

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SHACKLETON LOWER SCHOOL**

Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109526

Headteacher: Mrs P McCafferty

Reporting inspector: Mr A Margerison  
21666

Dates of inspection: 20 – 23 May 2002

Inspection number: 245335

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pearcey Road Bedford Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK42 9LZ
Telephone number:	01234 352912
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss F J Wells
Date of previous inspection:	23 – 27 March 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21666	Mr A Margerison	Registered inspector	English History Geography Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9163	Mr G Humphrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22113	Mrs A King	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Science Art and design Design and technology Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

21910	Mr G Longton	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education Religious education	How well the school is lead and managed?
27240	Mr W A Hooper	Team inspector	English as an Additional Language	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Shackleton Lower School is situated near the centre of Bedford. At the time of the inspection there were 207 pupils on roll aged from five to nine years. This is similar to the numbers on roll at the time of the last inspection. The school is organised into eight classes with some classes comprising pupils from different year groups. Most pupils live in the surrounding area which is a mixture of private and rented housing, but a few parents from neighbouring areas choose to bring their children to the school. A broad range of cultures and religions are represented among pupils, mainly Asian and European, but a few families are refugees from conflicts around the world. A significant proportion of pupils join and leave the school during the year. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language and the school benefits from support from Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant funding. A total of 53 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals and 31.4 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Both of these are well above the national average. There are nine pupils with statements of special educational needs. In many households parents are working, but overall socio-economic circumstances are well below average. Most children in the current Reception class went to Nursery school and although attainment on entry varies from child to child, overall it is well below that which is typical for children of their age. The school is in an Education Action Zone.

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

Shackleton Lower School is a very effective school that values the contributions, welfare and achievements of pupils. The school is very well led by the headteacher, provides a good education for its pupils and has many strengths including the good quality of teaching. Provision for developing pupils' literacy skills, their cultural awareness and the range of activities out of lessons are very good. Pupils' standards of attainment at age seven in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently below the national average, but pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Attainment in art and design and music is good at age seven and pupils attain good standards in art and design, music and design and technology in Years 3 and 4. Apart from reading and mathematics, in which standards are below average, pupils' attainment in writing and all other subjects at seven and at the end of Year 4 is in line with national expectations. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Pupils attain good standards in music and art throughout the school.
- Teaching is consistently good leading to pupils achieving well as they move through the school.
- There is good provision for pupils' personal education, in particular their cultural development, that results in positive attitudes to learning, very high standards of behaviour and relationships throughout the school between pupils and adults.
- The procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' attendance are excellent.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership. The highly appropriate priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan and very good teamwork ensures that the school has made rapid progress recently and is well set to improve further.
- There is a very good range of activities outside lesson times that allows pupils to pursue their interests and develop their social, physical and creative talents further.

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

- Pupils' standards of attainment in reading and aspects of mathematics at age seven and in English and mathematics at the end of Year 4.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and how the information gained is used.
- The quality of some of the information provided for parents and the involvement of parents in the work of the school.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1998. The progress made towards addressing the 'key issues' identified is good overall. There has been a substantial change in staff and the school still has three temporary teachers in the Reception and Year 1 classes until September 2002 when a permanent teacher will join the staff. This appointment of the current headteacher in September 2001 has led directly to the school now having a very clear educational direction focused on raising pupils' standards of attainment and the quality of the education. The quality of teaching has improved substantially so standards in English and mathematics are beginning to improve. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen during the inspection with the management of pupils and the organisation of lessons being particular strengths. The range of activities out of lessons is now very good, the provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and collective worship meets statutory requirements. Subject managers have clear roles and although they have had limited opportunities as yet to make a significant effect on standards of attainment or the quality of education, good plans for action are in place and they are beginning to make a positive contribution to the management of the school. Despite the school doing all it can to improve attendance, the rate of unauthorised absence means that attendance is below average. Recently, very good improvements have been made to the accommodation including some redecoration of classrooms and the creation of a new entrance, Reception and office complex.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

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

**Key**

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

Standards of work seen in the current Year 2 classes are satisfactory and pupils achieve well from the end of Reception. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, standards of attainment were well below the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. When compared with similar schools, as measured by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards in reading were average, above average in writing, but below average in mathematics. Taking the three years, 1999-2001 together, pupils' performance has been below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. There has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls and pupils of all abilities and background make good progress. Currently, pupils' standards of attainment in reading and mathematics are below national expectations, but the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 4 is increasing and standards are set to improve. Standards in writing continue to be better than reading with the majority of pupils achieving very well to attain satisfactory standards. Pupils' standards in science are close to that expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 4. Since the last inspection standards have improved in music and art throughout the school. Pupils now achieve very well so they attain standards above that expected for their age. In all other subjects, pupils achieve well so they attain standards in line with those expected for their age by the end of Years 2 and 4.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive attitudes to learning. They are well motivated and work very hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils understand and follow the established routines and meet the very high expectations set for them in all areas of the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are very good and enable the school to function as a very well-ordered community. Pupils respect each other and are sensitive to each other's feelings, values and beliefs.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. The rate of unauthorised attendance results in pupils' attendance being below average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
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 at the school is good with no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. This is good improvement since the last report and one of the reasons why pupils' standards of attainment has begun to improve and pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Teachers from the Reception class upwards place a strong emphasis on planning and teaching basic skills in literacy and numeracy to pupils of all abilities and background. The activities in other subjects such as history, geography and science provide good opportunities for pupils to use and practise their literacy skills. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' performance and behaviour in lessons and around the school so pupils concentrate well in lessons and are keen to do well. Lessons are very well organised. Pupils are consistently well-managed so they behave very well. The support given to pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language makes sure pupils are included in activities and overall they learn well, but is not sufficiently focused on their individual needs for them to make consistent progress in all aspects of English and mathematics.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a good curriculum. Strategies for developing pupils' literacy are very good and those for numeracy are good. The range of extra-curricular activities gives pupils very good opportunities to develop their social, physical and creative skills. All pupils have equal access to the experiences and opportunities provided for them. Links with the community and other institutions are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. The provision is well-managed and advice from outside specialists is used effectively, but targets in individual plans are not consistently specific or measurable to guide teachers in planning activities or support.

Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Teachers know pupils well and adults give them sensitive support in lessons, but insufficient emphasis is given to providing teachers and pupils with enough guidance on how to meet their individual needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for social and moral development is good. Teachers provide many opportunities in and out of lessons for pupils to work together. The range of visits and visitors to school enhance the opportunities pupils have to develop their personal skills. Provision for pupils' cultural development, particularly through art and music activities is very good. Provision for spiritual development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are excellent. Those for promoting pupils' behaviour and eliminating bullying and racism are very good. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good in English and mathematics, but procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress in other subjects are unsatisfactory and not enough use is made of information gained through assessments to monitor the progress pupils make.

On a day-to-day basis the school works well with parents, although the lack of a daily communication systems limits teachers capacity to communicate effectively with those parents who do not come to school. The quality of information parents receive, particularly the end of year reports do not give them sufficient information about how well their children are doing. The school has recognised this and is revising the current format.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is the main driving force in giving a clear direction to the work of the school. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher who made a major contribution to the management of the school during the extended period of instability before the current headteacher was appointed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths of the school and give effective support to the headteacher.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher, senior management team and governors have a clear understanding of what the school does well and how it needs to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Special grants from a range of sources are used well to provide support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Resources are used well in lessons. Spending is linked appropriately to identified priorities. Best value is sought routinely.

There is a good number of support staff, but a number are relatively inexperienced so the effectiveness of the support provided for pupils is variable. The accommodation is good, but the lack of an outside play area for all children in Reception classes affects the progress they make in aspects of their physical development. Teaching and learning resources are satisfactory and used well in lessons, although use of the large outside play equipment by children in Reception is limited.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best.</li><li>• The range of activities out of lessons.</li><li>• They are kept well informed about how their child is doing at school.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of work pupils are given to do at home.</li></ul>

The inspection team generally supports parents' positive views of the school. Although, the amount of work pupils are asked to do at home is broadly typical of First schools, the inspection team feels that the range and quality, particularly to develop pupils' reading and number skills, could be improved to help involve parents more effectively in their children's learning. Similarly, although parents are provided with plenty of information about the school, annual reports to parents do not give sufficient information about what pupils need to improve on and the lack of a daily home/school system of communicating with parents limits how well some parents are involved in their child's learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, standards of attainment were well below the national average in reading and mathematics and below average in writing. When compared with similar schools, as measured by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards in reading were average, above average in writing, but below average in mathematics. Taking the three years, 1999-2001 together, pupils' performance has been below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. There has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
2. However, the context of the school is much more diverse and complex than indicated by the free school meals indicator alone. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, including some pupils who are refugees from abroad, is well above the national average in all classes. However, pupils achieve well as they move through the school so that by the age of seven the majority attain the expected Level 2 in reading and writing by the age of seven and a better than average proportion attain the higher Level 3 than found in similar schools, but a lower proportion of pupils attain good Level 2 standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This is directly related to pupils' low standards of attainment on entry to school and brings the school's overall results down when compared nationally. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly in reading and writing and those with English as an additional language make good progress in reading and mathematics. Their progress in writing is satisfactory, but this reflects the pattern seen in many schools among this group of pupils.
3. The majority of children have pre-school experience in the Nursery school next door and enter Reception with a broad range of prior attainment. However, due to the additional factors referred to above, pupils' attainment on entry to school, according to local authority baseline tests, is well below that which is typical for their age. The previous inspection judged attainment on entry to Year 1 to be well below that expected. Currently, by the end of their Reception year the majority of children do not attain the expected standards in the six areas of learning, but they achieve well, particularly in the basic skills of language and literacy, personal development and mathematics so their attainment on entry to Year 1 is now below which indicates standards are improving.
4. The inspection finds that standards of work seen in the current Year 2 classes, taking all factors and subjects into account are satisfactory and pupils achieve well from the end of the Foundation Stage. This confirms parents' perspective of the school. Evidence from lessons, pupils' work and school data indicates that although in reading and mathematics, pupils' standards of attainment are below national expectations, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels is increasing and standards are set to improve. In reading, most pupils have secure understanding of letter sounds and names and can use a range of ways to work out unfamiliar words, but not enough are fluent and confident readers able to interpret what they are

reading and to comment on the plot or the characters. In mathematics, pupils have secure understanding of some areas of the subject such as shape, measuring and carrying out investigations, but their basic understanding of number is not secure enough. This is partly due to insufficient emphasis being placed in numeracy lessons on the opening parts of lessons and the limited range of tasks given to pupils that require them to use their number skills in subjects such as geography and science. Standards in writing continue to be better than reading with the majority of pupils attaining satisfactory standards. Pupils' standards in science are close to that expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 4 due to the emphasis placed by teachers on investigative work and providing plenty of opportunities for pupils to record their ideas and write up their own findings.

