

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTONING LOWER SCHOOL

Westoning, Bedfordshire

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109490

Headteacher: Jean Peacock

Reporting inspector: Bernice Magson
18143

Dates of inspection: 13th to 15th May, 2002

Inspection number: 245002

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:	First School
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Street Westoning Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK45 SJ11
Telephone number:	01525 712994
Fax number:	01525 712664
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. A. Russell
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18143	Bernice Magson	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage Science Physical education	What should the school do to improve further The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed
14178	Pat Willman	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Information and communication technology (ICT) Design and technology Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
17454	Brian Aldridge	Team inspector	Special educational needs English as an additional language English Art and design Geography History Music	

The inspection contractor was:

SES Ltd.
132 Whitaker Road
Derby
DE23 6AP

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	6
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	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Westoning Lower School is a small school situated in the village of Westoning mid-way between Luton and Bedford. The school has 131 pupils on roll aged between four and nine years of age. The school became a Foundation School in September 1999, previously having Grant Maintained status. Numbers have risen since the last inspection but vary in size and gender in each cohort. Almost all pupils come from white family backgrounds, with a small percentage with Chinese family backgrounds, all of whom understand and speak English fluently. Four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure well below the national average. The 16 per cent of pupils identified with special educational needs is below the national average. There is one pupil in school with a statement of special need. Children are admitted part-time into the reception class following their fourth birthday and attend full-time from the term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection 19 of the reception children had started full-time education. Currently attainment on entry is broadly average, which is a slight decline since the last inspection. Attainment is above average when pupils enter Year 1 and start the National Curriculum. The headteacher had been in post for four weeks at the start of the inspection. Since the last inspection there have been two changes of headteacher, and an acting headteacher for one term. There have been other staff changes in Year 1 and 2, causing some staffing difficulties. During the inspection, temporary supply teachers and a student teacher taught pupils in these two classes. In the Easter holiday just prior to the inspection a fire in the Year 4 classroom destroyed much of the pupils' work. The classroom has now been refurbished.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics and science. Teaching and learning are good overall. The new headteacher has started to build a partnership with the very capable governing body. Links with parents and the village are strong. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the end of Year 4, standards are high in English, mathematics, science and ICT, and pupils achieve well
- Teaching is good overall, especially of basic skills
- The reception class provides a good foundation to the children's education
- Pupils are provided with a good range of learning opportunities in the curriculum, and a very good range of extra-curricular activities
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They are very well behaved and develop very good relationships with other pupils and adults
- The involvement of the governing body in the work of the school is good
- The school has a very good partnership with parents.

What could be improved

- The consistency and challenge of the teaching in Year 1 and Year 3
- The use of ICT across the curriculum in Years 1, 2 and 3

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has shown good improvement since it was last inspected in October 1997. Standards have been broadly maintained in Year 2 but show good improvement in some subjects by Year 4. Children continue to make good progress in the reception class. The quality of teaching has also been

maintained at a good standard overall, but with more lessons of very good quality balanced by some lessons that are unsatisfactory. There has been good improvement in the key issues of the last report. The needs of high attaining pupils are now identified in teachers' planning in English and mathematics, and an additional challenge is provided in many lessons. The issue has been tackled more consistently in Years 2 and 4 than in Years 1 and 3 where there is room for further improvement. The governors have been committed to the development of ICT and provision and standards have both improved. Further school improvement since the last inspection has been restricted by changes in headship and difficulties arising from a long-term teacher absence.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A*	A*	A	C
Writing	A	A*	A	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A	B

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

Since the last inspection results have remained consistently well above average in the three areas tested. In 2000 the school's results were in the top five per cent of schools nationally in all three areas reported. The slightly lower standards in 2001 were due to variations between the 2000 and 2001 cohorts. Broadly, test results have shown a steady upward trend. The 2001 test results in reading are only in line with similar schools because fewer pupils achieved the higher level 3. Standards attained by the current Year 2 are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science and provisional results from this year confirm these high standards. In Years 3 and 4 pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science, achieving well above average standards by Year 4.

There has been significant improvement in the standards in ICT and standards are now in line with those expected in Year 2, and above nationally expected levels in Year 4. Throughout the school progress is good in history, and in physical education in Years 3 and 4. In other subjects standards are at expected levels though progress tends to be swifter in Years 2 and 4. In the reception class progress is good and most children achieve the Early Learning Goals well before they join Year 1. The school gives good attention to the special educational needs of pupils. They achieve well towards their individual targets. Progress is good for pupils identified as gifted and talented or who are high attaining.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good. They enjoy coming to school and strive hard to achieve success.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are very well behaved and act very responsibly towards each other
Personal development and relationships	A strength of the school. Pupils have a very good sense of responsibility and community involvement.

Attendance	Very good, well above the national average.
------------	---

The school has worked hard to develop the social skills of all its pupils and to foster their personal development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good overall with good learning taking place in most lessons. The teaching of basic skills in number, reading and writing is very good throughout school. Teachers have a very good understanding of the literacy and numeracy strategies and provide very good opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in other lessons. Generally, teachers plan lessons well, have clear aims and manage their pupils appropriately. A good variety of teaching methods are used to help motivate pupils and develop a good level of independence in learning.

In the reception class there is a good balance between formal teaching and exploratory play which leads the children towards learning but allows them to move freely between a range of experiences that are exciting and full of interest. This good foundation is built on by satisfactory teaching overall in Year 1 and good teaching in Year 2, where the learning is more rapid. Similarly in Year 3, although some good teaching and learning takes place in English and mathematics, there is a weakness in the teaching of some curriculum subjects. In Year 4 the teaching is of a consistently high quality and learning is rapid with a good emphasis on developing the pupils as independent learners. In all classes pupils with special educational needs and those with specific talents make good progress towards their own educational targets and contribute well in lessons. High attaining pupils are challenged very effectively in Years 2 and 4, but are capable of more learning in Years 1 and 3.

In the small proportion of unsatisfactory lessons teachers had insufficient subject knowledge and provided too many low level tasks that did not challenge and develop pupils as learners. In Year 1 supply staff and a student teacher had limited knowledge of the needs of the class.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall and with very good breadth and balance in the reception class. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements in full. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented very successfully. There is a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good and enables these pupils to make good progress in all areas of school life.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The very few pupils in this category make good progress in their learning
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural	Good overall, with very good provision for moral and social development. Provision for spiritual growth is good and for cultural development is satisfactory.

development	
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupil welfare and safety receive good consideration throughout the school. Good quality records are kept of academic progress of pupils.

The school has a very strong, supportive and constructive relationship with parents and this has a positive impact on the work of the school and the progress that children make. Good use is made of assessment to match teachers' planning to the needs of all pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The new headteacher has made a good start and is beginning to build a team partnership with the effective and well-informed governing body.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil all statutory responsibilities. They have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and have established clear structures to help the school with its' work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has very good monitoring systems that clearly identify areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes satisfactory use of its staff, equipment and resources. The principles of best value are always applied.

The number of teachers and support assistants is adequate, although the school is currently suffering from on-going problems resulting from long-term staff absence. Learning resources are good. Two new classrooms are spacious but the cramped conditions in the old building have restricted opportunities to develop an ICT suite and bigger library.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children like coming to school and behave well The teaching is good and the children are making good progress The school provides an interesting range of activities and children are expected to work hard. Parents are comfortable about approaching the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A few parents expressed concern at the recent changes in staffing and wondered how this might affect progress in Year 1 Some parents would like more information about how their children are progressing

The inspection team endorses parents' positive views and shares their concern about the impact of changes on progress in Year 1. The team believes the school gives parents good information both on children's progress and about the curriculum. In Year 2 the "Keeping in Touch" books are an exemplary system of communication between school and home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Results of the Year 2 National Curriculum tests in 2001 were well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared to schools with similar numbers of pupils eligible for school meals, standards are well above average in writing, above average in mathematics and in line in reading. Over the previous four years, since the last inspection, results have been consistently well above average in all of the three areas tested, and in 2000 the schools' results were in the top five per cent nationally in all three areas. Overall, test results have shown a steady trend of improvement since the last inspection. In reading, test results are lower than in other areas because fewer pupils achieved the higher level 3. Standards observed in this year's Year 2 are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The relatively small differences between consecutive years are attributable to variations in the gender balance and proportions of pupils with special educational needs. Though pupils in Year 2 are now making good progress as a result of good teaching, their progress until the start of the spring term was disrupted by staff changes.
2. Pupils' results in science are based on teachers' assessments of pupils' performance. The 2001 assessments show that the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level 2 was very high and well above the national average at level 3. However, teachers assessed that fewer pupils were achieving the high level 3 in the area of the science curriculum studying life and living processes. The school has taken steps to improve standards and has requested a visit by the Life Education Bus to enhance learning in this area of the curriculum.
3. Inspectors judge that the rates of progress of pupils increases in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 and 4. By the end of Year 4 pupils are attaining well above average standards in all three areas of the core curriculum.
4. As there are substantial differences in the proportions of boys and girls in each cohort of pupils an accurate comparison of the test results is difficult. However, over the past four years test results show that girls consistently perform better than boys in reading and writing, although there is no significant difference, apart from in 2001, when the difference between girls and boys in reading was twice that found nationally. In mathematics, girls did better than boys in 2000 and 2001 but the difference was not significant. Since the 2001 test results the school has made changes to the curriculum in reading and writing to better reflect the needs of boys.
5. Within the first few weeks of starting school children in the reception year are assessed using a nationally accredited baseline programme for speaking and listening, reading and writing, mathematics and personal and social development. Results of these assessments show that currently the development of the majority of children is in line with expected levels for their age in all the areas tested but with some children achieving above nationally expected levels, especially in personal and social development. Due to the extended intake of children over three terms annually, and with small groups of children tested on each occasion, any comparison of baseline testing with other schools locally is unreliable. Attainment on entry is, therefore, judged to be in line with nationally expected levels.

