positive impact on the skills of the pupils involved. In addition, the Parent Teacher Association works hard to organise social and fundraising initiatives that have also had a beneficial effect on school life through for example the purchase of library books and audio equipment. Many other parents support their children through hearing them read at home and with other homework tasks. However, although the impact of a small number of parents is strong, many parents are still reluctant or unable to become more involved in the life of the school. Therefore the effectiveness of the school's links with parents and the contribution they make to learning is satisfactory overall.
55. The quality of information that parents receive is satisfactory. The governors' annual report to parents is an informative document and this plus the prospectus now include all the necessary required information. The school makes some of its written information available in other languages and also makes accommodation and facilities available to a language and computer skills group, with several members of the group having children at the school. Parents receive regular newsletters as well as information about the curriculum that is both written and given verbally at the parent consultation evenings. The annual written report that parents receive has changed its format recently and now includes grades for attitudes to work and ability to learn new concepts. Parents also receive their child's individual targets and a curriculum overview for some subjects. However, although the reports make very good use of National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science, there is not yet enough written information given to parents about progress in particular aspects of the core subjects although more information is given at the termly consultation meetings.
56. The school takes care to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in following their progress. They receive letters inviting them to reviews and take part in assessing how well they are meeting their children's targets for improvement before they are changed. The school fully informs parents how they can support their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The leadership by the headteacher is excellent and standards are rising. Progress since the last inspection is very good.
- The leadership of the headteacher and deputy is very good.
 - They have been very successful in developing an effective team of hard-working and committed staff focused on raising standards for all pupils.
 - The aims and values of the school are very well reflected in practice and the head has created a positive, challenging learning environment, which is central to the school's success.
58. The head and deputy regularly monitor teaching and learning and have been very successful in setting up effective procedures and practices, which celebrate pupils' achievements successfully.

59. Very good management is evident in the day-to-day work of the school. The head and deputy have very successfully addressed the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report and good progress has been made. The effectiveness of key staff in the management of the school is now very good. Since the last inspection, subject co-ordinators have been given appropriate responsibilities. Responsibilities are now clear, but some co-ordinators have not had the opportunity to monitor teaching, planning and reviews of pupils' work.
60. The school has good systems of financial management. These are much improved since the last inspection. The appointment of a highly experienced bursar has led to accurate and effective reporting of budgeting matters. An initial audit on her arrival indicated that the procedures needed considerable strengthening. This has been achieved through an overhaul of the computer management system. Information is readily available about the current position and any adjustments can be made swiftly. Governors are kept fully informed about spending and now have sufficient knowledge and understanding to be able to make informed decisions. There are regular meetings between the headteacher, bursar and finance committee to help plan future requirements.
61. Until recently, the school budget had been in a deficit. This has now been turned around and there is a small surplus this year. This is enabling priorities to be addressed more easily. The school development plan has links to the budget but these are sometimes tenuous. Co-ordinators have little financial input into the development of their subjects which can be linked to their own priorities. Good use is made of specific grants. These include the training of teachers through the lottery funded ICT programme, funding for special educational needs and for those pupils with English as an additional language.
62. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.
- There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum.
 - The accommodation is good overall with some particularly impressive features such as the inner courtyard and the ICT suite.
 - Learning resources are satisfactory overall.
63. There is a very good match of teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum with a range of relatively new teachers complementing those who have been in the school for a longer period. The match of subject expertise in relation to the school's chosen curriculum is now considered to be very good with a consequent positive impact on standards in areas such as the performing arts. The school employs a large number of support staff (some of whom are extending their knowledge through training courses) who play an effective role through giving support to either individuals or groups of pupils.
64. The school has an appropriate performance management policy and the annual cycle of interviews are in place. All staff have job descriptions that are reviewed at the time of their annual performance management interview when their personal development needs are taken into account.
65. The induction of staff new to the school, including newly qualified teachers, is done very effectively and they are well supported. The school regularly offers placements to student teachers and has very good systems in place to ensure their time is used productively.
66. The accommodation in the school is good, with some impressive features such as the courtyard with staging, seating and a fenced-off pond. The new information and communication technology suite is also a relatively new addition to the accommodation and is well used and already impacting on standards in this subject. The classrooms are spacious and benefit from adjoining areas that can be used for quiet activities or for art work. On occasion however because of the open plan nature of having adjoining rooms the noise levels can become obtrusive. The school benefits from having two halls that are used effectively for physical education, music, drama, lunch and the breakfast club amongst other activities. The caretaker maintains the property to a high

standard and the attractive and impressive displays also do much to enhance the environment. The main disadvantage of the accommodation is the lack of a dedicated outdoor area for the children in the Early Years.

67. Resources are satisfactory overall. There are two libraries and more use is now made of the one situated in the junior area. The stock of books has been improved since the previous inspection. Information and communication technology resources have been much improved since the last inspection when they were considered to be unsatisfactory. The new suite and the range of software now available make resources in this subject very good and there have been improvements to the art and design, geography and music resources. However, science resources need to be enhanced and there is still a lack of suitable artefacts to support the teaching of religious education. The school makes very good use of resources in the wider community with educational visits to museums and other places of interest.
68. The teacher with responsibility for personal, social and health education provides excellent leadership. She ensures that the subject is given due importance. The staff are totally committed to this aspect of pupils' education because of its relevance to the school's pupils. The school has a very good range of resources to support the subject, which are fully used.
69. The co-ordinator for special needs provides excellent leadership, so that there is a very coherent approach to the school's provision. She checks on the school's teaching and the pupils' learning very meticulously. There is excellent communication between all those responsible for supporting the pupils. She has worked closely with teachers and governors to produce a very good policy which is aimed at including the pupils as much as possible in what is planned for all pupils. The school has very good links with the school psychological service. A specialist support teacher also provides very helpful advice on what pupils need. The governing body regularly liaises with the school through a teacher-governor with responsibility for monitoring the school's provision. The school has an excellent, detailed and well-prioritised list of actions to take on behalf of pupils with special educational needs in its school development plan. The school is wholly committed to supporting and developing them. This is shown by the financial allocation to supporting pupils with teaching and personal care and to providing a very good range of learning resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- (1) Raise standards still further in English by extending pupils' writing and systematic reading vocabulary and in mathematics by encouraging further the use of investigation and enquiry to develop pupils' understanding of how mathematics is useful in every day life. (Paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 108, 109, 113)
- (2) In partnership with the local education authority, meet statutory requirements by providing swimming for junior aged pupils. (Paragraph 156)

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

70. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. This is because the common practice of teachers is to plan for teaching following effective assessment of pupils' work. In addition, support staff are able to give close support to pupils because of the frequent occasions on which pupils work with adult support in a small group. Teachers plan the work which teaching assistants undertake and this ensures pupils with educational needs are fully included in classroom activity. Pupils are generally active and enthusiastic learners.
71. These pupils have access to the whole curriculum and to the wide range of learning opportunities offered in the school. Specialist classroom support staff are sometimes available to help pupils with their work.