5. The proportion of pupils of all abilities and background achieving the expected levels in English and mathematics by the end of Year 4 is improving as they continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets in their individual plans and when comparing their attainment in national tests at the age of seven and the optional tests at the end of Year 4. This is because the school has good procedures for identifying those pupils who may have difficulties and provides them with appropriate support in lessons. This is particularly the case in reading and writing. The school has identified a few pupils to be gifted and talented. These pupils and those with English as an additional language also make good progress particularly in reading and mathematics. Higher attaining pupils from all groups attain good standards and demonstrate secure understanding of literacy and numeracy and how to use these skills in their work as part of investigations in science or mathematics or when presenting their ideas through their writing.
6. Standards have improved since the last inspection in music and art throughout the school. Pupils now achieve very well so they attain standards above that expected for their age. In music this is primarily due to the very good teaching and collaboration with an external specialist music teacher who also works closely with school staff to teach them the skills to work with pupils in other sessions when she is not in school. In art, teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to work with different media and in different styles so they develop their skills in a broad range of contexts. In addition, the expertise of visiting artists contributes significantly to the rate at which pupils' skills develop. Standards are also above that expected in design and technology by the end of Year 4 with pupils having a very secure understanding of the design, make and evaluation process.
7. In all other subjects, pupils achieve well so they attain standards in line with those expected for their age by the end of Years 2 and 4. For example, in history, pupils have a secure understanding of different events, periods of history and how peoples' lives change over time. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those expected by the end of Years 2 and 3, but pupils achieve well as they move through the school. In religious education standards are satisfactory, but pupils achieve well so their knowledge and understanding of the subject is in line with those expected by the locally agreed syllabus.

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

8. Overall, pupils' positive attitudes to learning, their very good behaviour and relationships in the school have been maintained since the last inspection and

continue to have a positive impact on the quality of learning and pupils' achievement. Pupils' personal development is very good and they are well-prepared for the next phase of their education.

9. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attitudes towards learning are good. The majority are well motivated, work hard and keen to play their full part in lessons. The small number of parents who returned questionnaires and attended the pre-inspection meeting confirmed that their children are happy at school, behave well and respect each other and their teachers. They felt that the school promoted good attitudes and moral values.
10. In the Reception classes children settle well into school routines and soon gain sufficient confidence to participate in the full range of play and learning activities. Initially some children find taking turns and co-operating with each other quite difficult but they make good progress with their social skills during their first few weeks in school. As long as teachers give children clear instructions and maintain high expectations of behaviour, they observe the discipline of holding up a hand to answer a question and to wait patiently for their turn to contribute. A good example of the way children develop in confidence during their Reception year was seen during a country dancing activity. At the beginning of the lesson some children were reluctant to participate, but by the end were joining in enthusiastically. Similarly, they learn to listen well and to make a positive contribution to lessons. For example in a literacy lesson observed the children became deeply involved in a story about 'The Hungry Caterpillar' and responded to questions well.
11. This interest and enthusiasm for school activities continues as pupils move through the school. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work well together and have clear commitment towards learning. For example, Year 1 pupils were highly motivated and made a lively contribution when asked to create rhyming strings during a literacy lesson. Year 2 pupils demonstrated sustained concentration in an art lesson and very good collaboration when using a digital camera in an information and communication technology lesson and their response and contribution in a music lesson was excellent. As pupils progress through the school their interest and enthusiasm for learning continue to develop. For example, in a mathematics lesson on symmetry, a mixed class of Year 3 and 4 pupils made a great effort and demonstrated a very good work ethic.
12. Pupils' behaviour overall is very good. Pupils are polite and courteous towards each other and adults, holding doors open and standing aside to let others pass. Adults treat pupils with respect and consideration and this is reflected in the confidence and trust that pupils have in their relationship with others. There were 13 temporary exclusions in the last year involving seven boys of which only one was from an ethnic minority background, but most of these were in the period before the current headteacher took charge.
13. Relationships between all members of the school community are very good in lessons and around the school. Very good relationships between pupils and the class teacher were seen in a Year 3 science lesson where they were set the task of identifying different groups of animals. Pupils have a good understanding of the impact that their actions can have on others and a very good level of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. In many situations the relationships are

excellent with pupils showing care and concern towards each other. No bullying or unacceptable behaviour was seen during the inspection and pupils from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds work and play together in harmony.

14. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them to show initiative and take responsibility. Even the youngest take the registers back to the school office after morning and afternoon registration and pupils in all classes help teachers by handing out books and clearing up after lessons. Older pupils help in assemblies with the overhead projector, the music centre and provide percussion accompaniment during singing. All girls and boys, including those who find learning difficult, those from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, those who are new to the United Kingdom and have limited use of the English language, are fully included in all aspects of the life and work of the school so they learn to take responsibility for their own actions and learn to appreciate each other's differences in a positive way.
15. Attendance is below average. The proportion of unauthorised absence is higher than in most schools. This does not reflect any negative attitude of pupils to school, but is because some pupils are taken out of school by parents during term time due to overseas family commitments.

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

16. During the inspection, 37 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen, and most of the teaching was good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching, in particular, the very good management of pupils and the very effective planning of lessons is directly responsible for this improvement. Consequently, pupils' behave very well in lessons and learn at a good pace as they move through the school. There are no consistent weaknesses in the teaching methods employed by teachers although the quality of marking is variable. The amount of work pupils are given to do at home is broadly typical for their age, but insufficient care is taken to ensure it consistently reinforces and develops the basic skills of reading and number that pupils need to learn. In addition the lack of a whole-school approach to recording what pupils do at home limits teachers' ability to monitor and assess their progress and to communicate with parents as to how they can help their children learn.
17. The Foundation Stage caters for children up to the end of reception. At Shackleton Lower School this stage includes children in the Reception classes. There is a distinct difference in the quality of teaching and learning in the two Reception classes. The class taught by the permanent member of staff are taught well promoting good standards of children's achievement and behaviour. In the class taken by the two part-time temporary staff, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. In the shared class, planning of lessons is good but inconsistencies in the approaches taken to manage pupils' behaviour results in some children taking advantage of the variations in style. As a result, not all lessons have a brisk pace which affects the progress these children make in lessons on different days of the week. For example, in one literacy lesson tasks given to pupils were appropriate to the objectives set for the lesson and, although adults had to work hard to keep all children on task, by using a variety of methods, the children did what was expected of them. However, later in the week, the same pupils were not so well-managed and although they eventually completed the tasks satisfactorily, a significant amount of time was lost in trying to direct these few pupils. Consequently, taking all the children into account,

the pace of learning in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. However, this arrangement will be changed from the start of the next academic year with the appointment of a permanent new member of staff.

18. All the lessons taught by the permanent member of staff observed during the inspection were good. Notable strengths of the teaching are the planning of lessons and the teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Lessons cleverly consolidate and extend children's developing skills, knowledge and understanding in these areas. As a result, they make good progress from a very low starting point to attain aspects of the early learning goals by the end of their first year in school. The teacher has a very clear understanding of how to deploy other adults effectively in lessons to support individual children or small groups. The teacher allows children some free choice of activity, but balances this well with directed work, when she focuses on developing particular skills. For example, most sessions, but particularly those in literacy and mathematics, begin with a whole class activity in which she teaches a specific skill or new idea. Children are then provided with an interesting range of activities that extend their learning across all the recommended areas of learning, but with specific focused activities that consolidate the initial teaching. Children respond very well to these activities, showing great interest, concentration and enthusiasm. The supporting adults have specific activities that they do with different children and work well with the class teacher. Adults place a great deal of emphasis on children's personal development and on improving their speaking and listening skills. The teacher uses class discussions and questioning effectively in whole class parts of lessons to encourage children to contribute their ideas and to take part in lessons. In other activities the teacher and classroom assistant constantly discuss with children what they are doing. Consequently, pupils make good progress in aspects of their personal and social development, such as behaviour and attain the expected levels by the end of the Foundation Stage. They quickly learn the expectations of the teacher, and school and class routines. For example, they sit patiently in assembly with the rest of school and listen attentively to the speaker.
19. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, with this standard evident in more than half of the lessons. Teachers have secure subject knowledge, have high expectations of pupils and manage and organise lessons very well, so pupils generally behave well, are enthusiastic, try hard and learn well. Most lessons are briskly paced, which helps stimulate pupils' interest and keep them concentrating. An important factor in promoting the pace of learning in many lessons is the very good planning and teamwork of staff so that pupils in different classes experience similar activities. Similarly, the activities teachers provide for pupils are well-matched to the objectives of the lessons. In many cases, these are shared with pupils so they know what they are learning about. In the best lessons, teachers make it clear to pupils what they will be looking for in the finished work so pupils also know exactly what they have to do to achieve. Pupils are taught basic skills of investigative mathematics and science well so they learn how to use basic equipment well and the importance of fair testing.
20. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is also good so pupils continue to make good progress. The strengths are similar to those in Years 1 and 2. Management of pupils in lessons is very good and teachers have high expectations of behaviour, give clear and unambiguous instructions, so pupils know exactly what they have to do linked to the clearly displayed objectives for lessons. Teachers' response to pupils in lessons is very good and helps them to develop confidence and feel their efforts are valued,



but this is not as clear in the marking of pupils' work. In the best examples, pupils are clearly shown what they have done well and how their work can be improved, but this is not always the case. This inconsistency affects the progress pupils with English as an additional language make in developing their writing skills. Similarly, in some classes pupils have their targets on the desk in front of them as a constant reminder, but this effective system is not used in all classrooms throughout the school.

21. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language learn well overall, but this is primarily due to teachers having a good awareness of the learning needs of different pupils. This counter-balances some inefficiencies in the use of other adults in classrooms. In many cases, support staff do not have a clearly defined role, particularly in whole class parts of lessons, so the effectiveness of the support is very dependent upon the expertise and experience of the individual support staff. In the best examples, they help them to answer questions by rephrasing the question or prompting answers which helps them to be fully involved in the discussions. However, in other cases, their role is a passive one and opportunities to observe and assess pupils' skills, in for example, speaking and listening, are missed. The specialist teachers for special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language support pupils in lessons, but they do not provide a sufficiently different or focused style of support that helps teacher address pupils' specific difficulties. In many cases individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs outline clearly what pupils' need to learn, but they do not always suggest how this can be achieved so teachers cannot use them effectively to plan the support. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language are not always provided with the specific support they need. As a result, the potential for other adults to work with individuals or small groups within lessons on specific literacy, numeracy or language acquisition programmes is not always fully exploited.
22. The school makes good use of the expertise of a visiting music specialist to teach pupils and to work with staff to develop their music skills. Consequently, teaching of music across the school is very good and pupils make very good progress. Lessons are very brisk and the teacher continually uses subject vocabulary so pupils throughout the school are very familiar with musical terminology. Throughout the school pupils are given good opportunities to use their literacy skills, particularly writing. For example, in history, geography and science lessons pupils are expected to record for themselves and to write, within a framework, their own response to a topic or investigation. This has significant effect on the good progress pupils, including those with special educational needs make. However, similar opportunities are not provided consistently in lessons to develop pupils' mathematical or information and communication technology skills such as making graphs of traffic surveys in geography or calculating the results of investigations in science.

