

INSPECTION REPORT

**WRESTLINGWORTH CofE VC LOWER
SCHOOL**

Sandy, Bedfordshire

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109609

Headteacher: Mrs H Curry

Reporting inspector: Chris Christofides
7834

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 June 2003

Inspection number: 246927

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Lower
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane
Wrestlingworth
Sandy
Bedfordshire

Postcode: SG19 2EU

Telephone number: 01767 631249

Fax number: N/A

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Paul Sanderson

Date of previous inspection: 6 October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
7834	Chris Christofides	Registered Inspector	Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs English as an Additional Language Science Information and Communication Technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19578	Ted Worby	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?
33083	Fran Johnson	Team inspector	Mathematics Design & Technology Music Physical Education	
33061	Helen Smeeton	Team inspector	Foundation Stage English Art & Design Geography History	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wrestlingworth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Lower School is a very small mixed rural village school of 46 children of ages four to nine, in Wrestlingworth at the eastern edge of Bedfordshire, close to the borders of Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire. The roll has remained fairly constant over the last few years. The school's admission number is 13, which is well below the national average. There are nine children in Reception. Just over four per cent of the children are eligible for free school meals, which is well below the national average of 18.3 per cent. The school takes its children mainly from the village of Wrestlingworth and the neighbouring hamlet of Cockayne Hatley but, more recently, there has been widening parental interest from further afield. There are no children at the school who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of children joining or leaving the school part-way through the age range is low. Three children joined the school last year at a time other than usual time of admission. There are eight children on the special educational needs register, which is broadly in line with the national average. Three pupils have statements of special educational needs. The headteacher has been in post less than a term. The headteacher has a substantial teaching commitment and teaches the junior class. There are three classes, Reception, Infant and Junior. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is at the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school that provides a satisfactory education for its children. It is at its best in Reception where the quality of education is good. The teaching in the school is good overall. The leadership and management provided by the new headteacher and the governors is satisfactory at present but they have yet to establish sufficient monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and its impact on standards. In English and mathematics standards meet national expectations and children make good progress as they move through the school. Children are well supported and they respond with enthusiasm, very good attitudes and good behaviour. This is an inclusive school that meets the needs of all children with special educational needs but needs to do more to challenge the more able. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides well for children in Reception and they make good progress in their learning.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Relationships are excellent and a strength of the school.
- The children have excellent enthusiasm, very good attitudes and a strong interest in their work.
- The children achieve well in English and mathematics.
- Children with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.
- Parents and the community make a good contribution to the school and to children's learning.

What could be improved

- The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on the school's performance and standards.
- Delegation of some key responsibilities of leadership and management.
- Standards achieved by the more able children, especially in the Infant and Junior classes.
- Teachers' use of assessment in the planning of subsequent work.
- The balance and relevance of the curriculum is unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 4.
- Provision for extra-curricular activities.
- Procedures for child protection.
- Health and safety audits of the school building, playground and fields.

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 October 1997. It was judged then to provide a sound education for its

children. It is still providing a satisfactory education, with improvements in some areas, especially for the under fives. An appropriate curriculum is in place now for the under fives. These children now have adequate accommodation, outdoor play area and sufficient staffing support. They now make good progress. Some improvements have been made in tackling other key issues, notably, the work of older children now builds on their previous experience, and there is better planning for design and technology and information and communication technology. Not enough progress has been made in providing a more imaginative curriculum for science and mathematics, with greater emphasis on investigative and problem solving skills.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
Reading	A*	D	B	C
Writing	A	C	C	D
Mathematics	A	B	C	E

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

It is difficult to draw secure statistically valid conclusions from the table above or to determine trends, as the numbers in each cohort are so small. Currently, standards of attainment when the children start school are at nationally expected levels. Children make satisfactory progress throughout the school. At seven years of age the proportion of children achieving national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics is at the national average. By the age of nine standards reached by the children are at nationally expected levels in all subjects and many children achieve above expected levels in English and mathematics. Standards have improved slightly since the last inspection. Children with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress throughout the school, reflecting the school's inclusive policies and ethos. At present the more able children make insufficient progress in Years 1 to 4 because they are not challenged to develop their investigative, problem solving, creative and thinking skills. Children in Reception achieve well and most are working at higher levels than expected. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Children make good use of their speaking, listening and reading skills across the curriculum. They make adequate use of the key skills of mathematics and information communication technology in other subjects. Targets set for seven year-olds in English and mathematics for 2003 have been met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children are very well motivated and enjoy their lessons. Their enthusiasm for school is excellent and they are eager to participate and learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good throughout the school, both in lessons and during play times. Children are polite and show respect both for adults and the other children.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good. There is an effective programme of support for children's personal development. Relationships throughout the

	school are excellent.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance has remained consistently above the national average for many years.