72. The assessment of these pupils is satisfactory. There has been a review of the needs of pupils alongside a programme of direct classroom observations by the co-ordinator. This has resulted in the greatest support being given to pupils in the infant classes and to a renewed focus on improving pupils' reading comprehension standards. There has been a review of the current assessment criteria and the co-ordinator has now added specific items to it which give detailed information on pupils' progress in speaking and listening. The school also sends termly reports on pupils' progress to the specialist local education authority team which monitors the use of the specific grant to assist pupils with English as an additional language to make progress.
73. The school hosts an "English as a second or other language class". A lecturer runs it from Aylesbury College of Further Education. The class covers spoken and written English and ICT. The class which was observed during the inspection was attended by nine women plus two of their pre-school children. Several of the participants were mothers of pupils who are already at the school. Siting the class in the school sends out very welcoming signals to the broader community.
74. The co-ordinator has had this responsibility for about eighteen months. She has already taken steps to improve further the provision for pupils with English as an additional language. There is no policy in place outlining the school's commitment to such students but it is planned for presentation in the summer term. The specialist support teacher is currently on maternity leave. She is an Urdu speaker, which is the main heritage language community in the school. The school has secured a skilled replacement. The school could do more to ensure that classroom assistants who are part-funded by the special grant are aware of this and are able to give increasingly more specialised support to pupils with English as an additional language as part of their day-to-day work.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	100
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	28	42	20	0	0	0
Percentage	10	28	42	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	426
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	92

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	233

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	89

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	24
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	0.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	5.1

National comparative data	0.5
---------------------------	-----

National comparative data	5.2
---------------------------	-----

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	28	32	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	9	9	14
	Girls	22	20	25
	Total	31	29	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	52 (69)	48 (74)	65 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	17
	Girls	25	25	25
	Total	38	39	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	63 (77)	65 (82)	70 (78)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	26	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	10	17
	Girls	20	20	24
	Total	29	30	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (49)	67 (50)	91 (67)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	10	14
	Girls	20	20	24
	Total	26	27	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (41)	60 (43)	80 (49)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	87 (85)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	12
Indian	3
Pakistani	48
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	297
Any other minority ethnic group	26

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	2	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)	22.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	533

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	784,947
Total expenditure	748,282
Expenditure per pupil	1,803
Balance brought forward from previous year	-43,384
Balance carried forward to next year	-6,719

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
--	---

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	426
Number of questionnaires returned	103

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	38	0	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	43	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	50	3	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	40	17	2	2
The teaching is good.	62	36	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	49	6	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	32	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	36	4	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	41	51	5	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	59	33	8	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	36	6	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	33	3	1	3

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

75. There are currently 52 children in the early years` department. Of these 31 attend full-time and 21 part-time in the mornings only. They begin school in the term that they become four years old. This means that the older children have two terms part-time in school followed by three terms full time. Others with birthdays in the summer term have two terms part-time and one full-time before they move into Year 1. The Reception aged children are divided between two classes. Although there is a wide spread of ability, the vast majority of the children enter the school with low levels of attainment.
76. This is particularly the case in their skills of communication, literacy and language, their mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their development in fine control skills used for drawing and cutting are also poorly developed. However, by the time they enter Year 1, the school's assessments show that their attainment has improved significantly and some of the children complete the early learning goals in their reading, writing and mathematical development, as set out in the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, the proportion of children in the Reception Year group that achieves the goals in these subjects is below average even though these children have made very good progress.
77. The teaching in the early years` classes has improved substantially since the last inspection when it was good to consistently very good and often excellent. The co-ordinator for the early years creates an excellent team spirit. Consequently, the team works very well together and meets regularly to plan the objectives for the weekly lessons and activities. This results in a cohesive and excellently planned curriculum. The range and quality of the activities support the teaching very effectively and consequently, the curriculum provided is very good. The teachers intervene well to maintain a very good pace to the children's learning. They also maintain a very good balance between all the areas of learning. This significantly improves the children's attainment in all areas of learning and their progress from the time they enter the school is very good.
78. The staff know the children very well. There is a significant number of these children on the register for special educational needs and they receive good support. The children with English as an additional language are given help each morning by a visiting teacher and they are making very good progress in the development of their skills in English.
79. The teachers and teaching assistants use their knowledge of each child very effectively to plan activities that extend the children's learning. For example, the teachers develop different levels of questioning to deepen each child's understanding, knowledge and skills in all areas of learning. Consequently the children are developing a very positive attitude towards school and their work.
80. The parents are welcomed in the classrooms every morning to help the children settle quickly to the routines of the class. They have good opportunities to read their child's targets for the week and to talk informally with the teachers and the teaching assistants.

Personal, social and emotional development

81. When the children enter the class many are immature in their personal, social and emotional development.
82. From the time the children start great emphasis is placed upon developing their confidence and self-esteem. The children are encouraged to work and play well together and this is successful. They take turns when speaking and share equipment such as glue sticks and crayons, politely. Many children are already concentrating for long periods of time. For example, one four-year-old boy spent 45 minutes completing his observational painting of a sea bass. He was totally

- absorbed in his task. The children are generally enthusiastic about their learning and appreciate the learning and skills of others.
83. Most of the children are likely to meet the average that is expected nationally at the end of the Reception Year as a result of very good teaching and learning. Children make very good progress. They are developing a secure understanding of what is right or wrong. They are showing positive signs that they appreciate the work and views of others. In the lessons about sharing the children reflected upon their own attitudes. Following a story about the 'Rainbow fish' they expressed how they would share their most precious possession.
84. The adults provide a very good role model as they speak to all children calmly and politely.