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

23. The school provides a rich range of good quality learning opportunities for all the pupils. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and there is an appropriate breadth, balance and relevance to the work the pupils are offered in the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The youngest children in the school receive a good curriculum based on national guidelines for this age group in the

Reception classes, and they cover the 'stepping stones' towards the 'Early Learning Goals'. There are appropriate policies for all subjects, but at present many of these are still in draft form. In the main the school teaches the subjects in the curriculum using nationally accepted or local authority guidelines. Teachers' long-term planning forms a sound basis and ensures equal coverage of all aspects of the different subjects in the National Curriculum. A two year programme in many subjects such as history and geography effectively accommodates the mixed age classes in the school. Medium-term planning is generally good and there is detailed and thorough short-term planning.

24. The time allocated to subjects is appropriate, with a suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The school's strategies to teach pupils' basic literacy skills are very effective and provide a very good range of opportunities for the pupils to practise their skills, for example in writing in other areas of the curriculum. This is reflected in the very good progress pupils make in their writing to attain standards close to national expectations. The national strategy for numeracy has been implemented effectively and is beginning to have a beneficial effect on the pupils' learning. However, fewer opportunities are planned by teachers to give pupils the same opportunities to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects.
25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. However, in Reception classes, because staff know pupils very well and activities are planned at a more individual level based on the national guidance it is good. There are individual education plans in place for all pupils at the different stages of concern. The school has made a good start to bringing its procedures and practices into line with the most recent Code of Practice for special educational needs so that only pupils who require additional support over and above that provided to most pupils have individual plans. The targets in these plans are variable in quality. They are written by class teachers with the help of the special needs co-ordinator and in some cases they are specific, short term and measurable, but many, particularly those for pupils with behavioural problems are more general and do not give sufficient guidance for class teachers on how to work with these pupils and how to use supporting adults effectively.
26. The school makes every effort to provide all pupils with the experiences they need in order to achieve and they are expected to be involved in the full range of activities offered. The school provides a very good range of activities for the pupils after school. This is an aspect of the school's work that has improved significantly in response to issues raised at the previous inspection when this area of the curriculum was judged as unsatisfactory. The school offers clubs for pupils of all ages in the school including art, football, computers, drama, gymnastics and line dancing.
27. The school makes considerable efforts to enrich the curriculum for the pupils, through a wide range and variety of visits and trips, and also by actively encouraging and inviting visitors to the school to share their expertise and experiences. For example the artist in residence has made a considerable impact on the pupils' attainment in art, and senior citizens from the area are invited to relate their memories of the Second World War. The local churches in the area and people from the school community are used well to enhance the pupil's learning about religious customs and to discuss faiths, festivals and beliefs, such as Eid. During the

inspection fire officers visited the school to give the pupils information about fire safety, and the local Salvation Army attend school assemblies from time to time. The pupils visit the Bedford Museum, art gallery, the Butterfly Park, and a one night trip under canvas is organised for the older pupils.

28. Personal, social and health education is given good priority in the curriculum. The programme ensures a balanced coverage of all the elements relating to citizenship, healthy living and the development of social skills as pupils' progress through the school. This work is reinforced through regular circle time when the pupils can share their thoughts and feelings and develop a sense of self-esteem and respect for others. The 'Life Skills' bus visits the school regularly, there is a good policy for sex and drugs education and the pupils' questions are answered honestly and sensitively. Many of the practical aspects of this work are an established part of normal school routines, particularly for the younger children. For example, adults ensure pupils understand the importance of personal hygiene insisting on pupils washing their hands before meals and after practical activities.
29. The community contributes productively to the life of the school, and this enhances the pupils' learning. There are positive relationships with other schools in the area, for example pupils' art work from a nearby middle school is displayed in the hall. The established liaison with the nearby Nursery is fostered effectively and there are plans to develop these links further in the future. The school has good links with community organisations and many of these provide opportunities to broaden pupils experience and enhance the curriculum. For example the school has access to the Diocesan resource centre and its supply of religious artefacts and reference material and pupils visit places of cultural and historic interest, including a local church and a mosque. There are strong links with a pyramid of other schools through a social inclusion initiative and good working relationships with both the feeder Nursery school and receiving middle schools.
30. The planned provision for pupils' personal development is good overall with provision for cultural development being very good. However, pupils' behaviour and personal development is further developed by the very good management of pupils by individual teachers in lessons and the opportunities they are given to work with each other.
31. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory; but has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be unsatisfactory. Whole-school assemblies and acts of collective worship are calm, orderly occasions and provide opportunities for pupils to reflect on the world around them and to respect individual differences. They are enhanced by the quality of the singing and the music played as pupils come into the hall. However, in some single key stage assemblies opportunities are missed to create the same special atmosphere by using music and other items such as lighted candles. Pupils consider the beauty of the world through art, music and literature. Displays around the school make a good contribution to the positive climate, in which pupils are encouraged to grow and flourish and to respect others' achievements. For example, the art gallery recently established by the headteacher celebrates the contribution pupils make and reinforces pupils' appreciation of the importance in recognising in each other what they have to offer.
32. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. The school has consistent systems for rewarding good behaviour, attendance and achievement. The

school's rules and use of rewards recognise positive aspects of pupils' work and behaviour so pupils have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. Relationships in the school are very good and all adults provide pupils with good examples on which to model their own social and moral behaviour. Pupils are expected to work co-operatively, share ideas and support each other as needed, and older pupils are given opportunities to contribute to the smooth running of the school by undertaking responsibilities. The school is planning to introduce a School's Council in the new academic year to broaden the involvement of pupils in the running of the school. The school fosters a sense of community and makes all pupils feel valued. The very good range of activities out of lessons provides very effective opportunities for pupils to interact with each other in different social settings and groups.

33. There is very good provision for pupils' cultural development. In order to celebrate the wide diversity of the backgrounds of the pupils the school thoughtfully uses stories, music, art and literature from other countries and cultures throughout the school. This helps pupils understand and respect each other's values and beliefs. The very good range of visits and the visitors to school, in addition to discussions in lessons, helps pupils appreciate the faiths and beliefs of other cultures and how they each make a positive contribution to the society in which they live.

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

34. The school's procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. Overall, the personal support and guidance given to pupils is good, but the procedures for monitoring their academic progress are not systematic enough to ensure teachers have enough information to keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing in all subjects.
35. Health and safety practice is diligent. Meticulous records are kept that ensures all policies and procedures are consistently and effectively implemented. There is good provision for first aid and the school now has a dedicated medical and rest room for pupils who are feeling unwell or need comforting. The headteacher is the designated child protection officer and maintains close links with social services and other relevant outside agencies. Child protection procedures are very effective and staff are well trained and alert to the needs of all pupils.
36. The school actively promotes equality of opportunity and ensures that all pupils irrespective of gender, ethnicity or ability are provided with appropriate personal support, care and guidance. Teachers and support staff know and understand their pupils very well and care for their personal needs in a sensitive and supportive way. The few parents who returned questionnaires and attended the pre-inspection meeting confirmed their children feel happy, secure and cared for and that if a problem arises prompt action is taken to resolve it.
37. The policies and procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. The management of behaviour by teachers and support staff is of a consistently high standard throughout the school. It contributes directly to the very good behaviour and the very low incidence of bullying, racist or other anti-social behaviour. Parents confirm that incidents of bullying are rare, but unacceptable behaviour, such as showing a lack of consideration towards others, are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Good use is made of incentives and rewards for effort and consideration towards others.

38. The policies and procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are excellent. Unexpected absence is followed up by a phone call as soon as morning registers are returned and analysed and by a same day home visit if the immediate telephone contact is not successful. The school is well supported by an education welfare officer and benefits from the services of an Inclusion Officer funded by money from the Education Action Zone, who undertakes home visits. In spite of these excellent procedures attendance has remained below the national average. This is not a reflection of pupil attitudes to school but the result of parents fulfilling important family commitments abroad as well as visits to family overseas. Punctuality is satisfactory.
39. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and science are good. The programme starts with an initial assessment of basic skills and understanding when children first enter Reception. These tests are repeated at the end of the Reception year to monitor their initial progress. Further annual tests such as the optional national tests, carried out as pupils move through the school, provide a sound basis for a system to monitor pupils' progress. The quality of assessment at this level has been maintained since the last inspection.
40. The information from these annual tests is used effectively to predict potential National Curriculum levels in English, mathematics and science for the end of Year 2 and to help the middle school predict pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6. In addition, the information is used to identify pupils who may benefit from specific programmes such as Additional Literacy Support or those who may have special educational needs.
41. However, no other pupil performance data is systematically collated for information and communication technology or other National Curriculum subjects by the assessment co-ordinator or subject leaders. The headteacher and newly appointed assessment co-ordinator have recognised the need for the development of a whole-school process to support pupils' academic progress and to guide curriculum planning so it is a priority in the current school improvement plan. Currently, there are no systematic whole school procedures for monitoring, tracking and supporting pupils' academic progress between standardised tests. New assessment procedures of this type are currently being developed in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. For example, the First of the Month books in English are beginning to provide useful information on how pupils' writing skills are developing and in science end of unit tests are being piloted. These assessment procedures aim to track pupils' progress more effectively and to provide data to guide curriculum planning in the future. Once these systems have been established they need to be extended to cover all subjects of the National Curriculum. The Education Action Zone staff are providing the school's specialist teacher with good support to help her monitor the progress of pupils with English as additional language, but this work is in its early stages and is not yet used enough to have a significant effect on the standards pupils attain.
42. The school sometimes uses a range of specific assessment methods for assessing pupils who are referred to the special needs co-ordinator, but these are not used as part of a systematic process to establish what pupils can do and need to learn next as part of their individual programme. Similarly, for pupils with behavioural,

emotional or social developmental problems there is not a systematic approach to establishing the degree and context of the difficulties to inform the targets and strategies in the individual education plans.

43. The high quality of the procedures for monitoring attendance and child protection and the personal knowledge that adults have of each pupils' means that procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' personal development are effective. Pupils with statements of special educational needs have good support. The provision outlined in statements is fully implemented and carefully monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator through regular review meetings. The school has established close links with the 'Rainbow Room' Nurture group sited in school. A few pupils attend this local authority provision for pupils with emotional and social development problems on a part-time basis as part of the provision outlined in their statement of special educational needs. Class teachers and the staff from the Nurture Base meet weekly to share lesson planning so that the work pupils do in the Nurture Base is linked to what they will be doing in the main school. This effectively supports their academic learning within the specialist context of addressing their individual difficulties.