6. Children make good progress in the Reception class because they are well taught, having experience of a wide range of challenging tasks based on accurate information about their previous learning. By the time they are ready to start the National Curriculum in Year 1 most children are achieving above the expected early learning goals for their age.
7. Inspection findings are that pupils make consistently good progress in the National Curriculum over time between Year 1 and Year 4 in English, mathematics and science, so that by the time they leave school in Year 4 they are achieving high standards. However, in Year 1, there were inconsistencies in the progress of pupils in these subjects, caused by the long-term absence of the class teacher and the difficulties the school has experienced in recruiting supply teachers to cover the period of absence.
8. In Years 2 and 4 standards are in line with expected levels for pupils in art and design, geography and design and technology, and in religious education standards are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Progress overall is satisfactory in these subjects but is more rapid in Year 2 and 4. Progress through Years 1 and 2 is also satisfactory in ICT and physical education and attainment at the end of Year 2 is at expected levels. The recent fire in the Year 4 classroom destroyed much of the work of the pupils in art and design and history and as a result inspectors' judgments are based on the small sample of work available, discussions with pupils and the standards of work seen in lessons. Pupils achieve well throughout the school in history, and in ICT and physical education in Years 3 and 4.
9. Pupils develop very good literacy skills. Pupils listen very well throughout the school and are always willing to contribute their ideas in lessons. They are confident speakers. When they speak pupils use the correct vocabulary to describe their thoughts and are creative in their thinking. They articulate words clearly and discuss issues seriously, giving valued consideration to the ideas of others. In reading pupils achieve well. From learning sounds initially, they develop good skills in recognizing single and combinations of letters, and use a variety of ways to read words they do not recognize at first sight. As they grow older they read a good range of reading material and their skills continue to develop. All high attaining pupils read well with accuracy, fluency and good expression. Library skills are satisfactory but the small library does not allow higher attaining pupils to develop their library skills in a sufficiently challenging manner. Most pupils write fluently and neatly by the time they are in Year 4. Spelling is accurate because pupils have good knowledge of spelling rules. By Year 4 pupils use dictionaries spontaneously to spell accurately and to find the meaning of new words. The content of writing is good. Pupils have a good mature literary style and plan their writing thoughtfully, taking full account of the audience for which they write.
10. In mathematics pupils achieve well. By the time they reach the end of Year 4 they have developed a good range of strategies to improve their efficiency in number work. They have a very good command of language to describe their work. A good feature of the mathematics curriculum is its breadth, which ensures pupils make substantial gains in mathematical knowledge. Particularly good are the interest and ability pupils show in dealing with investigative work.
11. Skills of scientific enquiry develop well throughout school. Science is taught through investigation so that pupils enhance their learning and understanding of the subject through direct experiences. By the end of Year 4 pupils make reasoned predictions and evaluate their results sensibly, making good reflective judgments of ways of improving in future experiments. Particularly good are the research skills of Year 4

pupils, for example, using the CD-ROM to name and discover the function of the bones in a human skeleton, and then using dictionaries to find the correct pronunciation or meaning of some words if their comprehension of the complex medical explanations were difficult.

12. By the end of Years 4, pupils are achieving well in ICT. There has been significant improvement in standards since the last inspection because of better provision of computer hardware, and, as a result of training, teachers have greater confidence and skill in teaching the subject. Teachers' planning has also improved since the introduction of national guidelines and good links are developing across the curriculum to reinforce new learning in the upper part of the school and raise standards further. New software packages are being introduced to match the scheme of work. Teachers are to start the national training programme for ICT shortly so that they are better skilled in teaching all aspects of the ICT curriculum. However, the pace at which pupils develop their skills is restricted by the lack of opportunity to use ICT across the curriculum in Years 1 to 3 and limited timetable provision in Years 1 and 3.
13. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress in line with other pupils in school. They have good adult provision to support them and teachers plan appropriate work to meet their needs. The targets set in their individual education plans are precise, taking each pupil through the small steps they need to learn well in lessons and make good progress towards their targets. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at giving pupils confidence and ensuring that they have the opportunities and the skills to participate in lessons. They support pupils, who, according to need, learn at a slower rate than others, or have a particular talent. This ensures that all pupils whatever their rate of learning make good progress over time. The pupils who are gifted and talented achieve well. Their needs are carefully considered in all lessons. High attaining pupils have good opportunities for additional tasks and independent learning and are making good progress across the curriculum. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language have good levels of fluency and make good progress similar to other pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES, VALUES AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

14. Pupils, including the children in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs, have very positive attitudes to school. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is also very good overall. The pupils respond very well to the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school and their personal development and the relationships they have with each other, with their teachers and with other members of staff are very good. The quality of pupils' response to these aspects of their development has been maintained very well since the last inspection and creates a very happy and friendly community in which each individual feels valued. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance has been consistently better than that found in most schools throughout the country. During their time in school pupils develop an awareness of the purpose and value of education and become increasingly mature individuals with a good sense of responsibility towards the school community. This has a significant impact on the standards they achieve.
15. The children in the Foundation Stage enjoy their time at school and have very good relationships with their teachers, with each other and with other adults who work with them. They arrive at school in good time and settle happily into the routines of the classroom. They take part in the many varied and interesting activities with great enthusiasm, responding well to instructions and listening carefully to each other and to their teacher. They move in and out of unsupervised activities easily and naturally,

making sensible choices, taking turns and chatting sociably to each other. They organize themselves very well and tidy up quickly when asked. The children are inquisitive learners. Great excitement was generated when they discovered the effect of changing the height of connected containers full of water. Because of good questioning by the teaching assistant, the children learned to control the flow of water to achieve the desired effect. The children help each other and clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and how they are expected to behave.

16. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 participate in all aspects of school life with great enthusiasm and very high levels of interest. Almost all parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection agree that their children like school and the pupils confirmed this. Many participate in the after school clubs, and are proud of the success of the football and netball teams. They work hard in most of their lessons, becoming involved in and sometimes excited by what they are learning. They particularly enjoy ICT lessons, listening attentively and watching the demonstration of skills carefully, learning quickly as a result. In some lessons, because of the high levels of interest and motivation that were the result of exciting and challenging teaching, the pupils made very good progress. This was exemplified in a Year 2 mathematics lesson on shape and symmetry when the challenging task fired pupils' interest and they worked hard to achieve the objectives. The response of most pupils to the structure of the literacy and numeracy sessions is very positive and this has a significant impact on the progress they make in these subjects. They enjoy the challenge of mental arithmetic and contribute thoughtfully to the group discussion sessions offering a range of interesting ideas and suggestions. In a Year 4 English lesson, for example, discussing Jason and the School Bully, pupils were keen to express their views because all opinions were valued. Pupils want to do well in school and they are prepared to work hard to do so.
17. The behaviour of pupils in lessons, around the school and in the playground is generally very good. They respond positively to the school's high expectations of their behaviour and have a clear understanding of what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the school community. Even when lessons lack challenge and interest, pupils behave well because they know that bad behaviour is not tolerated. Towards the end of the day, pupils sometimes become restless and less attentive and do not always achieve as much as they could. Pupils are naturally courteous both to each other and to adults. In assembly, for example, one boy automatically excused himself when squeezing past another on his way to the back of the hall. Pupils are trustworthy and treat each other's property and the school's resources with respect. There have been no exclusions.
18. Pupils with learning difficulties behave very well. They treat the adults who support them with respect and they work well as individuals and in groups. They are eager to please and respond to praise very well. Pupils with special educational needs work well in pairs and groups and are independent in the classrooms. The teachers and learning support assistants encourage them to think for themselves and adults make sure that the pupils do as much as possible for themselves. They are independent workers
19. Pupils' personal development is very good. The strong and supportive relationships they have with each other and with their teachers provide the foundation for a happy and mutually supportive community in which each individual feels special. Most of the Year 1 pupils have coped well with the change of teachers, although a few have found it more difficult to adapt to different routines and strategies. Pupils co-operate very effectively in lessons, sharing ideas and improving their work as a result. Pupils respect the school and playground rules and follow instructions willingly. They move

about the school purposefully and sensibly and, although playtimes are active and exuberant, no unkindness was observed. Pupils are not concerned about bullying and are confident that staff will help them if they are unhappy about anything. During their personal, social and health education lessons, pupils learn to think about how what they do affects others. Assemblies and religious education lessons help pupils to develop tolerance for others. They are involved in fund raising activities for local, national and international charities and develop compassion for those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils can express their opinions logically about aspects of school life and listen quietly to each other, taking differing viewpoints into account in their discussions. Pupils show very good levels of initiative in the way in which they do their jobs around the school and in the way they look out for each other at playtimes. Year 4 pupils have shown commitment and very good organizational skills in their successful efforts to raise money for their residential visit to a youth hostel later this term. They have organized a tuck shop during playtimes and sell ice creams and lollies after school. A significant sum of money has been generated as a result of their hard work and the support from other pupils. A Year 4 pupil comes in early each day to distribute the registers and all pupils have classroom responsibilities, which they carry out conscientiously and with pride. Pupils are friendly, open and curious. They develop very good social skills, maturing into sensible and interesting individuals during their time in school.

20. Attendance is very good. It has been consistently well above the national average since the last inspection and there is no recorded unauthorized absence. This is because of a high level of parental support and pupils' enjoyment of school life. Pupils generally arrive at school in good time and the school day starts promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT

21. The quality of teaching is good overall, with over two-thirds of the teaching at least good and a fifth very good or better. However, in almost ten per cent of lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory. At the last inspection teaching was also judged to be good, though there were fewer very good and no unsatisfactory lessons. There is consistently good teaching in the Reception class and in one third of lessons teaching is very good. In Years 1 and 2 over half the teaching is good or better. However, in Year 1 there have been several supply teachers in the school during the long-term absence of the class teacher, and consistency in the quality of the teaching and learning have been affected. In Years 3 and 4 teaching is good overall. In Year 4 the teaching is of a consistently high quality with two-thirds of lessons very good or better. Unsatisfactory teaching, due to insufficient subject knowledge and low expectations of high attaining pupils, was seen in two in seven lessons in Year 3, both in the foundation (non-core) subjects of the curriculum.
22. Teaching in the reception class is good overall. The teacher and classroom assistant are effective in assessing children's progress to plan appropriate and stimulating work. There is a good balance between the formal teaching and exploratory play leading the children towards the learning and allowing them to move freely between a range of experiences, which are exciting and full of interest. They challenge children to extend their knowledge in each of the areas of learning through their skilful questioning. There is a good pace to the learning, and efficient recording of achievement so that the children systematically develop new skills and knowledge beyond their current understanding.
23. Throughout the school, the teaching of basic skills in number, reading and writing is very good. An appropriate time is spent each day on developing basic skills, for

example in phonic sounds, and further activities are provided to practise and reinforce the earlier learning, sometimes by playing games, or completing worksheets.