The children's attitudes and values are a strength of the school. They reflect the very positive ethos of the school, to ensure that every child is fully included in all its varied activities. Very good attendance is encouraged and achieved.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

Overall the quality of teaching is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. All the teaching is at least satisfactory, with nearly two out of three lessons good. The quality of teaching in lessons for the under fives and the Infants is consistently good. The quality of teaching in the Juniors is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is generally good for the under fives and the Infants and satisfactory for the Juniors. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum, which enables children to make good progress in acquiring skills in the different areas of the curriculum. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught well. Teachers' expectations of the children are not consistently high. They often do not meet the needs of the more able and do not challenge them enough to extend their problem solving, investigative and thinking skills. Their use of support staff and resources is effective. Teachers manage the children well and relationships are excellent. All lessons are taught with confidence and teachers' planning is generally good. Some short term planning does not always meet the needs of all abilities in each class. Children respond well to their teachers and work well, making good progress in their learning. They are all keen to learn and participate fully in lessons. They produce work of a good standard but are not encouraged to be creative or take responsibility for their learning. Children with special educational needs make good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good in all respects in Reception. It is broad throughout the school but in Years 1 to 4 it lacks balance and not all subjects are taught to an appropriate depth. The time allocated to teaching some subjects is too short. There are few extra-curricular activities on offer to the children.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Support for children with special educational needs is effective and enables all to benefit from the curriculum and make good progress. This is in keeping with the school's inclusive ethos.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for children's personal development is good overall. The children's social development is very good and their moral development is good. Their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Not enough is planned to develop children's awareness of cultural diversity.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school continues to provide satisfactory care of its children's health and well being. Procedures for monitoring attendance and the elimination of oppressive behaviour are very good. Procedures for child

	protection need to be updated.
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The curriculum on offer is generally broad and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum but it is not balanced enough to provide children with sufficient time in many subjects. The school's partnership with parents is a particular strength of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The new headteacher has set up appropriate leadership and management structures aimed at raising standards. Delegation of some key responsibilities to other staff is planned for.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory overall. The governors are committed to improving the school. They are more involved in shaping the direction of the school than at the last inspection. They fulfil most of their statutory duties well, apart from procedures for child protection that need updating.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The headteacher and the governors have identified what the school does well, but are not systematically monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on the school's performance and standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school has taken wise decisions based on adequate financial planning for the benefit of the children. The school uses all funds appropriately for their intended purposes.

The school has an appropriate number of qualified teachers and teaching assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum. In particular, provision for the under fives has improved since the time of the last inspection, with a new classroom, good resources and the appointment of a suitably qualified teacher and nursery nurse. Overall the accommodation is very good and the adequacy of learning resources throughout the school is good. The principles of Best Value are adequately applied, for example, in the way the school has consulted parents regarding its priorities.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, the majority of parents are happy with the school and what it achieves. It is a very caring school. The school reinforces their own home values. Behaviour is very good. Good support is given to pupils with SEN. They are pleased with the homework set. They welcome the focus on the early years. They are pleased with the new headteacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One in three feel that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. Some feel that the school does not keep them well informed about how their children are getting on in school. A few feel uncomfortable in approaching the school with a problem.

Parents are supportive of the school and feel it is doing a good job. The inspection confirms the positive views of the parents. The behaviour of the children is very good. The focus on the Foundation Stage has been a positive development since the last inspection. The inspection supports the view that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons and that the information regarding their children's progress should be made more specific and clearer. The evidence is that the school is doing all it can to make itself approachable to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of children in the Foundation Stage is good in all areas of experience. Standards in language, literacy and mathematics are good and give children a secure foundation for future learning. Children start school with levels of attainment average by national standards. By the time they move into Year 1 the majority of the children have been helped to make good progress and many attain the recognised early learning goals for children of this age. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection.
2. At age seven, children's attainment in the 2002 national tests was at the national average for writing, reading and mathematics. The number of children who achieved above average results was below the national average. In comparison with similar schools, reading is average, while writing and mathematics are below average. These results are broadly matched by teacher assessments.
3. The majority of children in Year 2 can write and order numbers up to 100. More able children are able to read numbers up to 100 and understand the value, for instance, of the 4 in the number 42. Most children are able to add and subtract numbers up to 20.
4. By the age of nine standards reached by the children are about average in all subjects and many children achieve above average in English and mathematics. Standards have improved slightly since the last inspection. This is due to improvements in teaching, especially in literacy and numeracy. Over the last three years the performance of children in English and mathematics has improved slightly but the small number of children in each cohort each year make it difficult to make secure judgements and comparisons over time.
5. In the classroom, children's attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average. Children's attainment in information and communication technology is also average by the end of Year 4. The last inspection found a narrow information and communication technology curriculum that restricted progress. Curriculum provision has improved slightly and now children make satisfactory progress.
6. Among the other subjects, the progress children make is good in geography and satisfactory in history, art and design, design and technology, physical education and music throughout the school.
7. The progress of children with special educational needs is good. Teachers make efforts to engage these children fully in their teaching. Teaching assistants and support teachers provide caring, understanding and effective support for children with special educational needs. There has been good progress since the last inspection. There is early identification of pupils with

special educational needs. Termly and annual reviews are carried out.