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

44. Parents have positive views of the school. The views expressed by the few parents who returned questionnaires and attended the pre-inspection meeting were that their children enjoy school and that standards of teaching are good and this enables their children to make good progress. These parents consider that the school is well-managed and staff are approachable and good at dealing with any concerns. They appreciate the standards of behaviour and the positive attitudes and values promoted by the school. The inspectors agree with these positive views.
45. The school has established effective links with parents and works hard to promote a close working partnership with parents and to involve them in the life of the school. The home-school agreement clearly defines what is expected of the school, the parents and the pupils. There are good induction programmes for parents and children entering the Reception class, which at that point includes a home visit from one of the Reception class teachers. The school is also adept at welcoming parents and pupils who join the school at other times. Class teachers make themselves available for informal contact with parents at the beginning and end of the school day.
46. The school offers regular daytime classes for parents who have limited understanding of the English language and a weekly 'Introduction to Computers' session. The school has also worked closely with a group of parents who are setting up a new youth club in conjunction with the local education authority. The school is currently instrumental in developing a computer course that will enable some parents to prepare a formal curriculum vitae and enhance their opportunities of gaining employment.
47. Parents are given the opportunity to attend three structured meetings with their children's teachers during each year. The first of these meetings, achieving the best attendance by parents in recent times, over 90 per cent, focuses on pastoral matters, homework programmes and provides information on the content of the curriculum for the coming year. The second relates to the progress that their

children are making, picking up any issues that might be having an impact on the quality of learning. The third meeting follows the distribution of the annual progress report. However, few parents help in school or are involved on a regular basis with the school, although they make generous contributions to fundraising events such as a recently held sponsored 'Bounce'. There is no formal parent teacher association although a recent consultation exercise did indicate that a small number of parents are interested in working with the school to start some form of friends or parent and teacher group.

48. Although the opportunities for parents to discuss with teachers the progress their children are making, newsletters and other written information provided to parents are good, annual reports explaining pupils' progress are unsatisfactory and in need of improvement. The format of reports provided for parents with children in the Reception classes does not review the progress and attainment for the six designated areas of learning specified in the Foundation Stage curriculum. The reports to parents with pupils in Years 1 to 4 cover the subject areas, but lack specific detail regarding progress and attainment and the targets for future learning are too general to guide effective parental involvement.
49. In addition, although the newsletters are regularly produced and useful documents, communications about activities and events are not generally available in community languages used by a significant number of the families with children in school and are not therefore fully effective. No homework or reading diaries are provided to encourage parents to participate more fully in the learning process. Consequently, the impact of parents on pupils' learning is limited. Many of the weaknesses concerned with the provision of information to parents are recognised by the school, for example a new format for the pupils' annual progress reports is currently being developed and home-school diaries are to be provided next term.
50. The school works well with parents of pupils with special educational needs and keeps them well informed of their children's progress. Parents are always involved if the school has concerns about a pupil and wants to involve outside agencies.

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

51. The school is very well led by the headteacher. She was appointed in September 2001 after the school had experienced a number of changes of headship in the previous year and the appointment had an immediate impact on the direction of the school. When the school was last inspected, it provided good value for money, but had a number of key issues to work on. Until the appointment of the headteacher limited progress had been made in addressing these issues, but the inspection team consider that the school has made rapid improvement recently so that overall good progress has been made. Parents also recognise that the improvements that have taken place in the school have occurred since the headteacher took up her post. She is a continuous presence around the school and is a major factor in the school's orderly and serene atmosphere.
52. Since her appointment the headteacher has worked unstintingly to move the school forward. Very ably supported by her deputy, the senior management team and all adults in the school, she has created a united staff team who have an excellent commitment to improvement and capacity to succeed. The school has a very positive ethos that reflects the commitment of the headteacher and all staff to

creating a positive learning atmosphere in which all pupils can achieve their best. All adults who contribute to the school's work share a clear vision for what it is trying to achieve for its pupils so that the school is well placed to improve further.

53. In a short time the school has made good progress towards addressing the key issues from the previous inspection. Arrangements for collective worship have been developed so they now meet statutory requirements. The headteacher and other members of the senior management team have observed lessons in English, mathematics and science and by giving advice and involving external advisors have significantly improved the standard of teaching and learning. Subject leaders now have a clear role and each has begun to act upon the action plan for their subjects. However, this work is in its early stages of development and has not yet had time to significantly affect standards of attainment, teaching, curriculum or assessment procedures. Where necessary, the headteacher has involved external advisors to work with individual staff to develop their skills and capacity to contribute to the school's future planning. For example, the link teacher from the Education Action Zone has spent a considerable time working with the specialist teacher for pupils with English as an additional language developing procedures to check pupils' progress. The school's improvement plan is very good. There are highly appropriate priorities for the coming years with criteria for success, so that the school knows when it has achieved a target. All aspects of the school's work are covered although the focus is on raising standards.
54. The co-ordination and management of special educational needs is sound. Reviews of pupils' individual plans are carried out three times each year. Outside agencies' advice is sought appropriately and the co-ordinator is fully aware of the requirements of the new code of practice for special educational needs. She has made a satisfactory start to adjusting the school's procedures to comply with the requirements of the new code. However, teachers are not given enough good guidance about how they can support pupils in lessons by using specific programmes of work or support staff.
55. The governing body makes a good contribution to the smooth and effective running of the school and it fulfils its statutory responsibilities. Since the last inspection, there have been many changes of personnel, including the chair of governors and there are several vacancies. However, they share the headteacher's vision for the school and its pupils, have a broad range of experience and bring many skills to the school so that they are a valuable source of support. Overall, governors have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and of the many influences on the school. They are kept fully informed by the headteacher and some are able to spend time in classrooms. The chair of governors knows about pupils' standards of work, how much progress pupils make and she provides good support and direction for the school. The headteacher receives good support from the governors' committees in most areas of the school's work. Governors are now actively involved in monitoring the progress being made in the school improvement plan which is discussed at every governors' meeting so their awareness of this aspect of the school's work is improving. Although, governors keep a close check on the budget in order that there is a small surplus, they also ensure that the priorities in the school improvement plan are supported by sufficient funds to enable them to be effectively implemented.



56. The school runs efficiently on a day-to-day basis. Its routines are clear and well understood and little time is lost in moving from one activity to the next. The school administrator manages the budget effectively in the short-term and has efficient procedures for ordering and paying for its purchases. Good use is made of new technology in administration and there are very good systems for ensuring that the school gets best value from its expenditure and income including specific funding for pupils with special educational needs or from being in an Education Action Zone.
57. Overall, the school is satisfactorily staffed to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. Although several classroom assistants work well with teachers and pupils, others would benefit from extra training to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities more effectively. Teaching is managed well, staff development has a high priority and new staff are given very effective support to help them settle into school. Subject leaders are beginning to become more effective in managing their subjects. The local college appreciates that the school supports the initial training of teachers very well. During the inspection two students were on extended placement and were fully included by staff in the life of the school and provided with very appropriate opportunities to work with pupils and teachers in a range of settings. Consequently, they were gaining in confidence and gave positive support to those pupils with whom they were asked to work.
58. The school now benefits from good accommodation and uses it very effectively, although there is at present no designated outdoor area for the youngest children in the school. However, the school building has been substantially improved recently, and there are plans to continue this refurbishment programme. There is a library, 'Rainbow Room', swimming pool and two good sized halls for physical development which are also used as dining areas. The use of space and the learning environment generally have been improved considerably in recent months. Classrooms are generally spacious; there are two multi-purpose halls, good hard play areas and a large playing field. The school's swimming pool is a valuable resource which is well used in the summer term and very much appreciated by the pupils. Resources for learning English and design and technology are good, they are satisfactory in other areas of the curriculum and adequate for the Foundation Stage, but have improved rapidly since the appointment of the new headteacher. Staff have worked very hard and very effectively to create an attractive and stimulating learning environment. The caretaker and his staff maintain the quality of the learning environment very well.
59. Taking into account the good progress that pupils make, the consistently good standard of teaching and the very good leadership given to the school by the headteacher; Shackleton Lower School is a very effective school that has made good progress since the last inspection, is well set to improve further and continues to give good value for money.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:-

**(1) *Raise pupils' standards of attainment in reading by:***

- developing a whole-school approach to teaching reading that involves pupils and parents working at home;
  - ensuring that learning support assistants have the skills to help pupils learn to read and to take a clear role in all parts of literacy and other lessons;
  - developing a systematic approach to record the progress pupils make and using the information to match teaching methods to the needs of each pupil;
  - improving individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs so they consistently identify pupils' targets and how they will be achieved.
- (paragraphs: 4, 9,16, 21, 25,106,116)

**(2) *Raise pupils' standard of attainment in mathematics by:***

- ensuring that teachers place sufficient focus on developing pupils' number skills, knowledge and understanding in numeracy lessons;
  - providing opportunities in other subjects for pupils to use and practise their mathematical skills;
  - ensuring that learning support assistants have the skills to take a clear role in all parts of numeracy and other lessons;
  - developing a systematic approach to record the progress pupils make and using the information to match teaching methods to the needs of each pupil;
  - improving the range of resources available for teachers to use in lessons;
  - developing a consistent approach to involving pupils and parents in working at home on mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding.
- (paragraphs: 4, 16, 22, 93, 96)

**(3) *Develop an approach to monitoring the progress pupils make in art and design, design and technology, geography, history music, physical education and religious education and use this information to inform future curriculum and lesson planning.***

(paragraphs: 41, 105, 109, 133, 136)

**(4) *Improve the quality of information provided for parents about how well their child is doing by ensuring end of year reports clearly identify what pupils can do and what they need to do to improve.***

(paragraphs: 48, 49)

## OTHER ISSUES THAT COULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

Provide an outside area for children in Reception to use wheeled toys and large play equipment.

## THE PROVISION FOR PUPILS WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

61. The school community reflects the ethnic mix of the wider community. Over 40 per cent of the pupils speak a language other than English as their mother tongue. Many of these are from well-established communities from the Indian sub-continent, but there are a significant number of asylum seekers from eastern European countries. The co-ordinator for this area is a part-time teacher who has worked at the school for twelve years. She has no formal qualifications for this type of teaching but has had experience of teaching overseas students and has attended courses run by the local education authority. The co-ordinator is very conscientious about establishing close contacts with the families and communities of the pupils that she teaches and has a good understanding of the cultural traditions represented in the school.
62. An analysis of the standards reached by pupils with English as an additional language shows that at the age of seven their attainment in mathematics was better than average. In the English tests their results were very similar to average, with writing results slightly better than reading. By the end of Year 4 the results were above average in mathematics and close to the average in reading. However, in writing they were below average. This is a pattern often seen in similar schools as progress in mathematics is not so closely linked to language development.
63. Until this year the co-ordinator provided support by taking groups of pupils out of classes and taught them in a separate classroom. However, the school recognised that her contribution to the support pupils received in lessons was limited so she now mainly works with pupils in lessons with the rest of the class. The school realises that there are occasions when it is appropriate for pupils to receive separate tuition - for example, a newly arrived refugee child with no knowledge of English - but these are now kept to a minimum. She is involved in planning sessions with two classes in particular, but she does not provide sufficient specialist advice to colleagues across the school or to pupils in lessons. As a result, teachers are not always able to plan activities that take into account the particular learning needs of some pupils. The school also employs a bilingual learning support assistant who works mainly with younger children, translating instructions into their home tongue as necessary, as well as giving more general support to pupils. Her skills are also used as an interpreter for parental meetings with staff and translating letters. The school has plans to employ more bilingual assistants as finances allow.
64. The school has a number of multilingual posters and signs and there are some bilingual books available, although the stock is rather small for a school of this size and cultural diversity. There is a computer in the language centre and pupils use language programs during lunchtimes and breaks to develop their knowledge of English. Often, a more experienced pupil will help newcomers and there is a very co-operative ethos.
65. The school is part of an educational action zone and much of the funding for language development is made available through this. A language co-ordinator from the local education authority visits the school regularly and is developing good links with the school co-ordinator. This has helped in developing the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress and setting up a more formal and structured system of record keeping. The school now uses the levels contained in a government publication, A Language in Common, as a basis for tracking the progress made by pupils.