24. English is taught well throughout the school and standards are at a high level. Teachers have a very good understanding of the literacy strategy and provide opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills in other lessons. Teaching in mathematics is mostly good or better but with insufficient appropriate subject knowledge creating some unsatisfactory teaching in Year 1. However, standards in mathematics remain high overall. Pupils enjoy mental arithmetic and there is a good pace to their learning. Because the school analyses very effectively the strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning in both English and mathematics, teachers are able to focus on the areas where the pupils have been less successful. Currently this is occurring in writing where the teachers are focusing their activities towards the development of better writing skills for pupils. In the best lessons in English and mathematics learning intentions are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson and then, as the lesson ends, achievements are judged to measure effectiveness. As a result pupils are fully aware of what they are learning and why. Many parents give good support to their children in the learning of basic skills at home. In Year 2 there is an exemplary system of parents and teachers working together to develop the children's reading and writing skills through the use of the KIT books, that is "Keeping in Touch" books, where there are many good examples of families and school having close links to promote the children's learning. Some parents also help regularly in the classrooms by hearing pupils read.
25. Teachers plan lessons well, they have clear aims to their lessons and manage their pupils well. Most planning makes very clear what pupils will learn, when and how, and ensures a clear structure to lessons. Teachers have revised long-term planning to match the nationally recommended guidelines and fully include new ideas and initiatives. Medium-term plans are fitted carefully to the prior learning of pupils and there are good links made between subjects to reinforce learning. For example, science and ICT are linked, which gives pupils opportunities to apply their computer skills to make spreadsheets or research for information. In Years 2 and 4 the teachers organize independent learning very effectively. In the best lessons the teachers have high expectations and there is a general understanding among pupils that they are to be self-sufficient and find ways to extend their learning independently. Most teachers promote good relationships and have high expectations of well-balanced social skills. Frequently, in the plenary part of the lesson, the teacher will encourage pupils to evaluate success in terms of social as well as academic development and respect for all round achievements is rewarded with praise. Even when the teaching is less successful pupils are keen to learn, strive hard to achieve success and enjoy talking about their work. There is a good work ethic in most classrooms.
26. When the teaching is most successful teachers use a good variety of teaching methods to help motivate and interest the pupils. Often the learning will start from a practical activity or research task. Each day pupils will have opportunities to work individually, in groups, or as part of whole class activities. In many of these better lessons the teachers provide a good variety in the structure of lessons to meet the needs of differing pupils. They are expected to work both in friendship groups and on other occasions with pupils of similar ability. However, observations in the classrooms and evidence from pupils' books show that there are lessons when the challenge in learning is insufficiently matched to pupils' prior attainment and rates of progress are unsatisfactory. In these lessons teachers spend too little time developing the pupils as learners and too much time on doing low level tasks or sitting

and listening to the teacher. In most classrooms learning support assistants make an effective contribution to the learning. Most have good specialist knowledge and work in a good team partnership with the teachers.

27. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Before lessons start learning support assistants are well prepared by teachers and often they keep very good quality notes about pupils' achievements. They are patient and give clear and accurate explanations. They give pupils reassurance that they can succeed and in doing so promote pupils' self-esteem well. ICT is used to support special educational needs well.
28. Teachers' marking is satisfactory overall but there is too much variation in its quality. In the best examples, particularly in literacy, specific advice is written on pupils' work. In other subjects advice is often directed only to a comment about effort. There are instances of pupils' work marked incorrectly in Year 1, causing some confusion in learning. The marking is very effective in the reception class as the teacher prepares with the children well-presented topic books made up of written work and drawings, where on each page a brief description of the activity accompanies the clearly explained information about how the child has improved.

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

29. The school provides a curriculum that is broad and mainly well balanced. At the previous inspection weaknesses were identified in ICT, for example, it was not taught as a separate subject and not all pupils had equal access to machines. Inspection evidence confirms that significant improvement has been made, although in some classes computers are still not used sufficiently well to support work in other subjects and there is too little timetabled time for the subject in Years 1 and 3. The acting deputy headteacher who is temporarily managing this area of the curriculum is highly skilled and has very good subject knowledge, so developments in resources, teaching and learning are continuing.
30. The school's curriculum includes all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The school uses the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Planning for subjects is mostly good and is linked to the appropriate schemes of work that provide good guidance for teachers and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. The national strategies for numeracy and literacy have been very successfully implemented and are supporting pupils' progression in acquiring basic skills. The quality of the curriculum in the Foundation Stage is very good, having a good balance between discovery and teacher intervention through formal teaching and exploratory play.
31. A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. These activities, which are mostly of a sporting kind, are very well supported by pupils, teachers and parents. The school competes in a range of competitions against other schools and achieves success, for example, in netball. The school's football team plays in a league, and a football club organised by enthusiastic parents meets on Saturday mornings. Other popular clubs include French, ICT, art, country dancing, rounders and netball. Visits to local places of interest, including a residential visit to Ivinghoe, generates enthusiasm and further support for learning.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good because the school has an ethos that is strongly inclusive. All pupils take a full part in all of the school's activities and are well supported in and out of the classroom by teaching assistants. Pupils'

special educational needs are well catered for in literacy and numeracy through skilled support, precise education plans and the setting of achievable targets. The school has an effective policy for equal opportunities, which recognises the needs of individuals. Pupils' personal and social and health education (PSHE) has a high priority at the school. This important work is taught as a discrete subject with a programme of work identified for each class. The school takes advantage of current issues and deals sensitively with them. For example, consideration of the needs of others and attitudes to games featured when boys became over enthusiastically competitive during a break time game of football. Through discussion and negotiation the pupils acknowledged and respected that the needs of all individuals should be given value and consideration. The local authority *Life Education Bus* is planned to visit the school and this facility will provide additional learning in a range of aspects in PSHE. The policy on sex education has been reviewed recently. Currently, it is part of the PSHE programme of work and teachers answer pupils' questions sensitively. From a young age the school makes the pupils aware of the dangers of harmful substances. In many classes there are opportunities for the pupils to discuss social and personal issues in 'circle time'. These opportunities have had a good effect on pupils' behaviour and attitudes.

33. The school enjoys very good links with the community. The community is proud of its school and this is reflected by the very positive comments made by villagers. A day rarely passes without the school receiving additional support from caring adults in the village. The school visits the church to celebrate important festivals and the vicar contributes to assemblies. Local businesses have made valuable contributions to the school and provided gifts for fund raising activities. There is a school tradition of raising funds to support local and national charities. While there are satisfactory links with other local middle schools, it is the school's intention to strengthen them further. There are opportunities for the pupils to visit the middle schools prior to transfer to the next phase of their education but curricular links between schools are made regularly.
34. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall and makes a significant contribution both to the very good behaviour and to relationships throughout the school. There are particular strengths in the provision for pupils' moral and social development. Strong links exist between PSHE and the promotion of pupils' moral and social development. Staff provide very good role models to pupils and the positive influences of considerate behaviour of staff is reflected very clearly by their pupils. Pupils have good opportunities in class discussions to consider how their behaviour affects others' feelings and emotions. Good manners are highly valued and it is very rare to hear hurtful words or see inconsiderate behaviour. Pupils have respect for themselves and for other people in the school community. Parents give good support in fostering high standards. Teachers give value to pupils' work and this is demonstrated in assemblies when teachers ask pupils questions and pupils' responses are carefully considered. Opportunities are given in assemblies for pupils to reflect on important issues, which fosters spiritual growth. The contribution of the singing of the pupils adds considerably to the spiritual atmosphere. In the classrooms circle time gives good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their beliefs and values
35. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. While there are strengths in the way that their own culture is successfully celebrated there are insufficient resources to promote greater awareness of life in a culturally diverse society. This is particularly evident in the library where books that celebrate traditions, values and beliefs of wider world communities need replacing and expanding. The school encourages racial equality and harmony through the personal, social and health

education programme. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities to learn about major world faiths in religious education lessons, but learning relies heavily on teacher knowledge with limited opportunity for first hand experience.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

36. All pupils, including the children in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs, are well cared for at school. The welfare of each pupil is the first priority of all who work in the school and this has created a warm and caring family atmosphere, which ensures that pupils are happy and make good progress. The procedures for monitoring and supporting academic performance and personal development are good and provide an effective level of educational and personal support and guidance for each individual. The strong relationships between pupils, their teachers and other members of staff are an important factor in the continuity of care provided for the pupils. The overall quality of the care provided has improved since the last inspection.
37. The care and attention afforded to pupils with special educational needs is very good. The identification of pupils who may have special educational needs is good and effectively ensures that if difficulties arise then the school can flexibly meet pupils' needs. The school has useful procedures for identifying and assessing those pupils who may need additional help. Pupils with specific difficulties have appropriate tests to identify the best ways to help them. Assistants maintain thorough and regular assessment checks to see how well pupils are doing in their reading skills and spelling.
38. The school has good procedures and established practices to govern health and safety and child protection. A trained member of staff undertakes basic risk assessment and governors inspect the premises at regular intervals. All staff have a common-sense approach to safety, although, because there is no caretaker at present, day-to-day maintenance and repairs are not always being carried out. The provision for first aid is good and emergency evacuation is practised regularly. Supplies of drinking water are available to all pupils at all times. The child protection co-ordinator has attended appropriate training courses and the commitment of staff ensures that there is a good awareness of this duty of care. Teachers ensure that pupils understand how to use resources safely and the importance of good hygiene and diet. Pupils receive appropriate information about sex and drugs through the personal, social and health education programme and visitors come to school to talk to pupils about issues of personal safety. Supervision during playtimes and lunchtimes is good.
39. The school has satisfactorily maintained its good procedures for assessment since the previous inspection. The school meets statutory requirements for testing pupils at the end of Year 2 and uses optional national tests to check on pupils' progress by the time they leave the school in Year 4. Good quality records of tests are kept and analysed by the headteacher and her staff and used to guide planning and meet pupils' needs. Good procedures are used to track the progress of groups of pupils in English mathematics and science, which enable staff to assess the impact of teaching on learning. Information is also used to help staff and governors to judge whether pupils make enough progress. Assessment arrangements in some other subjects are under review to improve practice further. There is satisfactory leadership of subject areas but much of this leadership is temporary with little long-term planning at present.