Communication, literacy and language

85. Most children enter the classes with poor language skills. However, the quality of teaching reading and writing is consistently very good. This is having a significant impact upon raising standards. As a result, nearly half of the children are likely to have completed the early learning goals for this area by the time they enter Year 1. Many of the others will make similar progress and come close to achieving these goals. Nearly all the children have made very good progress since they entered the school at the age of four. However the proportion of the children who reach appropriate standards at the end of the Foundation Stage is likely to be below average.
86. The higher attaining children read competently for their ages. They enjoy reading. They read with expression and are already reaching standards that exceed the early learning goals for reading. There are a few more, who can already read and recognise simple commonly used words. The lower attaining children recognise characters from the reading books such as Kipper and Biff. This is aided by the use of banks of key words, which all children strive to remember. They handle books sensibly and carefully. Most take pleasure in retelling the stories by describing the illustrations. However, these lower attaining children will not reach the average expected for this area of their learning by the time they enter Year 1.
87. The standards in writing are below the expected level for their age by the end of the Reception class. Nevertheless, most children make very good progress because the quality of teaching writing skills is very good. It is likely that just under half of the children will complete the expected level for writing by the end of the Reception class. This is a considerable achievement considering the children's low level of achievement on entry to the school. In their current work the youngest children copy words, which are written for them by their teacher following a discussion to decide what they want to write. As the children reach the end of their time in the Reception class, most have moved on from the copying stage and are now prepared to 'have a go' at writing down their own words and ideas. This development is fostered well through the role-play activities. For example, the chip shop corner encourages the children to write menus and labels as well as developing their speaking and listening skills through their actions of service and buying.
88. The school is developing very good additional strategies for developing the children's interest in reading. The teachers have recently launched 'story sacks' which contain a storybook, a reference book and some objects and games that link with the story. This is a very good initiative and is gaining the support of many parents. The classroom displays are stimulating and the children have easy access to reading books and games. The parents are also encouraged to share books and to play reading games with their children each day at home. Many parents take the opportunity to complete the reading record book regularly. Where this level of co-operation works best, there is a marked improvement in the pupils' progress and in their attitudes to their work.

Mathematical development

89. The pupils enter the classes with very low attainment in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Very few recognise numbers or can count to five with accuracy. As a result of very good teaching nearly all the children make very good progress. They enjoy their numeracy work and willingly offer answers and make suggestions about how to work calculations out. By the time they reach Year 1 the majority can count up to ten objects accurately. They can match figures up

to ten with the correct number of objects. For example, they were observed placing the right number of teddy bears against the relevant figure. Many five year olds understand the terms larger, smaller, taller and shorter. They can name simple two-dimensional shapes, such as rectangle, triangle and circle. A few can already count beyond ten and have a good understanding of these larger numbers up to 50. It is likely that just under a half of these five-year-old children will complete the expected levels. This is below average.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

90. The children have a very limited knowledge and understanding of the world when they enter the classes. By the time they reach the end of the Reception Year this has improved significantly and their knowledge and understanding of the world is broadly in line with expected levels for their age as a result of very good teaching and learning. In the current work seen, the children are already looking closely at the similarities and differences in objects around them. This skill is developed very effectively through observational drawings and painting. For example, most children are able to describe how a frog and a fish differ or are the same. Much of their knowledge is gained through their close observation of live and real life things. They were observed painting a sea bass that was of a very high standard. They were enthusiastic and they identified the patterns and colours on the scales of the fish. They made good comparisons with the shades of colours in their painting of this fish and with their paintings of teddy bears and the dragon plant.
91. As a result of very good and often excellent teaching in the Reception classes, the children's standard of work in ICT is outstanding. They have fine control skills when using the mouse and the keyboard. They use the mouse accurately to 'drag and drop' objects into pre-designed backgrounds and can use the fill option to colour in minute shapes with extremely high precision. Many of the higher attaining children include text such as 'fish swimming in the sea weed' to enhance their graphics work.

Physical development

92. Most children enter the classes with below average standards in their physical development. It is evident from the lessons seen that a good proportion of the children in the Reception age group are already showing signs that their physical development is likely to be in line with that expected by the end of the Reception class. Teaching and learning is very good. Most children move safely with confidence. For example, the oldest children were observed developing good control of their bodies as they demonstrated how they could hold a shape in a fixed position with good balance. They show a good awareness of the space around them in dance lessons. This is a direct result of the teacher's enthusiasm in physical education lessons.
93. The children's development of their fine control skills when using scissors, paint, brushes and pencils is progressing very well. They are eager to explore materials such as 'playdo', by squeezing, rolling and cutting out shapes. Most reception children are achieving above average standards of skills in their artwork. Most use small-headed paintbrushes with accuracy and can create small intricate shapes and patterns with outstanding control.
94. They have opportunities to use large wheeled vehicles only once a week during a playtime, as there is no secure area for them to use. Consequently, some of the experiences that should be gained through building with large construction kits or experimenting with wheelbarrows and bicycles in a planned and supervised manner are insufficient. The school is aware of this and intends to create a safe area where the children can pursue these physical activities more productively.

Creative development

95. This is an area where the children excel because of the very structured planning and the high quality of teaching. The children have very low levels of creativity when they enter the classes at the age of four years. They make very good progress especially in their drawing and painting. The teachers place great emphasis upon developing the children's skills of mark making. This has a

substantial impact upon their writing skills and their abilities to make refined marks to create textures and patterns in pencil and watercolours.

96. The children are taught very well and learn how to mix paint. For example, a teaching assistant spent time with two children to show them how to make four different shades of blue from a dark blue and white. The children experimented and eventually transferred their newly acquired skills to painting marks on the whole class sheet of blue marks.
97. The children enjoy their role-play and develop imaginary characters in their hairdressing salon as well as in their puppet theatre. The teachers support the play in these areas very effectively with clear targets for the development of speaking, listening and writing posted around the area.
98. Most children are likely to exceed the nationally expected levels for the creative area of development.

ENGLISH

99. Standards are below average at the end of the Year 2 and Year 6, which is in line with the findings of the last inspection. Results in the 2001 national tests show that results are below the national average when compared with similar schools and that pupils achieve well below national averages. However, results at the higher Level 5 show pupils to be well above those from similar schools and above those found nationally. Test results have varied considerably over the past five years. While the overall trend shows improvement at a similar rate to the national trend, the performance of girls is much better than that of boys. The school has identified this difference in performance and has sought to address it by ensuring that the books in school are a good mix of fiction and information books, that through emphasising writing which is linked to reporting, instructions and factual accounts. Inspection findings reflect higher attainment than the test results. This is because while pupils are working hard and conscientiously in daily lessons during the national tests they are required to work at some speed and with minimal support from adults or from reference materials.
100. On entry to school pupils' language development is weak and their reading skills are underdeveloped. The effective teaching in the early years classes, is built upon in Years 1 and 2, enables pupils to make good progress. The weaknesses in reading comprehension of many students across the school, but especially the younger pupils who are beginning to learn English, has led to a greater emphasis being given to reading for meaning. Some very effective work is being done in Year 2 to encourage pupils to recognise the main ideas in information books and to use them to write their own accounts.
101. Pupils receive regular lessons to help them to improve their library skills. Pupils in Year 1 are organising library books with the effective support of a teaching assistant. They know what an author and an illustrator are, they know that the author's name is used to order fiction books and they are becoming secure about alphabetical order. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are working on the development of glossaries based on words from the book 'From Egg to Chick' as part of a cross-curricular topic. By the time that pupils are at the end of the junior school they are well able to find their way around reference texts and information books.
102. Pupils are helped to use language better by the strong emphasis in the school to link English language development with other subjects. This results in pupils having to learn new words and to use them properly. Even so, some pupils in Year 6 continue to have difficulty in understanding what they read. They are helped to improve by being given specific work to do under the close guidance of a skilled teaching assistant on the teacher's direction.
103. Since the last inspection, the range and quantity of books has increased. This has resulted in pupils reading and working from books which fit their reading standards and which are interesting and enjoyable. This helps all pupils to make good progress in reading and fosters an appreciation of reading for pleasure across the school.