66. The school and local authority co-ordinators have identified priorities for further development of the subject and set these out in a clear document. They recognise that the major issue to be tackled is that of improving standards of writing for pupils in Years 3 and 4. This support for the school co-ordinator should help her to fulfil her role more effectively, particularly as an advisor to other teaching colleagues and in her liaison with the management team.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

37

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

31

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	9	21	7	0	0	0
Percentage	0	24	57	19	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	207
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	110

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	9
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	40

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	76

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.8
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
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***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	25	23	48

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	21
	Girls	17	17	15
	Total	35	35	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (67)	73 (78)	75 (72)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	19	20
	Girls	18	16	16
	Total	36	35	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (72)	73 (76)	75 (78)
	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	7
Black – African heritage	3
Black – other	1
Indian	19
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	32
Chinese	0
White	101
Any other minority ethnic group	17

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

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

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	12	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	31:1
Average class size	27.3

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	9.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	172

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

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	553,327
Total expenditure	511,827
Expenditure per pupil	2,461
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	1,500

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	207
Number of questionnaires returned	29

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	28	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	34	3	3	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	21	0	0	17
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	34	21	10	3
The teaching is good.	69	28	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	66	31	0	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	28	3	7	7
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	21	0	3	3
The school works closely with parents.	48	45	3	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	52	34	7	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	52	0	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	72	21	3	3	0

### Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by parents by questionnaire or at the parents' meeting.

## **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**

67. One of the characteristics of the school is that children join the school three times each year in the term after they are five, the majority transferring from the Nursery school next door. Consequently, some children are in the Reception class for only one or two terms before starting on National Curriculum work in Year 1. Children are enrolled in Reception with skills and knowledge well below the expected level for their age group, and with relative poor skills in speaking, listening and limited awareness of literacy. This picture of attainment is confirmed by initial assessments of the children's skills, when they first start school. However, the children achieve well in the Reception classes. Although their attainment overall is still below that expected when they leave the Reception year, in personal, social and emotional development they make great strides and achieve very well in several aspects. For example in their behaviour, having respect for others and developing an understanding of a variety of cultures. There was no clear judgement made in the previous report about standards of attainment in each of the six areas of learning, although the level of attainment on entry was judged as well below the expected level. Children learning English as an additional language and those identified as having special educational needs make good progress in their learning. All children are involved in the range of activities provided. At the time of the inspection one Reception class was taught by a permanent member of staff with the second class taught by two temporary part-time staff. This situation will be rectified at the start of the new academic year when another permanent teacher will join the staff.

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

68. Many children are enrolled in the Reception classes with immature personal, social and emotional skills. By the time they enter into Year 1 they are achieving many of the early learning goals in this area. For example, they behave well, have an increasing awareness of others, different cultures and beliefs and are encouraged to share and take turns. The youngest children however, sometimes still find it difficult to look after toys and equipment properly and have to be reminded to do so. However, overall their achievements are very good and reflect the good teaching and the very good relationships which have been established and to which the children respond positively. Generally the children work and play well together, although at times some children still play alongside their classmates, rather than collaborating in their play. This is due to the way activities are sometimes presented, and when the children are given greater autonomy they play more effectively together. Nevertheless, they usually show consideration and respect for others and are learning to recognise the consequences of their actions and how this makes others feel. They are also well-motivated, interested and keen to be active participants in their learning. Adults respond positively to children's requests and their ideas and suggestions are valued so they gain in confidence. Staff present very good role models to the children, they are polite and treat each other and the children with respect, to which the children respond well. Personal independence is generally promoted appropriately, for instance the children are encouraged to look after their own belongings, but sometimes resources and equipment are not as accessible as they might be, especially for creative work, so that children are not able to choose from an increasing range of materials or media to develop their own ideas.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

69. In the Reception classes the children are learning to listen to stories and to each other, and to develop their own ideas through their play. They come into school, in the main, with relatively low skills in literacy and speaking and listening, but due to the sound teaching they receive they learn to listen attentively and to handle books correctly. They enjoy sharing books with others, for example when pupils from the older classes in the school come to share stories and read with the children. All the children's efforts are valued, and their suggestions and ideas are shared with the rest of the group. Although the children achieve well in language and literacy, their skills when they leave the Reception classes are still below the expected level, and they are continuing to work their way through the 'stepping stones' towards the Early Learning Goals. In this area of learning there are distinct differences in the quality of teaching in the two Reception classes. In the permanent teacher's class, children are managed well so they listen attentively and behave very well. They understand that they have to put up their hands to answer questions and wait their turn. This is not always the case in the other class so some children do not always behave appropriately. However, teachers are generally skilled at developing the children's ideas about the sounds letters make in words and the children are beginning to use this knowledge in their writing, for example using the computer to write simple sentences. Aspects of the national strategy for literacy are used in the Reception classes to prepare the children for the next steps in their learning. This means the children are developing sound ideas about print having meaning and they can recognise a few simple words and their own names. Children are encouraged to think of themselves as having skills in reading and writing and their independent efforts in writing and mark-making are valued. Not many children can write their own names when they come into school. By the end of their Reception year many children are writing their names although sometimes they use a mixture of upper and lower case letters in their writing. There are areas set aside for writing in the classrooms, but these could be even larger to encourage more children to participate and to develop their skills.

## **Mathematical development**

70. When they start in Reception, many children do not have the mathematical knowledge or vocabulary that is typical for their age. Good teaching in one class ensures those children achieve well, but this is not consistent across the two groups so overall they progress satisfactorily, but do not overcome the difficulties experienced by children with special educational needs or who speak English as an additional language. Consequently, by the end of the Foundation Stage, standards are below those expected.
71. Teachers place a good emphasis in this area of learning on pattern-making and sequences and children's skills develop well. They have opportunities to recognise numerals, and to count from one to ten. However, opportunities to reinforce and extend this work are sometimes missed, for example comparing the number of children present and those staying for school dinners. Children are beginning to use mathematical language confidently, for instance when identifying three-dimensional shapes. However, sometimes this work is not correctly reinforced by staff and some confusion can develop, for example in identifying cubes and cuboids.
72. Teachers use the environment well to develop the children's mathematical knowledge by looking at the characteristics and shapes in buildings in the local area. They

provide some experiences for children to solve simple problems, but these are not emphasised sufficiently to fully extend children's knowledge and understanding and to help the children who learn more quickly. In some cases, resources limit children's opportunities to investigate ideas for themselves. For example, equipment for sand and water play is shared between the two Reception classes, which restricts the amount of time children can spend trying out their ideas about capacity, volume and making comparisons.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

73. Children come into school with a very basic knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Teachers provide a good range of practical experiences for children to build on what they already know, to understand more about where they live and the natural world around them. For example, as part of a recent study of mini-beasts and insects children went on a trip to a nearby Butterfly Park. Teachers' planning indicates children have a good range of experiences to learn about events in the past and present and to develop their understanding of how to find their way around the school.
74. There are plenty of opportunities for children to build, and make models, using a variety of materials. However, the accessibility of these materials, tools and equipment is not as easy for the children as it could be and restricts some of their work in designing and making their own models. However, children are learning to use information and communication technology effectively to support their learning in other areas of the curriculum and their skills when using the keyboard and mouse to enter simple text and play games are developing appropriately.
75. Teachers place a strong emphasis on teaching children about the faiths, values and beliefs of different cultures. They organise very good experiences for the children to find out about the broad range of cultures and beliefs represented in their school and the local community. For example, during the inspection the staff shared their customs and traditions at weddings and how people dress for a wedding in different cultures. These activities have a significant effect on the attitude of children to each other and make an important contribution to the social harmony and the very good relationships.

### **Physical development**

76. Regular opportunities to use the hall for children to practise and perfect their skills in movement, running, walking, skipping and dancing help them make steady progress. However, the school does not have a designated outdoor area for children to practise climbing, balancing or jumping and to use toys and equipment to push, pull and propel themselves along. Consequently children's skills in moving with co-ordination and control, remain below average for their age. There are two large climbing frames in the larger of the two halls in the school, but these are not the correct size for young children and, although there is some large play equipment available, this is not used consistently by all staff. There are plans to create an outdoor area, which will provide a range of opportunities in physical development and also other areas of the curriculum.
77. When children start in Reception many lack dexterity with scissors and pencils. Teachers in the Foundation Stage make this a priority and ensure children have daily

opportunities to cut, paste, paint and write. In this way children begin to master the skills so that by the end of Reception they are developing their skills appropriately. They learn to use pencils, scissors and malleable materials in their play. The range of this type of resources available for these activities has been improved significantly recently, but there is still not enough access to an increasing range of tools, materials and equipment as children become more imaginative and skilled.

## **Creative development**

78. Effective teaching by the permanent member of staff in one Reception class and the specialist teacher for music ensures that children make good progress in their creative development. Children come to school with a very low level of skill. However, by the end of the Foundation Stage the majority are close to achieving the expected levels typical for their age, particularly in music and aspects of art and design. They learn to make collage pictures, using different types of paper, they paint their own observations of the world and join in enthusiastically when music-making. There are plenty of opportunities for children to choose from a selection of materials, but this range needs to be extended in order to inspire the children and enable them to develop and express their own ideas and feelings. Children enjoy role-play, but sometimes tend to play alongside their classmates rather than interact with them to develop imaginary stories or situations. However, they enjoy singing and moving in time to music. The dance sessions they receive are good, with clear directions on how to create movements, but there is a need for more imaginative work to develop children's creativity.
79. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage of learning is good in the permanent teacher's class and satisfactory in the class where two temporary teachers share the teaching. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the recommended curriculum for this age group. They plan lessons well using the national guidance, with a thorough approach to what the children are to learn, building successfully on what they can already do and understand. Teaching methods are satisfactory, with an appropriate balance between those activities the children choose for themselves and those directed by an adult. This balance could be improved further to offer the children more autonomy for their learning, especially in creative work and developing concentration, perseverance and looking after toys and equipment.
80. The leadership and management of this key stage within the school are good, there is clear educational direction for what needs to be done, for example improving resources and developing closer links with the Nursery school. Assessment procedures are in place and used well to inform teaching in the short term. Children are assessed when they first start in Reception and then retested at the end of foundation stage to monitor their progress. On a more frequent basis, teachers and support staff make perceptive observations of what the children are learning and use this information well to inform future teaching. Overall, support staff are used effectively in the Reception classes and the work of student teachers training in the school is of great benefit to the children's learning.
81. The school establishes good links with parents through a home visit before children start school and staff are available each day to meet with parents after school. The bilingual support assistant makes a significant contribution with establishing links with parents who are not fluent English speakers. Books are sent home regularly for the children to share with their parents, but little guidance is given to tell parents how they

can help their children at home and the annual reports for parents and carers are to be revised as at present they do not cover the six areas of learning or identify the children's progresses through the stepping stones.