40. The informal systems for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The high level of attendance is achieved by involving parents and pupils through the home-school agreement and by ensuring that the school is an open and welcoming environment. Registration complies with legal requirements. However, because the on-going statistics are not completed in the registers, the ability to monitor overall attendance during the year is limited. There are good systems to contact parents on the same day of absence if no reason has been given. The arrival time of any pupil who is persistently late is monitored closely and the support of the education welfare officer is sought when the need arises. The school has good formal and informal procedures for recording and monitoring instances of unacceptable behaviour. Pupils are taught that bullying is unacceptable and any particularly kind or thoughtful behaviour is rewarded. There are systems to record any persistent incidents of poor behaviour or any behaviour with a racist or bullying element. Because the school deals quickly and effectively with any incidents as and when they occur, these recording systems are rarely used. Parents are pleased with the very good standards of behaviour in the school and trust staff to deal fairly with any incidents that occur. The school does not, however, formally record other areas of pupils' personal development. Although new and supply staff are briefed by the outgoing teacher and there is some continuity through the teaching assistants, because of the lack of formal recording, the personal support and guidance for those pupils, particularly in Year 1, is not as good as it could be.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

41. The school has a very strong, supportive and constructive partnership with parents and this has a very positive impact on the work of the school and on the progress the children make. The very good quality of this partnership has been maintained well since the last inspection. Many parents are actively involved in school life and in their children's learning at home and value highly the range of educational and social opportunities provided. This is reflected in the very positive views about the school expressed by parents prior to and during the inspection.

42. The quality of information provided for parents about the school and about their children's progress is good. It is practical, comprehensive and informative. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report for parents contain a wealth of useful information about the school and its achievements. The overall quality of the children's annual reports is good although there are some inconsistencies in content and presentation from year to year. The text gives a clear indication of attainment and areas for improvement are identified. The school offers parents opportunities for formal consultation during the autumn and spring terms, together with an open day in the summer term. Throughout the year parents are welcome to speak to the headteacher or class teachers if they have any concerns about the progress of their child. Because of the disruption of staffing in Year 1, it was not possible to hold the consultation for parents last term. The new headteacher has met with Year 1 parents to explain the situation and has arranged a parents' evening for these children to take place shortly. Each term parents receive an outline of what their children will be learning, there is a presentation on the standard assessment tests for Year 2 parents and new parents are invited to a familiarization evening. Monthly newsletters are sent out to keep parents up-to-date with activities in school.

43. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the decision making process and are kept well informed about the progress of their children. They feel confident in approaching the school to discuss any problems. Many are very impressed with the support the school gives, often offering advice as well as giving

information about their child's progress. The school works very hard to develop proper and informative links with parents. Parents are invited to attend the annual reviews of the pupils with statements of special educational needs and the school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. Individual education plans are shared with parents and targets are set in clear, helpful language.

44. The school is fully committed to involving parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school. There is a clear policy on homework provision and the majority of parents willingly and effectively help their children at home. This has a very positive impact on their learning. Several parents help regularly in classrooms with reading and practical activities and many volunteer to accompany the children on visits. This active involvement by parents has a positive impact on individual attainment and the school values their commitment. Parents' response to a recent questionnaire sent out by the school was extremely positive. The hard work and commitment of the parents' association have resulted in the accrual of significant funds. Some of these monies are used to fund outings and have recently been used to purchase Jubilee medals for each child. Parents support the events organized by the committee in large numbers, enjoying the informal participation in the life of the school community. The reading diaries and the Y2 "Keeping In Touch" books are used well by many parents as a channel for communicating any concerns to the class teacher on a daily basis. This is an efficient system, which parents value. The school is open and welcoming and parents are confident in approaching the school about any concerns. They are secure in the knowledge that they will be told if there is any cause for worry. Almost all parents have signed the home/school agreement and most fulfil their responsibilities under this agreement.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

45. The leadership and management of the school are good overall. Since the last inspection when the management of the school was considered a strength, there have been two changes in headteacher, and there has been an acting headteacher for one term. The well-established management systems have ensured that the school has been managed successfully during this period of change. A new headteacher has taken up post this term and has made good start. The headteacher and governing body are beginning to build a partnership to ensure that good stability and an agreed vision for school improvement is achieved. The headteacher has begun a careful analysis of the needs of the school prior to the preparation of a new school improvement plan. The important issues of maintaining high standards and appointing several new staff are taking precedence. All subjects and aspects of the curriculum reflect the aims and objectives of the school well. An acting deputy headteacher has been appointed by the governing body to help in this latest period of change and, along with the permanent members of staff, they are sharing satisfactorily the responsibilities for priority areas of the curriculum. However, in a small school, with supply and temporary teachers working in school, it is difficult to maintain all responsibilities and monitor teaching and learning successfully. Prior to the recent changes in management the school established very good systems of monitoring which the new headteacher is hoping to re-introduce when new staff are appointed. Collectively, the senior management team has a good commitment to succeed and a desire to improve.

46. The governors play a key role in supporting the headteacher in the work of the school. They have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and have implemented efficient management structures of their own which enable them to act both as a supportive and critical friend of the school. During the period of headteacher

changes the governing body introduced a well-planned series of measures that ensured that the leadership and management of the school could be effectively maintained. Governors are loyal and give their time willingly to help the school with its work. A full consultative programme has resulted in greater ownership of the school's current and future direction. Delegation and shared responsibility among the governing body are very good and statutory responsibilities are fulfilled very effectively. Governors are fully aware of their role, supportive of the school and appropriately critical in a friendly and very professional way.

47. The governing body has established good procedures for monitoring the school's provision for special educational needs. There is a named governor who takes an active interest in the delivery of provision. The headteacher has recently taken up the co-ordination of special educational needs and is well prepared to take advantage of the recently reissued special educational needs Code of Practice.
48. The school improvement plan is good. It is a useful working document against which progress towards priorities for each subject and aspects of the school are evaluated. Resources are targeted into areas of most need and used effectively in the classrooms. Action plans are prepared annually identifying clearly proposed improvements, estimated costings and the personnel to be involved. The governors have a good understanding of value for money and regular review achievements against the agreed priorities. Since the last inspection the governors have committed funding to the development of ICT and good improvements have been achieved. They are continuing to support improvements in this area and there are plans to develop a new computer suite. Plans to extend the library are being considered so that pupils have a wider range of fiction and non-fiction books. The day-to-day management of the school finances is very good with the excellent support provided by the school bursar and administrative officer.
49. There is an adequate number of teachers and support staff to teach Foundation Stage curriculum in the Reception class and the National Curriculum in other year groups. Appropriate training takes place in response to national initiatives or identified areas of weakness. The headteacher and governing body have a good understanding of the current difficulties of staff recruitment and have adopted an appropriate series of measures to help the school overcome them.
50. The school accommodation creates some difficulties for the management of learning. Its buildings are a mixture of the old school building, mobile classrooms, the reception classroom, and a recently built new classroom for Year 1. The reception and Year 1 classrooms are of a good size, spacious, and appropriate for delivery of the curriculum for the younger pupils, but the cramped conditions in the old building, although utilized to the best advantage, have restricted opportunities to develop an ICT suite and a bigger library. During the recent fire in one of the mobile classrooms pupils' work was lost. The governing body is well aware of the difficulties caused by the lack of facilities and they are working hard to address the issues to minimize the overall effect on standards. The newly resurfaced playground has improved opportunities for outdoor play and the arrangements with the local council to use the tennis courts and share the extensive field facilities are beneficial to the school. The outdoor play provision for the younger children in the reception class is good, and allows free access to facilities each day. The wild garden and pond area are securely fenced but available to provide a good outdoor learning environment. Learning resources are good and effectively meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

To improve standards and further raise the quality of education the headteacher and governors should:

Improve the consistency of the teaching and learning in Year 1 and Year 3 by:

- increasing the level of challenge and expectations of pupils of all ability
- improving teachers' knowledge of some subjects of the National Curriculum and the Agreed Syllabus
- improving the consistency and quality of marking in Year 1

(Paragraphs 7, 21, 24, 26, 28, 67, 73, 76, 80, 83, 108, 109, 111, 120)

Improve the pace at which pupils develop ICT skills by:

- *providing greater opportunities to use ICT in all subjects of the curriculum in Years 1 to 3
- developing skills through increased timetable provision in Years 1 and 3

(Paragraphs 12, 29, 50, 74, 79, 104)

Other, more minor issues the governors should consider for inclusion in the school development plan:

- *Improve the quality and range of books in the library and ensure that pupils have regular opportunities to undertake independent learning

(Paragraphs 35, 50, 69, 85, 93, 122)

- Improve the personal support and guidance offered to pupils by introducing systems for formal recording of personal development.

(Paragraphs 19, 40)

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

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	6	14	8	3	0	0
Percentage	3%	19%	44%	25%	9%	0	0

Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR-Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		131
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR-Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		25

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	9	26

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	26	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (95)	100 (95)	100 (95)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	9	9	9
	Total	26	26	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (91)	96 (95)	100 (95)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	129
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Yr-y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	25

Education support staff: Yr-y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	323,165
Total expenditure	291,387
Expenditure per pupil	2,159
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,333
Balance carried forward to next year	68,111

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	32

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	34	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	34	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	59	34	3	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	44	9	3	6
The teaching is good.	56	31	6	6	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	47	38	3	13	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	25	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	22	9	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	38	47	6	9	0
The school is well led and managed.	44	31	13	0	13
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	44	6	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	34	6	3	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

51. Children enter the reception class at four years of age and attend either a morning or afternoon session until the term in which they are five when they start full time education. At the time of the inspection 30 children were on roll in the reception class, 19 children having full-time provision and 11 younger children attending part-time. When children start school many have had some previous playgroup or nursery experience. There is a formal assessment of the children in their first term and a further assessment before they leave the reception class to start the National Curriculum in Year 1. Early assessment shows the children's attainment on entry to school to be broadly average. At the end of the reception year when their standards are compared against their initial baseline assessment, most children achieve well in all areas of learning. Many exceed the early learning goals for children of their age in their personal and social development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical, creative and physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. The progress of each child is carefully recorded and good use is made of this information to plan the curriculum and help the children improve their learning. Through early assessment those children with special needs are identified and carefully planned strategies are introduced to help them improve.
52. Effective links are established with parents before children start school. The class teacher and teaching assistant visit each child at home and parents and children make several visits to school. Relationships with the parents are good and a good dialogue is maintained between home and school so that the children are happy and relaxed in the school environment. They leave parents and carers happily at the school door and enjoy coming to school. Parents are sometimes invited into school to help in the classroom or on visits, and several provide this valuable additional help. Parents also come to assemblies, and to the parents' meetings each term where they can discuss their child's progress. Most parents enjoy the opportunity to participate in school events. For those children with special needs there are good opportunities for a parent to share their experiences with the class teacher and together plan strategies together to help their child improve.
53. The management and organisation of provision in the reception class is good. There is a shared commitment between the class teacher and the classroom assistant to ensuring good provision and high standards are achieved. They work well together as a team. Each day there is a good range of experiences planned for the mixed ages and abilities of children in the part-time or full-time provision. The staff are skilled at leading the children towards learning and allowing them to move happily between the formal and exploratory play opportunities in either the indoor or outdoor classroom environment. The system works well and there are many examples each day of children engrossed in their learning and happy to share their experiences with others. All relationships are harmonious.
54. The very good curriculum is broad and balanced and there are useful links arranged between the identified areas of learning. Planning and assessment are good. The teacher is experienced and skilled with children of this age and this is reflected in the planning which is full of interest and excitement. It is built on personal experiences for children so that their learning is more meaningful. For example, a recent visit to a local garden centre led to some exciting activities growing mustard seeds, making

pictures of tall and short plants, and shopping for packets of seeds and plants in imaginative play in the classroom garden centre