104. Pupils are given many opportunities to write. In Key Stage 1 the most capable pupils are writing several sentences independently having been inspired by structured whole-class work about a particular information text. In Key Stage 2 pupils write poetry and factual accounts. They set out instructions clearly and in order. The school has recently introduced the “Early Reading Research Project” which is working well and is helping pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 to make better progress in recognising sounds, letters and words. By the time the pupils reach the end of the key stage the most able pupils are producing imaginative as well as persuasive writing of both quality and length. All pupils are encouraged to finish their written work and to present it well. This happens because teachers are good at matching the work to the pupils’ capabilities and providing the time and the support for students to achieve.
105. The school’s handwriting scheme results in students developing a suitable joined style. In the infant classes teachers check that pupils are becoming more accurate in using full stops, capital letters and commas. As pupils move up through the school they begin to use other punctuation marks properly, the most able become adept at using apostrophes and by the time pupils are in Year 6 some are confident in setting out paragraphs. Pupils use a range of strategies to improve their spelling. Phonic approaches are used most. However, there are still weaknesses in spelling, especially amongst older students. There are examples in school of pupils being reminded through wall notices of the steps which they need to go through when they are dealing with unfamiliar words. This is helpful. However, further opportunities for pupils to check their own work and that of their classmates could help pupils to re-learn correctly frequently misspelled words.
106. Teaching and learning is good across the school. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The great majority were good and two lessons were very good. Teachers are skilled at putting the principles of the National Literacy Strategy into place. They are very good at ensuring that pupils know what they are to do and they use day-to-day assessment well, particularly in English, mathematics and science. This means that pupils who are early learners of English and pupils with special educational needs are usually enabled to make good progress and are given challenging work. In only one instance, two Year 1 boys who needed English language support were less productive in a small group as the pace of the group was slower than the whole class session. Teachers ensure that resources are ready for the lesson and that they are interesting and that there are enough of them. They manage pupils’ behaviour well and use effective strategies to moderate behaviour in time. However, the behaviour of a group of Year 4 boys presents a particular behavioural challenge and can adversely affect the progress of others in the class. Teachers have high expectations of pupils.
107. Subject leadership is very good. This is because the three teachers who have key roles in the development of English are skilled specialists. In the short time in which the whole team has been in place they have introduced the Early Reading Research project as well as providing support for pupils with English as an additional language throughout the school. The very good use of role-play, to promote language development and comprehension to promote imaginative and responsive language is very successful. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are good. The space, which is available in classrooms, in the library and in common areas for literacy and language work and display, is very good and is very well used.

MATHEMATICS

108. The standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are below the national average. However, because of the low levels of attainment of children when they start school, the progress that pupils make is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when results were well below the national average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. It is a similar picture to the results gained in the 2001 national tests. However, this is not the whole picture. Analysis of the trends over the last three years shows that there has been a steady rise, above that nationally. The reasons for the improvement are to do with the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, a better understanding of managing poor behaviour and the better use of assessment to guide teachers in their planning.

Strengths

- The good use of information to adjust the setting arrangements for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- The good use of assessment that has led to the teachers understanding how well pupils have progressed.
- The good use of marking systems.
- The balanced curriculum that is offered.

Areas for improvement

- The use of investigation and enquiry to develop pupils' understanding of how mathematics is useful in everyday life.
109. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to use the four rules of number with some confidence. They can add and subtract two and three digit numbers and those with higher ability use their understanding of place value to help them with multiplication and simple division. Pupils can measure objects and know the use of centimetres and millimetres. In discussion, they can explain the difference between the properties of a square and a rectangle and can name some three-dimensional shapes such as a cube. However, their understanding is more limited in areas such as using volume and in working out real-life examples of time. This is what is expected from pupils with average standards. An example of this was seen in a Year 2 class where pupils were learning about multiplication. Here, the majority of children were able to explain the double of a single digit number but when this was put in a different way only a small number could see the relationship between the numbers 20, ten and two. Pupils throughout Years 1 and 2 need many examples of similar methods before they fully understand the concept.
110. Children in the Reception class make a good start on their work in mathematics. The lesson seen was based around 'fish and chips.' A visit had been made to see what happens in a shop and the role-play was then enhancing this experience by learning about writing numbers and counting to five. Here, there was good understanding because the pupils could relate what they were doing to practical experience. This way of working is not always used often enough in Years 1 and 2. As a result, pupils are not able to relate their mathematical work to real-life situations and cannot adapt the knowledge that they have already learnt. In a good Year 1 lesson the pupils were able to work with numbers to ten, they could recognise and write these numbers and use them with some confidence. This is at a level that is expected. However, a substantial number of pupils were unable to work with numbers to 20. Similarly, in another class pupils found difficulty filling in missing numbers. In both cases the work given by the teacher was helping to build up this confidence.
111. By Year 6, pupils have benefited from challenging lessons and show good levels of maturity. The setting arrangements are having a positive effect in Years 5 and 6. However, in Years 3 to 6 there is a very wide range of ability. The higher set in Year 6 are able to use addition, multiplication and subtraction with confidence although a number of pupils in the lower set are unable to multiply and divide without a level of help. In the national tests, approximately half of the pupils in this year are on line to achieve the national average although only a small number of pupils are expected to gain the higher Level 5. Information from lessons, the scrutiny of work and an analysis of tests, suggests this is an accurate assessment. The majority of pupils have better knowledge than understanding. In their books they are confident in using a new mathematics rule when they are given similar examples. However, they have much more difficulty in adapting this knowledge in unfamiliar situations such as problem solving. This was seen in a good Year 3 lesson. The teacher was asking the pupils to decide how many three-legged monsters there would be if she saw 12 legs. A number of pupils confused subtraction and division although when this was given as a simple sum pupils were more confident. Good use is made of computers to help with work on data and for graphing. Results of surveys and from tallying are used in different spreadsheet programs.
112. Throughout Years 3 to 6 pupils achieve well. This is a major improvement since the last inspection when teaching and learning were very variable. Since then, better systems have been used to help teachers pitch work at the correct level and the general quality has been improved by better monitoring and tighter objectives set at the start of each lesson. Pupils show good levels of progress both in individual lessons and over time. They concentrate hard, show good levels of interest and work is presented very neatly. Teachers use a very good, common marking system

that helps pupils to understand what they need to do to improve. A target is set at the start of each lesson and pupils are asked about whether they have achieved this during the discussion period at the end. Individual targets are written in the front of books and teachers use these to discuss what needs to be done to improve. All these new strategies are giving better opportunities to individual pupils. However, whilst class teachers know their pupils well there are, as yet, no consistent ways in which this information is logged.