## ENGLISH

82. By the end of Year 2, most pupils' reading and speaking and listening skills are below what is expected for their age. This is a similar picture to the time of the previous inspection, but standards in writing have improved so they are now in line with what is expected. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school so that by the end of Year 4 standards in listening and writing are close to that expected for their age. The proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels in speaking and reading are lower than is typical, but this reflects the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language.
83. Although standards in speaking and listening are below that expected pupils achieve well in developing their skills. There are several reasons for this. From a very low base, pupils make steady progress as a result of the regular opportunities teachers provide for speaking. They use questions well in many lessons to make sure all pupils are involved and have an opportunity to contribute. Some of the teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs or those with English as an additional language by rephrasing questions or repeating them for pupils which helps them to be involved in the activities.
84. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour and insist on pupils listening to each other and waiting their turn. Consequently, their listening skills develop well. The youngest pupils generally listen well to their teachers, but are reluctant to ask questions and frequently when they volunteer comments they are not related to the subject. However, as pupils move through the school they gain in confidence and some of the oldest pupils are articulate and express their opinions fluently. However, they rarely question the views of others and the majority tend to answer questions literally with few references to why and how they have come to a particular conclusion.
85. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good progress in developing their reading skills although by the end of Years 2 and 4 the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels is below average. They are taught a range of strategies to help them read unfamiliar words. They are taught to look at clues from pictures and to build up words by sounding out letters. This ensures that most pupils are capable of reading basic texts by the end of Year 2 and are beginning to have an awareness of different authors and how to use their alphabetical skills to find out information from non-fiction books. They are helped to succeed by the school's effective use of initiatives such as the early literacy strategy, the regular library sessions and the daily opportunities for reading in lessons. However, there is not a systematic approach for pupils to take books home to read with parents, to explain to parents how they can help their children and to record what they have read out of school. Consequently, many pupils lack confidence, fluency and expression in their reading due to lack of practice.
86. In Years 3 and 4, teachers continue to provide plenty of opportunities for pupils to read so they continue to develop their skills. Pupils settle down to quiet reading times at the beginning of afternoon sessions. They have positive attitudes to reading and many lessons involve reading to find information. There is extra help for pupils who

find reading difficult so by the end of Year 4, most pupils are competent readers and are developing a secure understanding of how to use punctuation to add expression to their reading. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to discuss what they have read referring to characters or events in the story to justify their opinion. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in reading although the targets in their individual education plans are frequently too general to help teachers plan specific support programmes. Consequently, there are missed opportunities to use teaching assistants to work with individual pupils to work on specific difficulties.

87. Pupils achieve very well in their writing as they move through the school so that by the end of Years 2 and 4 they attain standards close to that expected for their age. This reflects the emphasis teachers place on encouraging pupils to write for themselves and their high expectations of presentation and handwriting. Standards in writing have improved well since the last inspection and the current approach means that standards are set to improve further. Teachers encourage pupils in Years 1 and 2 to develop a joined-up style of writing and although pupils do not consistently use it they develop the skills which means that more pupils are set to achieve a higher level than in previous years. Throughout the school, teachers have put a great deal of effort into raising standards in spelling. Pupils are given spellings to learn at home and are tested each week. As a result of this, most pupils in Year 2 spell simple words correctly and by the end of Year 4, the majority of pupils spell words with regular patterns correctly and are developing a good range of irregular words. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in writing whereas in reading and mathematics they make good progress. Partly this is due to the lack of guidance teachers receive from the specialist teacher on how to use teaching assistants and other specialist materials to help individual pupils in lessons. The support these pupils are provided with is frequently general and not planned to accommodate or address their specific difficulties.
88. Teachers provide interesting reasons for pupils to write in all subjects other than English and this is one of the main reasons why pupils' writing develops well. Worksheets are used sparingly and even when pupils are given a recording sheet in, for example, science lessons, they are expected to write on the sheet and not just record numbers. In English lessons a good range of written activities are asked of pupils. For example, in Years 1 and 2 pupils write stories, poems, news and accounts of events they have studied in other subjects. Book reviews of their reading books encourages them to think about what they have read and what they liked about the plot and the characters. The consistent attention given to punctuation contributes to the standards pupils attain. Teachers insist and remind pupils about full stops and capital letters and older pupils in Years 3 and 4 often have personal targets that relate directly to such basic elements of writing. The higher attaining pupils in Year 4 use speech marks and other more complex punctuation well in their writing. This focus on the teaching of basic skills of spelling and punctuation is one of the main reasons why pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language do well.
89. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and it is now consistently good across the school. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils. They are expected to behave well and to work hard and the majority of pupils respond well. In lessons, teachers and teaching assistants respond well to pupils and use praise effectively to reward pupils' efforts and contributions to lessons. However, the comments that teachers make on pupils' work do not consistently remind pupils about what they have done well and how they can improve.

90. Teachers do not make sufficient use of information and communication technology to help pupils make faster progress with reading and writing. Although they have sound word-processing skills pupils are rarely given the opportunity to draft or publish work using the computer, other than in information and communication technology lessons.
91. The subject leader has given clear leadership to the development of the subject and has overseen the introduction of the national strategy for literacy. Since the last inspection her role has been clarified and she has a clear idea of what needs doing to raise standards. She has a good plan of action and with the support of the headteacher has begun to work on the priorities. A thorough analysis of tests identified some gaps in teaching and learning that have been addressed recently. The school has also begun to introduce an assessment process in which pupils record a piece of written work at the beginning of each month as a record of how their writing improves. This work is in its early stages and is not yet sufficient to help teachers plan future work with pupils, but is beginning to provide a useful record of pupils' progress. However, the procedures for monitoring pupils' progress in reading or writing are not used consistently across the school. This limits teachers' abilities to check on pupils' progress and to evaluate the effect of specific reading schemes or initiatives on their learning. As soon as the headteacher arrived in school she identified resources such as reading books needed replacing. Consequently, the school has spent a significant amount of money on new books this year to broaden the range of schemes for teaching reading and in the library. Consequently, the quality of resources for English are good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

92. In the National Curriculum tests in 2001 at the end of Year 2, standards attained by pupils were well below the national average, and below the average attained in schools which draw their pupils from similar backgrounds. However, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and who spoke English as an additional language was high.
93. Evidence from lessons observed and from an analysis of pupils' work during the inspection suggests that pupils in the current Year 2 are achieving standards which are still below those expected nationally but significant improvements have been made since the previous year. Pupils' understanding of shape, space and measures is much more secure than their understanding of number. For example, in one lesson in a Year 2 class several pupils found it quite difficult to count up and down in fours and many were unsure about odd and even numbers. More emphasis needs to be given to learning multiplication tables and speeding up answering in mental sessions. Pupils are much more confident in naming 2D and 3D shapes with the more able pupils able to explain some of their properties. They understand simple basic measures; for example they tell the time in halves and quarters and this helps their understanding of fractions. However, there was little evidence of work in using and applying aspects of mathematics. A Year 2 class had produced pictograms which showed the number of pies sold in a shop on different days, but the limited opportunities pupils have to work in this way has a negative effect on how quickly they learn basic number skills.
94. Overall, the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make good progress in mathematics according to their prior knowledge. By the end of Year 4 higher attaining pupils reach similar



standards to those expected nationally, but the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level for their age is below that found in many schools. Again, this is mainly due to the higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs, although pupils with English as an additional language achieve well to attain standards in line with that expected. This is partly due to the good support pupils receive in their work, but this is a pattern often seen in similar schools as progress in mathematics is not so closely linked to language development. Pupils' understanding of number progresses satisfactorily with those in Year 3 able to count on and back in 10s and 100s from any two-digit number. For example 44 to 144 and 30 to 930 although several pupils found this quite difficult. Pupils in Year 4 pupils found mentally adding and subtracting numbers to 20 difficult. They understand the signs for more and less than. In shape work pupils understand, identify and sketch lines of symmetry. In group work pupils investigate many regular and irregular shapes and decide if they have either one or more than one or even no lines of symmetry using a small mirror to help them decide their answers. They examine patterns on various types of wallpaper and make patterns of their own involving translations.

95. The majority of pupils enjoy mathematics and have a good attitude to their work. With some notable exceptions in one of the Year 3/4 classes, pupils behave very well, listen attentively and show interest in the tasks they are given. Those who have short concentration spans are well-managed by all staff. Pupils are courteous and trustworthy and show respect for property. In all year groups, they form constructive relationships and work collaboratively when required. Pupils showing initiative are fewer in number, but many are willing to take responsibility by helping in different ways, for example by giving out and collecting equipment and books if required.
96. The overall quality of teaching throughout the school has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now good. During the inspection the teaching was never less than satisfactory and in over half the lessons it was good. In all classes, pupils are managed very effectively. Teachers use praise and encouragement well and a purposeful atmosphere for learning is created. Throughout the school, teachers use their knowledge of the national numeracy strategy and of their pupils to plan interesting, relevant activities. Lessons have clear learning objectives, which are usually explained to pupils so that they know what they have to do. Staff work closely as a team and support staff are deployed effectively. Some make a considerable contribution to successful learning, especially for pupils with special educational needs or those who have English as an additional language, though others would benefit from training in their role and become more involved in lessons. In many classes, teachers' personal enthusiasm for the subject, as well as their high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, harness the pupils' energies so that they make good progress.
97. The curriculum is broad and balanced and fully satisfies statutory requirements. Since the previous inspection the subject leader has developed the subject well. The national numeracy strategy is well-established throughout the school and is beginning to make an impact on raising standards. However, teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities in other subjects for pupils to use their numeracy skills which has a negative effect on pupils' confidence with number and their ability to use specific skills such as graphs in different contexts. A new policy has been agreed with all staff and is now ready to be presented to the governing body for approval. The subject leader acknowledges the very good support received from the local education authority's advisory service in developing mathematics. The subject leader has had some

opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning in other classes. This has contributed to the improved quality of teaching. The school intends to make mathematics the focus of attention in the development of the curriculum during the academic year 2002 to 2003. Resources are to be improved and with continued improvement in teaching the school expects to bring the results in mathematics up to the standard of English and science.