55. The accommodation for the reception class is good. The room is large and arranged attractively with different areas of learning so that each area creates interest and provides a good feeling of space. Displays of children's work are bright and attractive and celebrate past achievement very effectively. The children are happy to show their work to friends and visitors. The outside garden and play area are accessible directly from the classroom and are sufficient to allow play with trikes, wheelbarrows, tyres, or to climb on the climbing frame. There is plenty of room for sand and water play both indoors and outdoors. Because cloakrooms and toilets are easily accessible the children quickly learn to be self-sufficient. Resources are good and meet the requirements of the planned curriculum. They are sufficiently varied to challenge both the younger and older children. Toys are arranged so that children have access freely to them throughout the day. Because computers are placed strategically in different areas of the classroom they are used consistently and support children's learning mostly in number and phonic sounds, and are helping to raise standards in these area of the curriculum.
56. The quality of teaching is good overall and there is some very good practice. Children are managed well and soon begin to acquire basic skills in reading, writing, counting and sorting. Lessons are planned to help children reach the early learning goals expected for their age and for some to allow them to work at the early stages of the National Curriculum. The teacher prepares well-presented portfolios of work with the children. On each page with the piece of written work or drawing is a brief description of the activity, and clearly explained details of the progress the children have made. Parents appreciate that this work is shared regularly with them.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

57. The school caters well for children's personal, social, and emotional development and most children achieve the early learning goals well before the end of the reception year. Teaching is good in this area of learning. The teacher builds very good relationships with the children. Praise and encouragement are instrumental in their learning as they develop self-confidence and become useful members of the class group. Well-planned activities and clear explanations help them to understand the need for rules and routines. The calm atmosphere encourages children to behave responsibly and treat each other with respect. Equipment is used carefully and most children will tidy away when asked at the end of a game. They play happily together in the home corner or classroom garden centre. In all activities the children work for considerable lengths of time either with friends or alone. When they are directed to work independently they strive to be successful, but enjoy the opportunity to work with an adult, ask questions politely and chat happily about the directed task.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

58. Teaching in this area of learning is good. By the time they enter Year 1 most children have reached their expected early learning goals and enjoy reading and writing. Children develop good speaking and listening skills. Each day they have good opportunities to talk together, to listen to stories or rhymes on a listening centre, and in story-time they make quick progress in developing listening skills. They listen intently to stories, are curious to learn and are regularly fascinated and amazed by the plot of a story. They ask pertinent questions to understand stories more and compare them to experiences of their own. They are beginning to understand the difference between story and real events. In assembly they listen to the teacher with interest and can

remember the story theme when back in their classroom. Most children will join the class as they recite rhymes. During the school day children can be seen sitting quietly in the book area reading a picture book and sometimes discussing their favourite parts of a story with a friend. Children have good knowledge of phonic sounds for their age and practise identifying sounds and letter symbols daily. Most know the letters of the alphabet, and some recognize and name sound blends such as “th” and “ch”. Some more able children make lists of words with similar sound beginnings or endings such as “chin, or thin”. Children have regular reading practice in school and progress is good. Most parents participate in reading practice at home and provide valuable help for the school. Children also make good progress in writing. They often write about the stories taken from the reading scheme and suggest their own ending to a story. For example, they listened to a story about “A Secret Room” and then wrote about their own imagined surprises in the room. Children with the greatest writing skills can write a complete sentence unaided, including full stops and capital letters in the correct places. Other children are still developing their writing skills and need the teacher to scribe for them. A few less able children write strings of letters when unaided.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

59. As a result of very good teaching the children achieve well in this area of learning. Many can count and add numbers correctly, and explain to others how they completed a sum. With confidence most children count forwards and backwards to 10 and many can count to 20, eagerly adding, “blast off” as they arrive at zero. Most children write numbers to five from memory and many correctly to ten. Some children struggle with number reversals but are becoming more competent at copying numbers exactly if they use the “dragon” number lines. Children enjoy playing number games, building number towers with cubes or in play learning about weight and height. They are learning mathematical vocabulary such as “yesterday, today, or tomorrow” to help them understand time, or the meaning of “balance” as they play with scales piling bricks into the containers. Younger children are recognizing money as they count the 1p items in Teddy’s shopping basket. Most of the class can identify two-dimensional shapes of squares, triangle, rectangles and circles. Some are beginning to recognize oblongs and diamonds and attempt to cut these shapes for themselves when making a shape picture. They have enjoyed making a large class mobile of these shapes printing a design on them with paint.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

60. Children develop a good understanding of the world around them. Teaching in this area of the curriculum is good. Teachers skilfully provide an input to introduce children to new ideas or help them improve their skills of observation and then arrange many experiences for individual exploration. The teachers are constantly asking questions so that children identify similarities and differences and then reinforce later in their play. For example, much excitement was created in water play when with the help of a classroom assistant two boys learned how to make water run from one bottle to another with the use of a tube later sharing this learning with others. They made good progress in appreciating the significance of changing water levels as they experimented. Children are beginning to learn how to conduct an experiment as they record their predictions and observations using a simple chart to note their ideas. They have already gained a good understanding of reading information from a tabulated chart of ticks and crosses as they interpret their answers and those of others. Each day the teacher sets up a real life situation such as a steam train, or the

most recent garden centre, and additional different resources are added to make the play challenging.

61. The children are given opportunities for training on how to use the computer and gradually are learning new complex technical vocabulary. During the inspection they were having trouble remembering the name of the computer tower but, by recall of the story of "Rapunzel" trapped in a tower, they learnt this new name rather than their initial attempts of calling it a "castle." Overall, the children have good computer skills for their age; most use the mouse successfully to match words and picture in language games and some are beginning to use the keyboard to write simple three-letter words. Although most understand how the rubber is used to erase their mistakes, they find it difficult to remember the position of the icon and only a few are successful.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

62. There are good outdoor facilities to encourage children to improve their physical skills through regular practice and additionally there are specially planned physical education lessons each week. The quality of teaching is good. There are many regular experiences in physical play are enabling them to achieve well and attain above average standards. They work hard in all lessons to improve and there are good levels of enjoyment. The children show good confidence in all their movements. The teacher is effective in encouraging them to listen to signals to stop and start as directed, to take care with equipment and to consider the needs of others. Some children are beginning to understand how to find their own space in the hall, as a time "when you're near no-one" but for many these spaces are hard to achieve. All can run, jump and jog, as they move around the hall and some are learning the skill of skipping. They can sustain a small sequence of actions in a repeat pattern. With balls and balloons children can catch well for their age but have difficulty in aiming a ball to a friend or teacher.
63. Children handle pencils and crayons correctly and are developing good skills at mark making. Only some of the younger part-time children currently find this task difficult. All can cut out reasonably accurately for their age and use glue sticks well. They have good skills with jigsaws and are making good improvement in recognizing shapes and patterns as they fix the jigsaw pieces together. By the time they move into Year 1 many children are achieving well above the early learning goals expected for children of their age.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

64. Standards in creative development are above average. Teaching is good, characterized by good planning of a systematic programme, which develops new skills. As a result achievement in most activities is of good quality. Children play creatively and show good imagination. The children are given many opportunities to explore using a variety of materials set out for them in different areas of the classroom to entice them to make pictures, build models, or play creatively with clay or playdoh. Most children have average drawing skills for their age but use paint effectively to make pictures. They are confident in their use of materials and chat as they work about textures or the effects of tools on materials. In one lesson, as they built coil pots with clay, they described the clay as "soft and squidgy" and in another session when using glue sticks explained the need to use only small amounts of glue to create the best effect. Children enjoy building tall towers with bricks and making cars and trucks out of small bricks. They persevere for long periods of time as they fit bricks together and will have several attempts to achieve the best result. Although singing is part of

the daily routine there are few opportunities for children to make music on their own and they have satisfactory standards for their age in this area of the curriculum.

ENGLISH

65. Standards have improved since the last inspection. At that time standards were judged to be above the national average at the end of Years 2 and 4. In the last National Curriculum tests held in 2001, results were well above average in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. When compared to similar schools standards in writing were well above average and in reading were average. There was a similar picture for high attaining pupils in that standards in writing were comparatively higher in writing than in reading. Generally, girls achieved higher standards than boys. Standards have broadly followed an upward trend since the last inspection.
66. Year 2 has been making good progress during the latter part of the year, its progress over time has been hindered by staff changes and recruitment difficulties. Inspectors found standards in the current Year 2 above average in speaking, listening, reading and writing. Pupils achieve well over time in Years 1 and 2 although there are variations between classes. Standards are lower than at the time of the last National Curriculum tests because of inconsistencies in challenge and expectations of pupils. Standards in Year 4 are well above average in all aspects of the English curriculum, with many pupils achieving the levels expected in Year 6. Achievement in both Year 3 and 4 is good. Pupils with special educational needs, those who learn at a faster rate than others and high attaining pupils are well supported. Generally expectations are high because teachers have good subject knowledge and set challenging tasks for pupils. The work pupils produce is well written, punctuated correctly and well presented because teachers pay good attention to the basic skills.
67. Learning varies in Year 1 depending upon who teaches the class. When the head teaches, expectations are high because subject knowledge is strong and pupils rise to the challenge of the work set. Their work is of good quality, well constructed and full of invention. In the other lesson seen, and backed up by an analysis of the work in books, learning is satisfactory at best. The pace of the lesson seen was slow and expectations of how pupils should behave during listening sessions were not high. In Year 2 the expectations of pupils' behaviour, the amount of work they have to complete and the quality they must produce are high. Consequently, learning is good. In Year 3 pupils learn well and work hard; they are very attentive and want to please their teacher. At times their very good behaviour is not recognized sufficiently; however, expectations are high in this class and marking is very helpful. The same pattern of high expectations and challenging work is seen in Year 4. Relationships in this class are excellent and the teacher is sensitive to pupils' needs, often using humour to very good effect to help pupils learn at a brisk and challenging pace.
68. Standards of speaking are above average in Year 3 and well above average in Year 4; this shows good achievement. Pupils listen very well throughout the school and are always keen to volunteer their opinions and talk of events in their lives. They listen politely even when the subject matter is not captivating; their very good behaviour ensures they sit politely and listen. When they are interested in work, such as poetry in Year 1 and story writing in Year 4, pupils respond very well. In Year 2 the teacher used a favourite book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, to encourage pupils to settle and listen carefully; this proved a very good strategy as pupils sat and listened with rapt attention. This was just before each group negotiated their group name for the week. These short and sharp discussions were full of compromise and negotiation. Pupils answer questions with complex sentences and consider the opinions of others, even though they do not agree with some of the ideas voiced. They very often think

about their answers before responding and in Year 4 this gave rise to some surprising suggestions about how a story would end. Pupils are never content to take the easy road as they invent twists and turns in the plotting of their stories. When they speak pupils use the correct vocabulary to describe their thoughts, often repeating the technical terms used by their teachers. They articulate words clearly and discuss seriously giving value to the thoughts of other pupils. Pupils are confident speakers.