113. The teaching and learning seen during the inspection was good overall. It ranged from very good to satisfactory. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour. In contrast to the last inspection there were no instances of poor behaviour seen during this inspection. Particularly good use is made of questioning. In the best cases, seen in the majority of classes, pupils are asked to think more about the result rather than just giving an answer. This is helping all levels of ability to use the information that they already know. As a result of the good teaching pupils work hard, concentrate well, show good levels of interest and are generally motivated by what they are doing. It is much better than this when the lesson is interesting and relates to their own experience. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson on fractions. Here, the teacher asked the class to cut up tortillas. She had previously segmented an orange to demonstrate the meaning of numerator and denominator. In this class there was a buzz of excitement and pupils were motivated by what they were doing. The majority of lessons move at a good pace and much is achieved during each session. The level of written work is high.
114. Good use is made of the results from internal and national tests. These are being analysed to provide support for pupils with special educational needs and those with higher ability. As a result these pupils make very good progress against their own individual targets. The experienced co-ordinators have a good view about what to do to improve the subject. They keep comprehensive records and have given support for the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Their work is supported by the assessment co-ordinator who is in the process of analysing the progress that pupils make year on year. All these new initiatives are helping improve the subject over the longer term and explain why standards are rising. Resources are sufficient although the co-ordinators have little input into a longer-term strategic budgeting plan for the subject.

SCIENCE

115. Standards of attainment are average for seven and well above average for 11 year-olds. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Moreover, the quality of provision has improved and is set to raise standards further. There are several strong features in the subject:
- The quality of teaching and learning is very good.
 - Pupils' achievement is high. They sustain very good progress.
 - Pupils with special educational needs or for whom English is a second language make very good progress.
 - Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good.
 - The curriculum is good in that it both furthers knowledge and understanding and develops experimental skills.
 - The teacher with subject responsibility leads the staff very well.
 - Teachers are fully committed to raising standards.
116. In 2001, teachers' assessment of seven year-olds placed them as very low compared with pupils nationally. In contrast, the performance of 11 year-olds in the national tests was well above average. Inspection evidence does not confirm this to be the case for the current Year 2 and Year 6. Attainment at both ages is average compared with pupils nationally. Pupils retain knowledge well in some aspects of science. However, they have an average understanding of the subject and an average ability to conduct experiments independently. The school has been very successful in meeting the needs of the very high proportion of pupils on its roll with special needs. It has also overcome the difficulties arising from a high turnover of pupils.
117. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment is average. They know the main features of plants and different animals and what they need to live. The more able know about different habitats, but not

about how creatures have adapted to their surroundings. Pupils know that it matters what people eat. They compare different materials in several ways. They know that some changes made through heating cannot be reversed. They do not know that metal is used to conduct electricity. Their knowledge of physical processes is above average. Pupils understand electric circuits and the more able explain how a switch works. Most pupils know that forces involve pushing or pulling. Pupils are very methodical in experiments but still rely on teachers when reporting.

118. By the age of 11, pupil's attainment is average. Their knowledge about living things and materials, however, is above average. They list the functions of many of the major organs of the human body. They explain a food chain. Pupils know why people need exercise and about the beneficial and harmful effects of microbes. While not sure about how electricity is conducted, they understand various means of separating and changing substances. Pupils know about forces such as friction and upthrust, but less about how sounds are altered on musical instruments. By the age of 11, pupils experiment with an average degree of independence. They plan and report their investigations in their own words.
119. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. It varies from satisfactory to very good. Eight out of ten lessons are good or better. Moreover, teachers' expectations of written work are very good. However, there is scope for giving more independence at an earlier age. Teachers have very strong subject knowledge and ensure pupils learn accurate information. They are skilful in asking probing questions. During a germination experiment, one teacher asked 'What does that tell us?' which prompted pupils to think carefully. Teachers help pupils to develop their oral language. Consequently, they progress over time from being silent or giving one or two-word answers to speaking several sentences. Teachers' planning is a strength. This was particularly shown in a lesson where pupils measured the effects of friction. The teacher provided tasks and resources to match pupils' abilities, in order to include them all in the learning process. Pupils concentrated hard and completed their tasks. High expectations of thinking, English and presentation result in pupils' setting out their work logically and carefully. Teachers adjust the level of support according to age and ability. They help pupils to make good use of their literacy skills, but there is room for more numeracy and use of computers. Marking indicates ways for pupils to improve their work so that they learn to communicate better. Pupils present their work very well. Very clear charts, diagrams and illustrations accompany their writing. Assistants give strong support to pupils with special educational needs.
120. The curriculum is good and relevant to the needs of this school's pupils. There is a balance of investigation and consolidation of knowledge. The school plans ways to develop understanding through links with other subjects. For example, during their study of the human body, pupils found out more about nutrition when making bread and about the effects of exercise on the heart during sport. They observed how the body moves in art and design and discussed how to keep fit in their health education. The teacher with responsibility for the subject checks on pupils' work very well, so that they make very good progress in their learning. He has a very focused action plan which is relevant to the pupils' needs. However, current resources do not support its priorities, with the exception of the environmental area which provides rich opportunities for first hand investigation.