## SCIENCE

98. Standards in science are broadly in line with the level expected for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 and when they are about to leave Year 4. These standards compare well for those pupils who achieve at a higher level when compared to schools in similar circumstances. There are no significant differences between the performance of girls or boys.
99. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils can identify body parts; the five senses and make comparisons about characteristics, such as differences in height. They study forces, for example on a swing and other moveable objects, look at materials and their properties, magnetism, and light investigation. Work is generally of a satisfactory standard in both year groups, although sometimes younger pupils work too quickly, without proper attention to detail and presentation of their findings. The pupils are also learning about making predictions and the effects of friction, for example, they test their theories about how far toy vehicles will travel down a slope over different materials, such as sandpaper, carpet and plastic.
100. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils are taught similar topics, these include finding out about materials, their properties and uses, investigating electricity, switches, and circuits, using thermometers, and observing habitats and insulating materials. The pupils are learning about how to use their scientific knowledge to categorise the features and characteristics of a range of animals. They understand the use of a key to identify features quickly and link this to their work on maps in geography. Older pupils complete this work well. They have a generally good level of presentation, and work is complete and detailed. Younger pupils are untidy at times, although the coverage and content of their studies are adequate. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those identified as having special educational needs progress well in science. There are good levels of inclusion and different groups of pupils are supported effectively.
101. Teaching in science is good and the pupils make good progress. The staff have secure subject knowledge and there is clear, detailed and thorough planning to ensure the pupils receive equal access to all aspects of science. Good account is taken of the mixed age classes which exist in the school. The two year programme is planned effectively to accommodate these classes and ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding develops steadily as they move through the school. There is a need for more actual objects and materials to be used in science lessons to reinforce learning, and to enable those pupils learning English as an additional language to understand more easily. However, pupils are taught basic skills in science effectively, for example to test their theories and make predictions, and resources available are used effectively. The rate of pupils' learning is usually good and they are productive and concentrate well as they are well-motivated in their learning. Learning support assistants are deployed appropriately and support the pupils. However, sometimes their role is not clearly defined, and the specific purpose

of activities is not identified to support the pupils in the way the class teacher intended. However, the staff use good teaching methods overall, relationships are very secure and the pupils' behaviour is generally managed well.

102. The standards in science have been maintained and the pupils' skills of prediction and experimentation have improved. There is some work in science using information and communication technology, but not in all year groups, due to a lack of software; this aspect is still to be developed across the school. The use of appropriate scientific terminology is also to be developed to enable pupils to be more specific in their scientific work. Most pupils enjoy their lessons in science; they are well motivated and interested. Cultural development is well promoted in science.
103. The leadership and management of science are satisfactory with clear priorities for how to improve the subject, which are identified in the school's plan for improvement. There is a satisfactory range of adequate resources and plans are effectively monitored by the co-ordinator for appropriate coverage of all aspects of science. Resources are constantly being improved; they are well organised and are being updated. Assessment procedures are in place and are to be monitored by the co-ordinator.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. Standards in art and design were judged as in line in both key stages during the previous inspection. The findings of this inspection are that they are now good and pupils achieve very well. There was reference in the previous report to limited access to resources, this is being addressed and resources have been improved considerably since the appointment of the new headteacher. Resources are being developed, for example to offer the pupils a wide range of books about art and design, to inspire them in their creative work.
105. Only very few lessons in art and design were observed during the inspection due to the arrangements of the timetable. However, from analysis of the pupils' work on displays. There is evidence that pupils make very good progress in their art and design and they are taught well. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of elements of art and design, and plan an appropriate curriculum that gives pupils a wide range of artistic experiences and teaches them a good range of skills and techniques. In a Year 2 lesson, the class teacher had very good control, gave clear instructions on what the pupils were to do and demonstrated skills effectively. Based on good subject knowledge there was a good level of challenge for the pupils to use and develop their own ideas. Work is assessed, but there are no formal systems in place to record the progress pupils make. The curriculum for art and design is based on a two year programme to accommodate the mixed age classes in the school, and this ensures continuity and progression in pupils' learning.
106. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils investigate weaving materials and use a variety of techniques to create different effects. They have studied the local environment in their artwork, for example sketching 'Moot Hall', in Elstow and using paint to illustrate butterflies and figures. There are good cultural links in art and also good links to other subject such as mathematics and geography. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils have learned about techniques of print making, inspired by African designs, and also sketching still life using coloured chalks to illustrate peacock feathers. There is good use of pen and ink and the pupils are given a wide range of techniques and benefit

from the input from visiting artists. There are good cultural links in this work, as the peacock in the national bird of India, and Asian artefacts are displayed alongside the pupils' artwork. The school art gallery displays the pupils' work in the style of famous artists, such as Monet, Modigliani, Van Gogh, David Hockney and Hodghin. The pupils identified as having special educational needs are well-supported in art and design and pay good attention in lessons. Different groups of pupils are included in the range of activities offered and those pupils learning English as an additional language make good progress, particularly in the older year groups.

107. The leadership and management of art and design in the school is good. The headteacher, as co-ordinator, is very interested in art and design and transmits this enthusiasm to the pupils. For example, there is already one art club and the pupils are keen for the headteacher to introduce an additional club, so that more pupils can be involved. Visiting artists make a major impact on the work in art in the school and the new school entrance and the school corridors bear testament to the good range of high quality work the pupils achieve. Their artwork is attractive, well presented and colourful. Having completed the work, the pictures are framed and displayed, which indicates to the pupils, parents and carers that this work is valued and celebrated. There are good links with local schools to reinforce work in art, for example Abbey Middle and Harrowden Middle Schools has loaned samples of the pupils' work to display in the school hall.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

108. It was not possible to observe any lessons in design and technology due to timetable arrangements. An analysis of the pupils' work, displays and from discussion with the co-ordinator for the subject indicate that pupils achieve very well as they move through the school so that standards of attainment in design and technology are above the level expected by the end of Year 4. Older pupils' standards of attainment in design and technology have improved since the previous inspection and standards have been maintained for the pupils in Key Stage 1. Resources have been improved and are good. During the previous inspection they were judged to be limited in range.
109. As no lessons were seen, it is not possible to come to a judgement about the quality of teaching in design and technology. The planning of the curriculum for design and technology indicates the staff have a secure understanding of the necessary requirements for this work. They plan the curriculum effectively to offer the pupils equal access to a wide range of techniques and skills. The assessment of the pupils' work in design and technology is to be developed to record the progress pupils make. The curriculum for design and technology is based on a two year programme to account for the mixed-age classes and to provide equal access to the curriculum and ensure continuity and progression in pupils' learning.
110. The pupils make good progress in their work in design and technology. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils are developing good skills in using pneumatic systems, using compressed air, syringes and pumps, to create 'munching monsters'. They also look at healthy eating and use graphs to illustrate their favourite fillings for sandwiches. There are good links to mathematics, literacy and information and communication technology, for example using computers to print recipes. The pupils design their own packaging for products, with clear descriptions about what is required, with good links to mathematics and three-dimensional shapes using nets to make boxes. They create designs which move, for example butterflies with flapping wings.

111. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils make model vehicles and understand the purpose of axles in positioning wheels. They design coats and bookmarks, with moving parts and there are examples of using instructions on how to make a spider which can be moved up the water spout by means of a lever. Pupils are learning to evaluate and improve their work as they go along, for instance when designing a moving model of the 'Owl and the Pussy Cat'.
112. Leadership and management of design and technology is satisfactory. There is a policy for design and technology, but this needs updating. The school adheres to national guidelines, staff are confident in teaching design and technology and resources are used effectively. There is no monitoring of teaching and learning at present, and assessment procedures are to be developed.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

113. Standards of attainment in geography and history by the end of Years 2 and 4 are close to national expectations. The schemes of work are based on the recent national guidance from the qualifications and curriculum authority. As a result, pupils make sound progress in learning the skills, knowledge and understanding in both subjects. Due to the timetable arrangements, opportunities to observe lessons was limited so judgements are primarily based upon discussions with pupils and from looking at their work.
114. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a secure understanding of time. They use words such as today and yesterday, old and new correctly. They know that places and the way people live changes over time. They compare people and things from different periods such as a modern kitchen and one from Victorian times. They learn how to use objects such as kitchen equipment to learn about how people lived in the past. However, there is limited evidence that pupils have a secure understanding and knowledge about some of the major events that have happened in Great Britain, such as the Great Fire of London, or some important historical figures, such as Guy Fawkes. In geography, pupils' mapping skills are particularly well developed. Most pupils can show on a map of the United Kingdom where they live and understand at least the four main points of the compass. Most pupils draw detailed maps as part of the Katie Morag topic. The maps are mainly pictorial, but detailed, with important places shown. Some pupils include a key to help identify specific places or features. Maps drawn by more able pupils show they are beginning to understand that maps are a birdseye view of the landscape. They use a map of York to find interesting places to visit in the city. Pupils understand that different parts of the country have different physical features, which affect how people live and the jobs they do. In addition, pupils understand that countries around the world have different climates, and this affects what people wear, what food they eat and how they live.
115. By the end of Year 3, pupils continue to make sound progress and attain satisfactory standards in geography and history. They know the difference between countries and continents. Most pupils can name the continents and higher attaining pupils can correctly point to them on a map of the world. In history, pupils in Year 3 have a secure understanding of how peoples' lives were affected during World War II, such as by food rationing and evacuation. They have a secure understanding about some civilisations from the past, such as in Ancient Egypt. They use timelines to show how the civilisation developed over time and when important buildings, such as the pyramids, were built or pharaohs, such as Tutenkhamen, ruled.