69. Pupils achieve well in reading. All pupils enjoy their reading. They talk about their favourite books and authors and read a variety of stories, poetry and information books. Boys have been supplied with a wider range of books including more reference material and this is having a positive effect on their reading habits and on the standards they are achieving. Pupils know the sounds that single letters and combinations make and use a variety of ways to read words they do not recognize at first sight. As they grow older so their skills develop and all higher attaining pupils in the school read well, with accuracy, fluency and very good expression. More able younger pupils make good use of punctuation to read their books. They change their voice to suit whichever character is talking at the time. In Year 4 poetry is read very well; rhythms are used to good effect and rhyme schemes such as limericks are recognized and appreciated. Less able pupils in Year 4 also use plenty of expression when reading. A challenging humorous book was read well, with lots of pauses for effect. Pupils know how to use dictionaries to find information, for example, in a lesson in Year 3 about prefixes. Pupils from Year 2 onwards know how to find information in books; they understand the difference between the contents and index page. The library is small and although well kept it does not allow high attaining pupils to develop their library skills in a sufficiently challenging manner. Pupils are skilled at using the Internet and CD-ROMs to find information.
70. Writing is above the expected levels in Year 2 and well above in Year 4, showing good achievement. Spelling and punctuation are used well in all classes. In Year 1, for example, one pupil wanted to know why the teacher had used a small line between words in a list. The teacher took the opportunity to teach the class about commas. Some of the higher attaining pupils went on to use commas in their writing. Higher attaining pupils in Year 1 try to use speech marks in their stories and pupils in Year 4 write in paragraphs and use punctuation such as semi-colons to ensure their work is correctly punctuated.
71. The quality of handwriting rises from satisfactory levels in Year 1 to well above average in Year 4. Pupils form letters correctly; their teachers are diligent in teaching them how to hold their pencils and pens correctly and how to sit at their desks so that writing is fluent and neat. Much work in Year 4 is at the level expected in Year 6. Spelling is accurate because pupils learn letter sounds and pupils try to spell words before using dictionaries or asking adults for help. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in lessons. Whether their work is supervised by a teacher or teaching assistant, less able pupils are given lots of opportunity to complete the same sort of work even though they may use different materials, for example, in Year 1 pupils wrote poems in the style of Shirley Hughes. Less able pupils were given more support than brighter pupils but both groups were expected to complete their poems to a good standard. Pupils used the format of the originals and developed their own styles, above average pupils using internal rhymes, for example, 'scrunchy, munchy sweets'.
72. In Year 2 pupils use their literacy skills in science and write poetry in the style of Spike Milligan. In a challenging lesson on homographs pupils wrote sentences using words that looked the same but are pronounced differently. In Years 3 and 4 pupils write poetry that is reflective and full of compositional skills. One Year 3 pupil wrote; 'The

green grape vine' and another in Year 4 wrote; '...and from the grass, under the willow, flutters a butterfly'. Work is literate and of high quality. Story plotting is complex and draws the reader in to continue the story. Poetry has good rhythm and well-formed stanzas.

73. Pupils achieve in line with the quality of teaching. An analysis of pupils' books shows that achievement in Year 1 is inconsistent and is not increasing at the same rate as pupils' work in other classes. In this class teaching varies from just satisfactory quality to very good. Subject knowledge is at times weak and the pace of lessons is slow as pupils are not challenged to produce their best work. In Year 2 the quality of teaching is never less than good and is very good in Year 4. Teachers teach the basic skills very well. Pupils receive good help from teaching assistants, parents at home and those who come into school. Pupils' reading is well supported; they are taught the most common words, have useful comments added to their reading diaries and have their progress tracked effectively. In Years 2, 3 and 4 expectations are high and pupils are offered plenty of challenging learning opportunities. Pupils are managed well; the adults who help them value their opinions and pupils are polite and well behaved at all times. Marking is good in Years 2, 3 and 4. In the best example, pupils are encouraged to think of ways they can improve and a written conversation is struck with pupils about their work. A notable system is the Keep In Touch books used in Year 2. These are an exemplary method of ensuring parents understand how well their children are doing and an excellent two-way system of communication between the home and school. Homework is used well to support learning and is consistently used in Year 2.
74. The use of ICT as a form of written communication is inconsistent. In Years 2 and 4 pupils have good opportunities to compose their writing on machines, to practice spelling rules, and improve reading and comprehension skills as they use the Internet. However, in Years 1 and 3 there is limited consideration given to ensuring all pupils have opportunities to use machines as an alternative method of recording, researching or practising new skills through structured programmes.
75. The assessment systems used in English are very good. The analyses carried out of these regular and consistent assessments show what needs to be improved and, for example, that boys need a different range of books to help them improve their reading skills. The headteacher and acting headteacher are sharing the leadership of the subject. The improvement since the last inspection is good.

MATHEMATICS

76. The teaching of mathematics is good overall and in Year 4 it is excellent. There was one unsatisfactory lesson observed. The high quality teaching, particularly of Year 2 and 4 has made a significant contribution to improved performance in national tests. Results of national tests in 2001 showed that standards were well above the national average and, when compared with similar schools, they were above average. Results in the optional national tests in 2001 showed that over 80 per cent of Year 4 pupils well above expected levels. The inspection evidence broadly reflects these very good results with pupils achieving above average standards by the end of Year 2 and well above average standards by the end of Year 4. Standards in mathematics have been maintained in Year 2 and have improved further in Year 4 since the previous inspection. Standards observed in Year 2 are not as high as those attained in last year's national tests largely because the present Year 2 has not, until the beginning of this year, enjoyed consistent support of high quality. Pupils' ability to recall number facts quickly and accurately as well as their receptivity to wider investigative mathematical issues is a secure basis upon which to build. Very good quality

teaching based upon a partnership approach to learning and the very successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has supported improving standards. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. There is no difference in the levels of achievement of boys and girls.

77. By Year 4, pupils build up a range of strategies to improve their efficiency in number work. There is an emphasis on patterns in both positive and negative numbers. For example, in an excellent lesson in Year 4 pupils plotted coordinates in the four quadrants. They have a very good command of language to describe their work, using words like 'axes', 'grid references' and 'coordinates' correctly. They remember the order to describe a grid reference by using an aide-memoir - "along the corridor and up or down the stairs". This teaching point gives pupils confidence in their predictions and this has a very good effect upon learning. A feature of the mathematics curriculum is its breadth. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 2, pupils investigated lines of symmetry in regular two-dimensional shapes. Again, pupils' use of precise language to describe shapes was evident. They used pentagon, hexagon and octagon accurately without their teacher's prompting. They enjoyed exploring the shapes and identifying lines of symmetry. Throughout this work the teacher challenged pupils. Pupils made significant gains in their knowledge, using language to test their hypotheses in response to their teacher's challenges.
78. By Year 4, pupils' understanding of number is very good. They confidently and accurately multiply numbers by 10 and 100 and show awareness of place value. They have very good recall of tables up to 10×10 and can apply these facts to successful calculations. They use simple formulae to calculate area and perimeter.
79. ICT support in mathematics is inconsistent. Resources are limited and are under review and while those for data handling and shape and space are satisfactory, the range and quality of materials for most pupils in number work is limited. The school is aware of this situation and is working to identify appropriate materials to meet pupils' needs more closely.
80. The quality of teaching was very good in half the lessons. At the beginning of each lesson, pupils know the learning objectives and teachers return to this during plenary sessions to assess how well pupils have learned. A strong feature is the high expectations some teachers have of the pupils. They know their pupils very well and provide very good role models of behaviour and attitude. Teachers work to create very good conditions for learning. Very good quality relationships ensure pupils feel confident that their contributions will be valued. Good humour adds to the enjoyment of some sessions. The pace of teaching is good and learning moves on at a good pace. A feature of successful teaching is the high level of teachers' subject knowledge, which enables planning to be precise to meet pupils' individual needs. Activities are well matched to pupils' abilities. As a result pupils take pride in their work and this is reflected by the good quality of presentation in exercise books. In one unsatisfactory lesson tasks lacked challenge, particularly for higher achieving pupils. The activity to reinforce work on symmetry was low level with pupils being asked to colour a picture of a butterfly. The quality of marking is variable. While it is satisfactory overall, there are insufficient examples of teachers indicating ways in which pupils can improve their work further.
81. Most pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics. Behaviour in lessons is very good. Pupils listen attentively, follow instructions and concentrate throughout the lesson. Mental warm ups create a good atmosphere for healthy competition. Pupils are anxious to be the first to respond to their teachers' challenges. Accuracy and a very good work ethic are natural parts of the learning process.

82. The subject leader is an excellent role model. Her very high standards inspire pupils and colleagues. She has carefully monitored teaching and successfully introduced a commercial mathematics scheme to complement the National Numeracy Strategy. Staff have observed her teaching and all have profited by the follow up discussions. Arrangements have been made for staff to visit other schools and to observe good teaching practice. This has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' learning. The subject leader takes every opportunity to make mathematics relevant, for example, by organizing mathematical investigations linked to a residential field trip to Ivinghoe.