ART AND DESIGN

121. Standards are very good and the school has maintained the well above average standards which were reported in the previous inspection. Moreover, the range of the work which pupils do has broadened and there is a significant emphasis on working with textiles.
122. Art and design is a strength of the school and the very good standards achieved contribute to the quality of the learning environment, for example, where the vivid printed panels form the basis of high quality displays of pupils' work in classrooms and around the school. The particular strengths in this subject, which lead to such high standards being reached, are:
- the quality of teaching;
 - the effort which pupils put into their work;
 - the opportunities which pupils have to acquire art and design skills and to show flair;

- the leadership of the subject; and
 - the commitment of all staff towards using art and design alongside literacy development.
123. Good art and design teaching is routine across the school and there is much very good and some excellent teaching. This is evident in the quality of the work which pupils do in lessons and the work which is displayed around the school. In an excellent lesson in Year 2 pupils were working on a cross-curricular theme. This had drawn in the incubation of bantam eggs, taking notes from a non-fiction text, 'From Egg to Chick' and a visit to Chiltern Open Air Museum. Pupils were doing observational drawings of quail and peacock feathers. The work had been well matched to the pupils' capabilities and to their previous progress. A teaching assistant was helping some pupils in their use of water colour. This resulted in pupils producing some very subtle colour mixing, using tints and tones. They notice and record the interplay of yellows, reds, browns and blacks within the pattern of the feathers. The teacher's work with a group of students, including some pupils with considerable special educational needs, helped them to concentrate hard, to work at a good pace and to improve the quality of their pencil drawings of the feathers, echoing differences in light and shade and use of contrast. By the end of this lesson pupils were looking more closely, drawing more accurately and exercising their skills in making pattern and marks.
124. In a very well taught lesson for Years 3-4 the teacher organised pupils into small, co-operative groups where they quietly and conscientiously used pastels to draw primulas from life, continued their embroidery and appliqué with designs derived from close observation of primulas and a further group of pupils were well advanced in using their designs to block-print on fabric swathes. The well-planned and managed lesson led to pupils making good progress and both boys and girls having positive attitudes to their work.
125. Students have learned to work with care. They complete their work over several weeks and are encouraged to produce work which is of a good standard. This leads to good skills development. However, there are sometimes limited opportunities for pupils to make choices about the materials which they use and they do not exercise sufficient responsibility for organising themselves for work by collecting materials, setting out tables and so on.
126. Subject leadership is very effective. The co-ordinator is a very skilled specialist who is good at motivating pupils and in giving guidance to staff which helps them teach art and design confidently and well. Planning for development is good and it has resulted in a broadening of the curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

127. Only two lessons were seen during this inspection, one of which was in Year 3 and the other was in Year 4. As well as these lessons teaching plans were seen and account was taken of the displays around the school and previous work. Standards at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are good and are better than at the last inspection when they were below expectations. The appointment of a new subject leader in September 2001 has led to a higher profile for the subject and to improvements being made. These include:
- the quality of subject planning;
 - the teaching of design and technology;
 - the links with other subjects;
 - pupils' understanding of the design process; and
 - the use of resources.
128. The school's adopted scheme of work has been adapted so that it contributes well to the cross-curricular themes which are taught. Teaching plans are organised into two-year cycles which means that pupils in mixed age classes are able to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding without duplicating work or missing essential elements. Teachers' confidence and skills have improved because of the good quality of the long-term planning which is available. In addition, there is now a greater emphasis on pupils planning their own work, considering a number of possible designs, choosing the most appropriate one and, after making the product, considering how it might be improved. These features are demonstrated by a lesson in Year 4 where students

were designing photo frames. They were able to consider the features of a well designed photo frame because of the wide range of examples which the teacher had brought into school. An adjustable camera tripod was used by the teacher, helped by pupils, to demonstrate what free-standing meant and how the frame could be made more stable. The pupils were able to use the well-planned design proforma to organise their thoughts and to note their progress and their design decisions. Pupils are used to doing this as the good quality of their previous completed project proformas show. This very good quality teaching leads to pupils who work hard, remain interested and learn well and produce work of a good standard. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress although continued care needs to be taken to ensure that the text on the planning proforma is always accessible to them. The linking of design and technology with subjects such as art and design, English and science leads to a good use of resources.

129. The plans for developing design and technology are sound, they will be improved by the acquisition of further resources to improve work on control and through closer links with information and communication technology in school. The co-ordinator has written a new policy for design and technology and it is planned that this will be accepted by the school in the summer term. At that point, its introduction is planned to be linked with specific training for teaching staff.
130. A good start has been made in developing a school portfolio and this is leading to increased staff awareness of the range and quality of pupils' work.

GEOGRAPHY

131. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally. Progress since the last inspection is good.

Strengths

- Good coverage of the various strands.
- Good balance of work especially in dealing with subject specific vocabulary.
- Good links with other subjects.
- Good use of a two year cycle of topics.

Areas for improvement

- Further work on geographical skills such as comparisons of different and contrasting areas.

132. The school places a high priority on giving all pupils a wide range of experiences that relate well to those they have experienced and to those that they might not have the opportunity of seeing. As a result, pupils know some interesting facts and can talk about what they have learnt. Pupils with special educational needs are given some support from assistants and usually have different work from others in the class. Their progress is equally good. The standards have improved since the last inspection especially by the end of Year 2.
133. During the inspection few lessons were seen in geography. However, from discussions with pupils and teachers and from a scrutiny of work there is enough evidence to judge that pupils are achieving well. Children in the Reception class have low levels of general knowledge and little understanding of their own locality. Lessons are developed to give them first-hand experience. They learn about the local streets, shops and school grounds. Good links are made to other subjects. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 know about different types of houses. They can describe 'semi-detached' and 'terraced' and can draw pictures to explain these. They have begun to understand the relevance of mapping and have drawn simple keys. This is all at a level that might be expected. However, higher understanding is more limited. They do not realise how locality affects the way people live or talk about the reasons for their answers.
134. By the end of Year 6 pupils have improved their mapping skills. They can draw maps to scale and put in more complicated keys. They use colour to separate different areas and understand simple physical and human conditions. In Year 4 the pupils have undertaken an extensive study about

Kenya and this is giving them an understanding of how different people live and the reasons for it. Despite the good teaching and learning older pupils find it difficult to draw on their previous knowledge and make comparisons and assumptions about social conditions in other areas that they have not studied. Their general knowledge is limited for their age. Use is made of ICT to help enhance the opportunities and some use is made of web sites for research.

135. Teachers have tried hard to develop appropriate and comprehensive work for all age groups. This balances the lack of knowledge by a number of pupils and coverage of the National Curriculum. All this has been achieved well. Pupils learn a wide variety of different skills and the work in books is always presented well. Pupils show that they care about what they are doing and the marking system helps them to see where they need to improve. Teachers have high expectations about what they want to cover and are conscientious about ensuring work builds on that which has gone before.
136. The geography co-ordinator is relatively new to the post and has had other responsibilities. As a result development of the subject has been limited until recently. Despite this, an appraisal of the success of the subject has been undertaken and this has involved buying new resources such as atlases. The co-ordinator does not have sufficient input into the whole school development plan to allow her to build a comprehensive development over the longer term.