116. Teaching in both subjects is satisfactory. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure, so the planning of topics effectively interprets the national guidance to give, where possible, a local relevance to activities. This helps pupils put the work into context and fuels their interest and enthusiasm. The one lesson of geography seen in Year 3 was good. Pupils were very enthusiastic, worked well with each other and generally demonstrated very positive attitudes to the subject. In this briskly paced lesson, instructions for tasks and general organisation were explicit, so pupils knew exactly what they had to do. These high expectations were reflected in pupils' good behaviour. Tasks are varied appropriately to accommodate the different pupils' abilities. However, over time, not enough emphasis is placed on giving pupils opportunities to write in different styles and from different viewpoints, or to practise their literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, not enough emphasis is placed on encouraging pupils to present and date their work. These factors have a negative impact upon pupils' standards in English and mathematics. The recent developments in the school's resources for information and communication technology, and the training that staff currently receive are leading to an increased use of information and communication technology in lessons. For example, in the lesson observed, pupils were given good opportunities to research a topic, using an encyclopaedia program. However, this good example of how information and communication technology can be used is not consistent across the school. The full potential of computers for pupils to present their work in different ways or to link specific parts or activities in topics to complementary computer-based tasks such as creating a database and graphs of rainfall patterns is not fully exploited.
117. The subject leaders give sound leadership to the subjects. Progress since the last inspection in developing the subjects has been satisfactory. The school has adopted the national guidance from the qualifications and curriculum authority as the basis for planning a two year cycle of topics to take into account the mixed age classes and draft policies have been drawn up to reflect these changes. The range of resources for teaching in history has been enhanced recently and an action plan has been written for both subjects that accurately identifies areas for development. However, the subject managers has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching or learning nor are there any procedures to monitor pupils' progress as they move through the school. This limits the subject manager's capacity to accurately evaluate how effective developments are on the standards pupils achieve.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. The school has worked hard to good effect to develop this subject. Improvements to the computer suite and the extra computers provided during the past twelve months allow all pupils much improved access to information and communication technology. There is a well-planned curriculum to support the systematic teaching of skills. Consequently, standards of attainment have been maintained since the last inspection.
119. By the end of Year 2 pupils reach national expectations. They are confident in using the mouse, are familiar with the keyboard and know how to print their work. They use listening centres independently in order to assist in developing their literacy skills. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their learning and develop confidence particularly in using a computer for word-processing when they use different fonts and colours to enhance their work. Year 2 pupils were observed combining art, science and information and

communication technology in their study of worms, ants and snails. One group used a digital camera to record pictures of actual specimens they found in the school garden while another group investigated the same native fauna on a CD-ROM before making detailed drawings.

120. In Years 3 and 4, pupils become even more confident in their use of computers. Year 3 pupils import pictures from a clip art programme adding text. A very good example of this was seen in their Mother's Day cards in their portfolio. By the end of Year 4 pupils write weather forecasts and invitations to a party showing very good ideas in making their finished products exciting to look at and informative to the reader. Pupils said they enjoyed using their computers to investigate house prices from real advertisements. The majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make good progress as they move through the school.
121. Pupils' attitudes towards the subject are good. The youngest pupils are confident when using computers and other technology such as listening centres. Pupils of all ages collaborate well and are helpful to each other. Whilst working in pairs and small groups, they share ideas and show confidence and independence. They take good care of software and hardware and can be trusted to work independently in pairs. Behaviour in classes, and especially in the computer suite is very good. There, pupils listen carefully, and watch while teachers demonstrate on the big screen the skills they are to learn.
122. The quality of teaching in the computer suite to whole classes and in classrooms to small groups or pairs of pupils is always at least satisfactory. In a lesson taught in the computer suite by the subject manager the quality of teaching was very good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology and their skill in handling equipment have improved enormously since the previous inspection. The subject manager carefully analysed comments made in the previous report and has successfully addressed every recommendation, providing in-service training for all staff who are now attending additional training provided by the national training programme. This helps staff to lead pupils to develop a good range of skills. Teachers plan lessons carefully and as pupils become more confident and skilful in using computers are beginning to make use of them to support and enhance other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 1/2 pupils looked at impressionist paintings and then designed their own by using pencil or other on-screen tools to draw pictures in the style of Lowry. In science, they drew a picture of their body on the computer and labelled each part. Teachers manage pupils very well and make good use of the time available. All this combines to motivate pupils. Such motivation is evident from the way in which pupils work hard and enthusiastically in the subject.
123. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The new policy and programme of work are now complete. Under the direction of the knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader who has been leading the subject for the past three years, the whole staff is working hard and their commitment to high achievement is beginning to improve standards. There is a system of assessment in place, but the subject manager is aware of the need to improve it further to help the development of the subject. Resources are now satisfactory. Parents have helped to improve the resources by collecting tokens from local supermarkets which have provided extra computers and software. The governing body is well aware of the importance of computers in pupils' education and are dedicated to providing the best possible opportunities for all pupils by further improving resources as soon as finances allow.

## MUSIC

124. Pupils' standards of attainment have improved since the last inspection, primarily due to the work of an external specialist music teacher so that they are above national expectations in all age groups. From evidence gained by observing lessons, looking at planning, attending assemblies, looking at video evidence of recent musical performances for parents and discussions with pupils and teachers it is apparent that the school has provided a very good programme of work throughout the past year.
125. The employment of a specialist music teacher for the past year, funded partly through the Education Action Zone and the school's own budget, has been mainly responsible for the very high standards of attainment and the improvements in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. Working very closely with the subject leader, the specialist teacher, who is a very talented musician and has inspired all staff to co-operate well, has helped to produce a new policy and a programme of work which is reflected in the good quality of lessons.
126. The specialist music teacher works very closely with staff in one lesson per week in a team teaching situation. Class teachers and some classroom assistants are fully involved in the lessons and specific instructions and suggestions for improvement are left for the teacher to follow up in a subsequent lesson. In this way the class teacher's own confidence and subject knowledge are being vastly improved whilst at the same time as providing all pupils in every class in the school with a very exciting musical experience. As a result, pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of music.
127. Reception and Year 1 pupils join together for their music lesson. They sing a variety of songs from memory adding accompaniment with a wide range of percussion instruments and are able to name each one with confidence. They study the pitch of notes using their hands to indicate high and low notes. They learn about rhythm by dancing to the music.
128. As they move up the school pupils gain confidence and improve their expertise in playing musical instruments. In their warm up exercises Year 4 enjoyed singing, "We are the human race" using a variety of body parts to provide accompaniment. This immediately captured the pupils' interest and attention which the teacher sustained during the whole lesson by frequently changing the activities and maintaining a very lively pace. After very good teaching and total concentration by every pupil in the class, pupils gave a very good performance at the end of their lesson singing in three parts, adding accompaniment and making the song into a round which was excellent and gave them immense satisfaction with their own learning. In all the lessons observed taught in the team-teaching situation, every pupil enjoyed the lessons and co-operated well, gaining a keen interest and a good knowledge of music.
129. Varied opportunities are given for pupils to experience the works of traditional and modern musicians and music has a high profile in the school. It is played as pupils enter the hall for assembly and pupils often sing the assembly song again spontaneously as they leave the hall. The curriculum for music now supports pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development very effectively. For example, pupils enjoy working together and singing in groups and listening to music. Assembly music during the week of the inspection was from Africa. A peripatetic music specialist



teaches some pupils to play the violin. A group of them gave a performance in one of the assemblies and received applause from their friends. All pupils thoroughly enjoy their music and the quality and feeling in their singing in assemblies uplifts the cultural and spiritual dimension of the experience.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

130. Pupils attain similar standards as those seen during the previous inspection. Pupils were observed in dance, games and an extra-curricular gymnastics session. Together with an analysis of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers' inspection findings indicate that overall, standards of attainment are as expected nationally by the time pupils leave the school. However, there are some pupils whose attainment is above average in specific areas such as football. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and who have English as an additional language, make good progress as they move through the school. Swimming was not being taught in the school's own pool during the inspection, but records show that pupils make good progress in swimming and the school makes very good use of the pool during the second half of the summer term when all classes have lessons two or three times per week.
131. All pupils change quickly and quietly without fuss for their physical education lessons. Teachers too are appropriately changed and set a very good example to pupils. In a dance lesson taken by a visiting student of dance teaching and the class teacher, pupils showed how keen and eager they were as they completed a vigorous warm-up routine to very exciting music which involved every part of their bodies. In their dance performance they were challenged to remember movements from the previous lessons. All pupils made a real effort to put style into their dance. They counted their steps silently and this helped improve their mathematical development. Afterwards pupils worked in small groups composing dance routines of their own, making very good use of the basic steps they had learned from their teachers. Games lessons were observed both on the hard surface area and on the school's extensive playing field. Pupils in Year 4 practise dribbling skills on a prepared course and work with a partner passing the ball while on the move. The teacher wisely put the more able boys in one group to stretch them as far as possible and they attained a very good level of accuracy and control. Both boys and girls were equally involved and all enjoyed the activity. A group of pupils showed their skills in gymnastics during an extra-curricular activity session taken by a visiting specialist teacher of gymnastics. Pupils performed their movements well according to their age. In all lessons observed, teachers use praise and encouragement well to motivate pupils into further effort. Teachers have good subject knowledge and control of pupils. They are fully aware of safety rules and know the importance of warm-up and cool-down exercise.
132. Pupils' attitudes to their lessons are very good. They all change quickly and quietly without fuss and obviously look forward to engaging in physical activity. They behave well, even when that have to sit still, listening to the teacher or waiting their turn to demonstrate. They co-operate sensibly in pairs and small groups and use their initiative and imagination creatively. Sometimes when groups perform for the other pupils in the class they receive generous applause from their friends. This spirit of friendliness is a feature of school life which is fostered well in physical education lessons. In discussion with pupils they were keen to point out that they liked coming to school because both teachers and pupils were so friendly.

133. The headteacher is in the process of reorganising the management of physical education. There is a policy and a programme of work which provide teachers with an outline for the lessons. As yet there is no formal system of assessment, but teachers build assessment strategies into lesson planning and use these to check progress. Resources are satisfactory and the temporary subject manager has made a start in reorganising them since she took over the management of the subject five weeks before the inspection. The oldest pupils benefit from the opportunity to attend a summer camp when a variety of outdoor pursuits are available.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

134. It was only possible to observe one lesson in religious education therefore it is not possible to make a judgement on teaching. Judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' work, displays and discussions with pupils and teachers. These indicate that, as at the time of the last inspection, pupils are generally attaining the standards expected in the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus. The policy and the programme of work have been reviewed by the local education authority to form a lower and middle school system which the school now follows.
135. By the end of Year 2 pupils reach the expected standards in their knowledge and understanding of the subject. They are familiar with stories from the Bible and write about the special friends of Jesus. They examine their own feelings and learn about people who care for others. They know about the Chinese New Year celebrations. By the time they leave the school pupils have learned about the major religions of the world, often through special celebrations and meals such as Divali and Shabbat. They recognise the distinctive features of Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism and how these relate to the everyday lives of those who practise these religions. They add to their growing understanding of religious beliefs, values and knowledge by studying the similarities and differences between the major faiths. They have an understanding of the need to take responsibility for their actions and consider other viewpoints in a mature way. The school has forged strong ties with leaders of other religions as well as Christianity. Pupils visit several local centres of worship including the Gurdwara and the Church of England. A Christian group visit the school on a regular basis to take part in assemblies. It was very interesting to hear in discussion with Year 4 pupils that they all liked religious education lessons because they learned about each others' religions and it helped them to "get on better" with each other. This is strength of the school.
136. The subject leader manages the subject well. The curriculum has been reviewed and steps taken to ensure that all pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language and pupils who are in mixed age classes, are taught the appropriate areas of the syllabus. Assessment opportunities are at an early stage of development and will be included in the whole school approach to assessment which is being developed at the present time. The subject manager realises that more resources are needed to stimulate interest in the subject. Religious education makes a significant contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.