SCIENCE

83. Standards are above the national average for pupils in Year 2 and well above average for pupils in Year 4. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained for pupils in Year 2 but there has been a good improvement in the standards of pupils by Year 4. Progress is good overall but is inconsistent across the school. In Year 2 and Year 4 progress is good over time, and in some lessons is very good, with good evidence of challenge in learning especially in independent investigative work. In Year 1, due to the long-term absence of the class teacher, science has been taught by a number of teachers, who often have insufficient subject knowledge and low expectation of pupils' achievement. As a result progress in Year 1 is not as rapid. In Year 3, although there is a good range of science activities, there is insufficient challenge in the investigative tasks for the pupils of differing abilities. Progress in Year 3 is sound overall but insufficient for the higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall towards their individual educational targets as they are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants however in lessons where there is limited additional help their progress is sound. The pupils identified as gifted and talented or with English as an additional language achieve well because of good consideration of their personal needs.
84. By the end of Year 2 many pupils have good knowledge for their age and can describe the life cycle of plants, or ducks, or humans. They have watched plants and sunflowers grow, and have a good understanding of the importance of food, light, and heat for plant growth. Each day they peer over the fence surrounding the wild garden and note the changes in the tadpoles in the pond anticipating the stages of development by the next day. They have considered the benefits of a healthy diet for themselves and agreed the values of exercise. To help them understand about sensible and less healthy diets they have kept a food diary for a week and then used this information to identify fatty or sugary foods or even favourite foods. Experiments on forces have helped the pupils understand the requirements of a fair test. In one lesson to test the speed of a car down ramps arranged at different heights, the pupils asked pertinent questions of the class teacher about where the test should start and the degree of force to exert if the test was to remain fair. Many pupils have a good understanding of technical vocabulary for their age and are constantly improving their knowledge of new terms. The teacher has high expectations of them and without hesitation she will discuss with them "the angle of a slope," or "the optimum position of a car." As a result during independent work many pupils use these terms accurately in their conversations. By the end of Year 2 more able pupils are recording their answers effectively using block graphs, charts and written accounts. Most pupils make predictions and evaluations of tests unaided but some have difficulty recording this information. A small number of pupils have difficulty with comprehension and need more detailed explanations from the teacher before they can undertake the scientific experiments. This slows down their rate of progress.

85. Pupils continue to develop well their knowledge and skills in Years 3 and 4 through carefully selected topics. The planned scheme provides a good structure to the learning and ensures the needs of pupils of all abilities are addressed. For example, in Year 3 pupils have undertaken a topic on teeth, identified incisors or molars, and discussed the preferred habitats of herbivores and carnivores. This work has been extended in Year 4 when pupils have identified bones and muscles in the body and then considered the benefits of different diets and exercise to protect and build good bone structures and strong muscles. In this year group pupils have discussed the dangers and benefits of drugs and with sensitive teacher questioning have understood about drug misuse. The school has decided to introduce a topic on sex education and a programme of work is being developed currently for the older pupils. Good experiences are introduced in Year 3 for pupils to grow fruit and vegetables, and they can describe in good detail how to grow carrots, runner beans, and tomatoes. Most pupils in Year 3 and 4 have a satisfactory understanding of magnetism and of positive and negative forces. Through work on electricity most pupils are able to describe how to make an electrical circuit but are not yet able to recognize the different uses of electricity in home appliances. Their knowledge of the solar system and planets is limited, and understanding of day and night relies mostly on their memories of the recent eclipse. By the time pupils move to middle school they can write a detailed report of a scientific experiment explaining their predictions, the constant and variable elements of their methods and then a brief evaluation of their results. Rapid progress is made by the oldest pupils in developing good skills in research, mostly using CD-ROM, but also sometimes books and posters as additional sources of evidence. There is only a small selection of books in the library available for pupils to read independently.
86. The quality of teaching is good over time, although in some lessons there is an inconsistency in pace and expectations. The curriculum has good breadth and balance and teachers are well supported by a programme of study built on the nationally recommended scheme of work. Since the last inspection more attention has given to providing tasks that are appropriate to different ability groups, especially the more able pupils. In the better lessons planning is good and activities are organized thoroughly. In these lessons pupils are encouraged to learn through investigations. There is some evidence of planning building successfully on previous learning so that pupils make good progress in developing new skills. Teachers mark well in Years 3 and 4 and effectively describe to pupils best methods of improvement. The oldest pupils in Year 4 benefit from many well-planned opportunities to work independently. In most classes teachers reinforce scientific learning through other subjects of the curriculum successfully. For example, in an ICT lesson in Year 4 pupils used information from earlier research to make scattergrams about bones. Some teachers have good subject knowledge and an enthusiasm in the subject. These teachers have high expectations and create a good ethos for learning.
87. Pupils enjoy work in science especially when it involves investigation. They display good levels of involvement and interest and strive hard to be successful. Pupils display very good social skills as they work on class or group activities. They enjoy the challenge and interchange in group discussions and this helps improve their learning. Behaviour is good in most lessons and in some lessons is very good. This subject makes a very good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
88. There has been little monitoring in the subject recently as there has been no subject manager. The newly appointed headteacher proposes to take temporary responsibility for this subject and has already identified some strengths and

weaknesses through a review of standards. An action plan for improvements is already emerging. Assessment takes place at the end of each topic and there is some on-going assessment to target areas for improvement with pupils through marking. However, this is inconsistent across the school. Only a small number of pupils can yet describe their strategies for improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

89. The attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 4 is at the expected levels, maintaining the standards seen at the last inspection. Judgments are based on the evidence of one lesson, an analysis of the work in portfolios and displays, and discussions with pupils. The recent fire destroyed the artwork in the Year 4 classroom. Work produced in Year 2 is of particular note.
90. In Year 1 pupils sketch minibeasts in chalk showing good use of colour. Flowers are portrayed using paint and chalk. These paintings are full of energy and life. They paint buildings in their work in geography, attempting with some success to show the texture of bricks, stone and wood. In Year 2 studies of fruit and vases are a precursor to very good quality observational drawings in pencil, chalks and pastels. These sketches are taken from the work of Chardin and are atmospheric and evocative. Pupils have captured the highlights reflected on glass and the texture of the fruit.
91. In Year 3 pupils have used the work of Matisse as models for their own decoupage. Carefully torn paper is used to portray snails and work based on Memory Of Oceania. This is sound work combining a secure understanding of colour and texture. Pupils in Year 4 have studied the work of Paul Klee as part of their homework and painted their versions of his three colour work. They talk of trying to emulate the artists as he 'took his pen for a walk'. A good cultural understanding was established as pupils studied the work of Native Americans fabricating pots to use in totem poles. Pupils have used a wide range of media and understand the need to design their work and evaluate their progress. This was also evident in Year 3 as pupils in that class evaluated how they produced their work based on Matisse.
92. The quality of teaching in the lesson observed was satisfactory. The teacher encouraged pupils to look in detail at the work of Matisse and then reproduce his style. The pupils were interested in the work and made satisfactory progress in learning to use a variety of brushes. Following reminders from the teacher they created various shades of colour. Overall, teachers' planning is satisfactory but new tasks do not build sufficiently on previous learning.
93. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the subject is well led by a competent subject manager. The development of portfolios is useful and charts pupils' progress in the subject. Good links with ICT ensure that pupils use their graphic skills to good effect when developing illustrations and artwork. There are a small selection of books about famous artists but insufficient to extend pupils' knowledge about a wide range of artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are in line with those expected. The school has maintained its standards in this area of the curriculum since the previous inspection.

95. No lessons were observed in design and technology during the period of the inspection and judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' work, an examination of teachers' planning and discussions with the subject leader and with pupils.
96. By the end of Year 2 pupils learn about the design processes and plan and make a variety of models from cardboard and balsa wood. For example, pupils cut card using scissors and fold to make corners when they made sweet boxes. They chose a name for their sweet and a marketing slogan. Higher achieving pupils explored making a net for their product. They also designed frames for photographs and used a vice to hold the wood while they cut with a saw. Edges and joins were sanded indicating good attention given to the quality of finish to their work. They chose colours to decorate their frames and made a decision about the photograph to be framed. A camera was available for pupils who were unable to identify a photograph they wished to use. Good links with ICT are encouraged. For example, pupils used a paint program to design a print, which was then decorated using a range of attractive materials. By the end of Year 4 pupils have refined their design skills further. They design masks using a range of paper and card in an investigation to explore the different effects that can be made using paper. A wide range of techniques including weaving and twisting were used. Joining different materials using a range of adhesives enhanced pupils' knowledge of the differences of textures. The finished masks were evaluated and in discussion pupils readily indicated ways in which their work could be improved.
97. The school follows recent national guidelines for design and technology. The importance of assessing work is recognised by teachers and pupils. After each project teachers discuss with pupils the strengths and weaknesses of their work. Throughout the school pupils identify ways in which their work can be improved further.
98. Pupils enjoy explaining the way in which they plan their work. They talk enthusiastically about future projects and give carefully explained details of how they plan to complete the task. There has been no recent review of resources to assess quantity or quality of materials matched to National Curriculum needs.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

99. The last time the school was inspected standards in history were above the expected levels in Year 2 and in line in Year 4. In geography standards were in line with expectations in both years. Since then standards in history have improved in Year 4 but declined in Year 2. Standards in geography have been maintained. The choice of themes in history in Years 1 and 2, although in line with the National Curriculum for primary schools, lacks coherence and pattern. Its focus shifts from 'my family and those around me' to the Mayflower and Scott of the Antarctic in Year 1 and then covers invaders and settlers in Britain in Year 2. This mix of topics does not help pupils develop a sense of chronology.
100. One lesson was observed in geography in Year 2. In this lesson teaching and learning were good. Pupils had previously made field sketches and in this lesson looked carefully at the public playground adjacent to the school. They made sensible suggestions about how their local environment could be improved and responded with good common sense. They understand the idea of keys and how to draw sketch maps. Pupils in Year 1 have a sound understanding of maps and diagrams and how they apply to their classroom and school. They have written persuasively about how good life is in Westoning and show on maps from the Internet, the location of their

school. Pupils in Year 2 study the weather and use symbols on maps to follow weather patterns.