HISTORY

137. Standards are satisfactory throughout the school.
- Standards in history have improved since the last inspection. By Year 2 and Year 6 they are now in line with national expectations. This is largely due to the increasing emphasis placed on developing the skills of enquiry, interpretation and explanation.
 - It was also possible to observe a history drama session for Years 3 and 4 on life in the World War Two Blitz. In this session, pupils made very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of this period as a result of very good teaching by all staff and the stimulating links to literacy and numeracy.
 - Good progress has been made since the last inspection.
138. By Year 2, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of events and personalities from the past. They show an understanding of the order in which things happened; for example, they can place particular important events such as the accession of Queen Victoria and the Great Fire of London in the correct order on a timeline. All pupils have a satisfactory understanding of differences between the life that is familiar to them today and life in the past; for example, identifying how clothes worn at the time of the Great Fire are different from the clothes worn today. Across the attainment range pupils are able to use sources such as photographs and contemporary paintings to make simple observations about the past.
139. By Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of key dates, periods and events in British history. They are able to identify differences between particular historical periods, give reasons for them and describe how they affected people's lives. Average and higher attainers are able to explain why things happened as they did; for example, by using drama in telling the story of Boudicca's rebellion and its consequences. Higher attainers are developing the understanding that interpretations of the past may differ and can give examples of what is fact and what is opinion. During Years 2 to 6 pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of the different sources of historical evidence. They are able to successfully present the information they find in a variety of ways; for example, as a letter from an evacuee in the Second World War. All pupils show an understanding of the point of view of the people who were alive at the time of the periods they study; for example, the feelings of the children who were evacuated during the Second World War.
140. Attitudes to learning in history are at least satisfactory and on occasions very good. Pupils are interested and keen to share their knowledge and opinions. Most listen attentively to their teachers and do their best to carry out their tasks.

141. Overall, teaching and learning are good throughout the school and the history morning for Years 3 and 4 was excellent. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Lessons have clear learning objectives, which are generally shared with the pupils. These objectives focus on the development of historical skills as well as knowledge; for example, in a Year 2 class pupils placed photographs of historical events on a timeline to develop their understanding of the passage of time. In the majority of lessons, teachers demonstrate satisfactory subject knowledge and manage behaviour appropriately so that pupils make satisfactory progress. They make good use of resources so that pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are fully included in the lesson. Where teaching is weaker, explanations lack sufficient depth to extend pupils' understanding and misconceptions are not corrected.
142. The management and leadership of the subject are very effective. The school uses a nationally recommended scheme of work, which is sensibly adapted for use with the mixed-age classes. This ensures that pupils make appropriate gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding in history. The co-ordinator undertakes regular monitoring of teachers' planning and pupils' work, but does not yet monitor the quality of teaching, including the use of ICT.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

143. Since the last inspection when the standards in ICT were unsatisfactory, there have been substantial improvements throughout the school. With the use of grants from the National Grid for Learning Project and additional funding from the school's budget, the school has established a computer suite. The development of these very good resources has had a substantial impact upon raising standards. All pupils now use this facility at least once a week and as a direct consequence they now make very good progress.

Strengths

- The pupils' standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 are above the expected levels for their ages.
- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now very good.
- The range and quality of the curriculum are good.
- The quality and quantity of the resources are good.
- The co-ordinator gives a very good direction to the work throughout the school.

Areas for improvement

- The school still needs to develop and extend the use of procedures for control and sensing to improve the older pupils' understanding and knowledge.

144. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and very good in the Reception class. As a result of this, the pupils' quality of work by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is above the expected level for their age. The teachers base their lessons securely upon the national guidelines. This provides them with a very good structure for the development of the pupils' skills.
145. By the time the pupils reach the end of Year 2 most of them can edit and amend the text they create on the word processor. For example, in their current work there is evidence that they sequenced the lines of the song 'Row, row, row your boat' into the correct order by highlighting, cutting and pasting. They have a very good understanding of the use of large databases such as First Dictionary and can use a menu and an index competently. They have created graphs to show such data as the colour of their friends' eyes and hair. Within their word processing they incorporate pictures and they present the words in different colours and size of fonts to improve the presentation. Their work in graphics is good. They use Colour Magic to create drawings that they incorporate into their writing. Nearly all the pupils can save, retrieve and print their own work, unaided. Nearly all the pupils are eager to work on their tasks and complete a good amount of work by the end of each lesson.
146. By the time the pupils reach Years 5 and 6 their skills have improved effectively. Although the computer suite has only been in full use for the past few months these pupils have made good progress in the development of their skills. The quality of their work is above average and this is a

substantial improvement since the last inspection. This is as a direct result of the good quality of the teaching by the subject co-ordinator, the class teachers and teaching assistants who work alongside her. This very able team encourages the pupils to develop a positive attitude towards their work in ICT. Consequently, their behaviour and attitudes are very good overall. They are keen to complete their tasks on time and many move onto the next task. They enjoy 'playing' with their new skills and extend their knowledge very quickly. Once a new technique has been discovered, the pupils are eager to share this with their friends. However, there are some pupils with special educational needs in Year 3 who have not developed this eagerness for ICT. They receive very good support and with constant supervision they complete their tasks on time.

147. The pupils in Year 5 were observed using the drawing toolbar in their word processor. They were all totally absorbed by the task. By the end of the lesson they were all able to select a shape, resize it, colour it and to grade the effects using texture and pattern, very effectively. Through discussions with some Year 6 pupils it is evident that they make very good use of the Internet to search for information to be used in other subjects. They are competent in their skills of downloading, cutting and pasting from the Internet. They use this technique well to collect information from the large databases. For example, they explored a history website to gather information about the Romans and they also researched the dangers of smoking in order to write an informed piece of persuasive writing. They use all facilities of the word processor well and include design techniques such as 'Wordart' to design eye-catching presentations, especially posters. They have a firm understanding of the use of spreadsheets to help them calculate the areas and perimeters of regular shapes. They can create graphs to help them interpret their results. These are all strengths of the pupils' skills and knowledge.
148. However, there are elements of control and sensing that are not as effectively developed because the school does not possess the equipment. Nevertheless, some of the pupils can describe how to guide a 'turtle around a maze and can describe the procedures to draw shapes using the 'forward and turn' commands in 'Superlogo'.
149. The school is now well placed to continue the developments and improvements it has already made in ICT.

MUSIC

150. Pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6 reach standards that are in line with those expected nationally. Better standards are achieved in singing. Pupils throughout the school make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily. Improvement has continued since the last inspection. Teachers are now more confident.

Strengths

- Singing throughout the school.
- The number of pupils involved in various forms of music.

Improvement

- The profile of composition and understanding of musical notation especially in Years 3 to 6.

151. Few lessons were seen during the inspection although there was evidence of singing and listening and some music-making. The youngest children are beginning to understand the relevance of types of music and the moods that can be created. In the Reception class children were listening to 'Peter and the Wolf.' They were able to distinguish different instruments although they were not always sure of the names. From this good start, pupils are given opportunities to cover all strands of the music curriculum. More time is given to singing than to composition and this aspect does need strengthening. In a Year 3/4 lesson the pupils were able to remember the words to some well-known 20th century tunes and could sing enthusiastically. The teaching here was good. The specialist was able to enthuse and interest the group and with the help of another class teacher improved the performance by practising scales. Individual pupils were happy to come to the front and lead on verses. There were good links to the topic for this term in history.