101. One history lesson was observed in Year 4 and in this lesson teaching and learning were very good. Pupils worked hard at sifting through sources of information about their school and school life generally in the last century. They understand the differences between evidence, which is collected first and second hand and know that although newspapers tried to be accurate, some mistakes occur. Average and below average attaining pupils checked sources of information against each other. For example, in a newspaper cutting from the 1970s a gentleman boasted of being the 'naughtiest boy in the school'. Pupils checked his age, looked back at the school's logbook for that period and found that his name was not the most common entry in the punishment record. In discussion, pupils' chronological knowledge is above average. They understand how to triangulate their findings and check the validity of their sources. In this lesson the resources were of particularly high quality and had been organized well. Pupils became engrossed in the lesson and, by posing searching questions, the teacher encouraged pupils to think hard about their work. She asked them to consider the relative power of the evidence available by giving pupils evidence they did not require. For a little while pupils became sidetracked by photographs but returned to the written evidence as being most reliable and giving a fuller account. Previous work has included life in Roman Britain, roads and homes, the Vikings and Victorian Britain. In Year 3 pupils made good efforts to research Viking place names and some good quality work was produced in their homework projects on the Victorians.
102. Schemes of work have been agreed between the school and their partner middle school. However, the school is aware that this has caused an imbalance in the curriculum and will shortly be discussing this issue with other schools in the area. Pupils use computers and CD-ROMs for research purposes to good effect. The headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher are leading the subjects in a satisfactory manner.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

103. Pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected of pupils in Year 2 and above the expectation in Year 4. This is a significant improvement on those described at the time of the previous inspection.
104. Teachers have become more confident with ICT since the previous inspection and this has improved the quality of teaching and learning. The staff will shortly begin additional training to improve their skills further. While resources have improved considerably, much of the software has yet to be delivered. There are now sufficient machines in each classroom. Pupils use the Internet to access information and in Year 4 this has encouraged the extension of ICT skills into other curriculum areas. A temporary subject leader with very good subject knowledge and plenty of enthusiasm is currently leading the subject very well. Teaching has been monitored and this has brought good practice into sharper focus. Teachers now recognize the need to plan ICT more regularly in other subjects of the curriculum to reinforce skills in practical situations. Currently timetable provision in Years 1 and 3 is too limited.
105. Pupils build on the skills they have learned in the reception class. Year 1 pupils gain confidence using the keyboard and most pupils make satisfactory progress improving their knowledge of the position of the keys. They experiment with paint programs to make attractive pictures. By the end of Year 2 pupils programme a floor turtle and show a good knowledge of making 90 degree turns. They retrieve information from

CD-ROMs to reinforce and extend their learning in other subjects. There are good links with mathematics when pupils display their investigative conclusions using block graphs. Word processing skills are developed further in Year 3 with pupils choosing different fonts for their work. The skills and knowledge of pupils in Year 4 accelerates; for example, they know how to import pictures to illustrate their work. They access information from a range of sources and are beginning to recognize ways of displaying information through Excel. The quantity and diversity of work increases rapidly and all pupils have personalized disks as evidence of the progression in their knowledge and skills. Pupils' work shows purpose.

106. The quality of teaching is good overall with examples of excellence. In a good lesson in Year 2 the teacher showed good subject knowledge when she gave a very clear explanation of how to program a screen turtle. She works closely with the teaching assistant and this has a very good effect upon learning. Very good relationships in the classroom and the teacher's high expectations of pupils' work and attitudes promote good quality learning. Pupils in Year 4 become engrossed in the subject. The excellent relationships in class between adults and pupils provide a very good platform for learning. The teacher has very good subject knowledge, great respect for pupils and high expectations of pupils' work and attitudes. She provides a very good range of challenge for all pupils and they respond very positively. This has an excellent effect upon the high quality of learning in the classroom. Pupils talk confidently about different information sources they have used. They know about spreadsheets and understand the significance of scattergraphs, linking this with work in science.
107. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the excitement of learning through using ICT. Many have computers at home and talk enthusiastically about sharing their knowledge with older brothers and sisters. These interests accelerate learning and ensure that pupils begin the next phase of education fully able to take advantage of sophisticated learning programs.

MUSIC

108. Two music lessons were seen, in Years 1 and 3. It is not possible to make a judgment about standards in Years 2 and 4 but learning in the lessons seen was slow, particularly in the aspects of performing and composing. At the last inspection standards were judged to be at the expected levels for pupils in Years 2 and 4. However, although the school uses a commercial scheme to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum requirements, in the lessons seen teachers did not have enough subject knowledge to ensure that pupils make the required rates of achievement. Pupils sing well in lessons and in the hall during assembly. Their singing is tuneful and words are well articulated; their voices are clear. As pupils enter the hall for assembly music plays, helps to create an atmosphere appropriate to the occasion and the composer and title are displayed.
109. Both lessons were well managed and contained all of the elements of the music curriculum. Pupils in Year 1 the teacher meticulously recapped on the previous lesson and reminded pupils that, as they sang 'One, Two, Buckle My Shoe', they had to listen to the recorded music and each other. Pupils were enthusiastic and as they sang the lesson developed so that they had to clap along with the song. The attainment in this section of the lesson was below what is expected for pupils of this age. The teacher and pupils clapped the rhythm of the words rather than maintaining the pulse. Pupils listened well and followed directions so that one group sang as the other clapped. However, there was little development beyond this basic achievement.

110. In Year 3 pupils talked about carnivals they had visited and with their teacher discussed how they would characterize carnival music. As pupils listened to four excerpts, 'The Last Post', 'Land of My Fathers', 'Auld Lang Syne' and Caribbean carnival music, they correctly identified the mood of each piece and how the music would be used in public events. This work was at the expected level for Year 3 pupils. As the musical instruments were given out, pupils behaved very well even though it took a little time for this to be completed. Pupils followed the pulse of the recorded music with untuned percussion and then moved onto accompanying more recorded music with glockenspiels. Although pupils accompanied the song on each bar of the music, this was formulaic and did not encourage creativity or improvising around the basic structure.
111. The pace of both lessons was slow and, because teachers lacked subject knowledge, both lessons lacked challenge and pupils did not achieve as much as they should have done. The implementation of the music scheme, which was new at the time of the last inspection, has not brought about enough improvement. Some pupils have the benefit of attending recorder clubs and others have lessons from a peripatetic violin teacher. As the school does not have a musician on the staff singing is to recorded music rather than live. The staff and governors are aware of this shortcoming and are attempting to recruit a community member to support this work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

112. Standards in physical education are broadly in line with nationally expected levels for pupils in Year 2 and are above expected levels in Year 4. These findings are similar to those reported in the previous inspection for pupils in Year 4 but have shown a decline in Year 2. When pupils start the National Curriculum they are achieving well and are agile, with good skills of co-ordination for their age. In Years 1 and 2 they make sound progress and there is satisfactory improvement in skills in gymnastics, games and dance. In Years 3 and 4 rates of progress are more rapid and pupils have greater enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and participate in all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs, high attaining pupils and those who are gifted and talented achieve well as good consideration is given to their individual needs.
113. The quality of teaching is varied across the school, but satisfactory overall. In the better lessons the teachers have good subject knowledge and skilfully introduce pupils to more challenging tasks. Through targeted questioning pupils learn to evaluate their own performance and suggest ways to improve. A good pace is established to the learning. Most teachers organize lessons well and consider the needs of pupils carefully. The best lessons take place when teachers adapt their planning according both to the needs of pupils and the venue, and introduce activities, which are appropriate. However, in some less successful lessons, especially in the school hall, pupils find it difficult to improve their performance because of cramped conditions. In these lessons rates of progress are much slower. Some teachers dress suitably so that they can join in with pupils and provide demonstrations of instructions. This involvement by adults helps all pupils including those with special educational needs towards their best performance. All pupils have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in their performances.
114. Pupils enjoy physical education lessons and show good attitudes throughout. They listen intently to instructions, concentrate well as they seek to improve their performance, and show good levels of spontaneous appreciation of the improved performance of others. Politely they will contribute to the teacher's explanations of activities so that they can benefit from each other. For example, in a Year 2 games

lesson pupils explained the techniques, which they had learnt in the netball club, to help improve performance when throwing larger balls to a partner. In all lessons behaviour is good. Through this subject pupils learn very good moral and social skills.

115. Additional interest is created in this subject by the very good range of sporting activities available for pupils after school or at lunchtime. The staff welcomes the numerous parents, grandparents and friends of the school who are eager to help so that pupils can participate in school and village sporting events. Some pupils return from the middle school to give their support and watch the progress of the various teams. There are several football and netball teams, athletics and country dancing. Boys and girls play well together in these activities. The school participates in local leagues and festivals, and during the inspection one of the teams proudly received the winner's netball trophy for the 3rd consecutive year.
116. At present there are no agreed assessment procedures other than informal evaluations and in some year groups little information is available to identify pupils' current skills or pinpoint areas for development. Although pupils carry out tasks adequately, challenges are not matched to individual levels of attainment.
117. There is an experienced subject manager who is enthusiastic about maintaining standards but who has limited opportunities to monitor its development. The subject manager is able to assist her colleagues in planning lessons or providing advice, and most teachers are confident to deliver the planned scheme of work. Equipment for gymnastics, games and athletic is of good quality and plentiful. The subject manager makes regular checks on resources for safety and suitability. In lessons safety is always given good consideration, although in the small hall this is often difficult to achieve and lesson time is lost as teachers move storage equipment out of the hall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118. Standards in religious education are in line with the targets of the locally Agreed Syllabus, which is followed by most schools in Bedfordshire. All pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards in the subject are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
119. By the end of Year 2 pupils know a good range of the stories that Jesus told. They know that Jesus was born in Bethlehem and that he grew up as the son of a carpenter and that later he was to become an important leader. Pupils also talk about important festivals, for example Easter and Christmas, and are aware that these times of the year have special significance for Christians. They recognise other religions also have important festivals. They find out about Diwali, the festival of light, and recognise that holy books give guidance to believers. By the end of Year 4 pupils have sound knowledge of Jewish family life. Interesting themes, for example 'Choices', encourage pupils to consider the importance of making decisions in a variety of situations that can affect lives.
120. In the two lessons observed the quality of teaching was good in one lesson and unsatisfactory in the second. In Year 1 pupils learn about Christian festivals. The teacher encouraged pupils to talk about their experiences, for example, attending harvest celebrations, weddings and christenings and skilfully extended pupils' knowledge about Christian traditions. Well-organised group discussion helped pupils to learn effectively from each other's experiences and to understand that religions have their own special characteristics. In the unsatisfactory lesson, pupils in Year 3 learned about the contribution of the Bible and its importance for Christians. At first,

pupils showed a good knowledge about aspects of the Bible. They knew the relevance of the Old and New Testaments. The teacher prepared four different accounts from the Bible. Pupils were encouraged to compare the use of language in the texts, and with the teacher's help they began to understand why there are different versions of the Bible. However, difficulties in understanding biblical language, the inferior quality of the text and overlong teacher explanations made learning difficult.

121. Overall, discussions and sampling of work shows that teaching is satisfactory. Most of the learning is through discussion. Pupils are enthusiastic to discuss their work in religious education. For example, work on other major faiths prepares pupils well for life in a multi-faith society.
122. The subject leader has monitored teaching and learning and has provided sound guidance for staff. Assessment procedures are informal and pupils are encouraged to contribute to the assessment of their work. Resources are satisfactory but shortages have been identified to support the teaching of certain aspects of Christianity. There is only a small selection of books available to encourage pupils to learn about major world faiths.