152. A large number of pupils are involved in musical tuition such as the flute and clarinet. These also include recorder clubs and the use of a specialist musician for teaching the violin. The school is rightly proud of its contribution to a Buckinghamshire music festival that will be taking place in the Royal Albert Hall. All these opportunities are helping boost both musical understanding and self-esteem. In all the lessons seen, the pupils were willing, interested and motivated in the tasks that they were set.

153. The school benefits from the expertise of a specialist co-ordinator. Other staff are involved in teaching their own classes using a commercial scheme. This ensures that a range of opportunities can be given. The expertise of these staff is variable and where extra help is needed it can be sought from the co-ordinator. Little evidence was seen of formal work on composition or musical notation. The range of untuned percussion instruments has been improved since the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154. Pupils' attainment at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 is as expected nationally for their age. Boys and girls from all different ethnic backgrounds work well together. All have access to the curriculum on offer and all, including pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve very well. In the infant classes pupils carry out a series of instructions to move in a variety of ways, changing direction and they make good use of the space available. Pupils receive and send a ball in a variety of ways. They throw, catch, roll, dribble and strike. They devise invasion games and employ good defensive and attacking tactics. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the basic rules of several games such as football, hockey and tag rugby and have taken part in athletics. They move very well to music and sequence movements working in pairs and groups. They combine their individual group efforts effectively with a clear beginning, middle and end, creating a good dramatic effect. During dance lessons, pupils displayed very good body shape, poise and spatial awareness. Pupils sustain physical activity for a reasonable length of time and are aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies and the benefits to their health and fitness. Teachers give due regard to safety issues.
155. The co-ordinator keeps records of the pupils' attainment, which show that they are again on target to reach the required standard. Pupils' attainment is also improved through extra-curricular activities such as dance, football, netball, cross country and rugby clubs.
156. The quality of teaching and learning is good and as a result pupils achieve well. The teaching in dance and drama is always very good and sometimes excellent. This is a very considerable improvement since the previous inspection. However no swimming takes place at Key Stage 2 and this is unsatisfactory. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond appropriately. They have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and they demonstrate the skills to be learnt very well, keeping brisk pace to keep their pupils interested in the activities. Appropriate resources are prepared in advance, which increases the time available for physical activity. Teachers give clear guidance to pupils to improve their skills and they respond positively when extra challenges are set. For example, in a Year 4 dance lesson, after working in pairs, pupils were asked to work in fours and develop a sequence of mirroring others' movements. They enjoyed the lesson and worked hard to refine their sequences. Pupils look forward to lessons and they concentrate and persevere to improve their skills.
157. All teachers wear appropriate footwear and ensure that pupils are properly warmed up before starting and cooled down at the finish. Pupils are given opportunities to observe their peers' work and suggest ways of improving performance. They make very good progress from year to year that is in evidence in their skills in dance and gymnastics. Teachers make good links with other subjects such as English, science, music and art and design.
158. The school uses its accommodation of two halls and a playground very effectively for the teaching of game skills, dance and gymnastics. The resources for the subject are sufficient and are well used. The school has implemented a scheme of work that gives good guidance to staff. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management. She monitors the quality of teaching through informal observations, advice regarding the organisation of activities and a scrutiny of planning to ensure that skills are taught progressively. There are no systematic assessment procedures to check standards against National Curriculum level descriptors. The co-ordinator is aware of this and has planned to monitor teaching this year to improve standards further.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

159. Religious education has improved since the last inspection:
- Standards of attainment have risen from below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus to being in line.
 - Pupils now achieve very well in relation to their attainment on entering the school.
 - Teaching has moved from being satisfactory to very good.

- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are now consistently very good. This improvement is particularly marked in Year 6.
 - Planning is now focused on learning and there is better progression in what is taught.
160. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the local syllabus for religious education. They recount Christmas and Easter satisfactorily. Pupils know some of Jesus' teachings, but not in detail. They know some of the features of a Christian church. The more able understand the symbolism of bread, wine and the cross. By this age pupils ask questions such as 'How many stars are there?' and 'Who made God?' They have their own answers to some, such as 'God has a million eyes,' and 'God is magic'.
161. By the age of 11, pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the local syllabus. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs, symbolism and ways of worship. They know about other religions, such as Islam, in considerable detail. They, too, enjoy asking deep questions. Moreover, theirs include trying to understand about Jesus' relationships with his disciples, asking 'Why did Judas betray him?' They have firm opinions; 'Some people think that the chubby man in the red suit called Santa was also born on Christmas Day, but that's just another way of making business.'
162. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Nine out of ten lessons are good, with some teaching being excellent. Teachers' subject knowledge is very secure. This enables them to demonstrate similarities between faiths, such as rules for living, or singing and chanting. Teachers' planning is good. It is inclusive by referring, where possible, to faiths in the wider community. Teachers recognise that the subject involves abstract ideas. Therefore, they include pupils of all abilities by discussing and giving pupils practical work. For example, in a lesson on religious symbols, they both talked about their meaning and designed their own symbols. Teachers' expectations are good and support pupils' language development. In a lesson about the Ten Commandments in Year 4, for example, pupils were asked to choose one they considered to be very important. The teacher expected individual pupils to provide a reason for their choice. Teachers' methods are good and sometimes excellent. In a Year 1 lesson about Easter, pupils enacted Palm Sunday. Pupils became so involved that when the crowd welcomed Jesus very warmly, the girl playing him said, 'You nearly made me cry!' The interest and pace of lessons result in pupils concentrating and behaving very well. Teachers take the subject very seriously and provide good opportunities for the older pupils to consolidate their learning with illustrated writing. Pupils plan a service and give written reasons for what they consider to be right or wrong. Teachers' expectations ensure work is well presented and written in their own words.
163. The curriculum is thorough and relevant to this school's pupils. It makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils as young as those in Years 1 and 2 were awestruck at Jesus' crucifixion and considered events in their lives which have been deeply sad. Lessons make clear the importance of all people learning to live and work together in harmony with one another. As such, it has been one important influence on improvements to pupils' behaviour since the last inspection. Discussion and role-play have provided pupils with opportunities to express themselves in a positive, controlled way. The subject leader provides good leadership and checks teaching and learning well. She maintains a useful portfolio of work which demonstrates how teachers make good links with other subjects. For example, designing Rangoli patterns develops pupils' art and design and poetry writing about appreciating the seasons contributes to their literacy.