8. During the inspection there were no observable differences in the attainment and progress of boys and girls. Children of higher ability are not always appropriately challenged and some are not working at high enough levels in the National Curriculum programmes of study.
9. The school has made good progress towards its Year 2 targets and this summer has met these targets in reading, writing and mathematics. Suitable targets have also been set for children to attain in the optional tests in English and mathematics at the end of Year 4.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The children's attitudes are a strength of the school. Since the last inspection, attitudes have improved and are now very good. The children's enthusiasm for school and overall relationships are excellent. They are very eager to come to school and quickly settle. The very good links with parents help to provide positive attitudes and the education the school provides is clearly valued in the community. Children enjoy the interesting variety of activities offered in lessons and the generally good pace of teaching and learning helps to sustain attention. They willingly contribute ideas to discussion. Children are clear what they are expected to do and how they should behave and this helps them to achieve a sense of success. They collaborate well and work well together and the concentration shown in lessons is particularly good.
11. The behaviour of pupils is good in lessons and around the school. There have been no exclusions. Children show respect for school property and other people's feelings and belongings. Playtimes and lunchtimes are happy and sociable occasions. The vast majority of children enjoy school due to the very good relationship they form with other children and staff, and a strong feeling of belonging to the school community.
12. Children make good progress in their personal development. Numerous examples were seen during the inspection of acts of kindness and support among the children themselves, including older children frequently helping and playing with younger ones. Teachers and other staff speak politely and courteously to children and they respond to this positively by being polite and respectful in turn. The children were frequently observed saying 'please', 'thank you' and 'excuse me' to each other.
13. Children make satisfactory progress in taking initiative and personal responsibility for tasks, such as delivering registers to the office manager, clearing up classrooms and the playground, devising and reading prayers at assembly and saying grace at lunch time. The imminent introduction of a school council is planned to help to extend children's citizenship skills.
14. The level of attendance remains very good. Rates are above the national average. The children's regular attendance helps them to make progress in school. Registration takes place promptly and little time is wasted during the day.
15. Children show respect for one another's beliefs, cultures and background. They make good use of opportunities in lessons to explore feelings and get advice on how to deal with difficult issues, like keeping friends and respecting differences. They know and adhere to the schools rules.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Overall the quality of teaching is now good at the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. All the teaching is now at least satisfactory with nearly two out of three lessons good. The quality of teaching in lessons for the under fives and in the Infants is consistently good. The quality of teaching in the Juniors is satisfactory overall. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is generally good for the under fives and the Infants and satisfactory for the Juniors.

17. Teachers' planning and teaching methods are generally good. Their use of support staff and resources is effective. Teachers manage the children well and relationships are excellent. All lessons are taught with confidence. Teachers' use of homework is adequate but its not always used effectively to extend children's learning. Teacher expectations are satisfactory for meeting the needs of most pupils, but in some lessons they do not always challenge the more able effectively to extend their problem solving, investigative and thinking skills.
18. Children respond well to their teachers and work well, making good progress in their learning. They are all keen to learn and participate fully in lessons. They produce work of a good standard but are not encouraged to be creative or take responsibility for their learning. Children with special educational needs make good progress. Children concentrate on their work and enjoy learning.
19. The teaching of literacy is good overall. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of English, their planning of lessons and teaching of basic skills are good. In the good lessons teachers have appropriate expectations. They use the literacy framework well to plan lessons, choosing appropriate texts and activities that appeal to children's interests. Marking is mostly consistent but remarks seldom help children to know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.
20. In numeracy the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. Teachers generally have a secure knowledge and understanding of mathematics. Planning is good and follows the framework for teaching mathematics. In the best lessons teachers make good use of oral and mental work to consolidate numeracy skills. In these lessons they share learning objectives with the children and use the plenary session to review learning. In the least effective lessons teachers do not allow the children enough time think for themselves. In some instances, teachers interrupt the group or individual work to explain points that either should have been explained earlier or which children could be left to work out for themselves.
21. In science the quality of teaching is generally good in both Key Stages. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge. The best teaching demonstrates clear appreciation of the facts and methods involved and the ability to develop a topic logically and in an interesting way. In the least successful lessons there is lack of rigour and insufficient opportunities to challenge the class. The use of information and communication technology is limited in science. Lesson planning is good. There is some helpful and careful marking but assessment of children often is not used sufficiently in planning subsequent work. Teachers manage their classes well and some are particularly skilled in the use of questions to help children learn.
22. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory throughout the school in art and design, geography, history, design and technology, music, information and communication technology and physical education.

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

23. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to children is generally good in Reception and broad throughout the school but in Years 1 to 4 it lacks balance and not all subjects are taught to an appropriate depth. The time allocated to teaching some subjects is too short. There are few extra-curricular activities on offer to the children. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum in all subjects. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. The school takes account of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy.
24. The curriculum offered to children in Reception is broad and balanced, promoting the early learning goals in each of the six areas of learning. Children are well supported and prepared and by the end of Reception they are working towards the National Curriculum. Entry assessment is effectively used to identify children's needs and details of their subsequent achievement,

including samples of work, are regularly kept. Children with special educational needs make good progress in Reception.

25. The school has successfully implemented its strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. This has benefited the quality of teaching and learning across most areas of learning. The increased emphasis on the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson has resulted in a review of time allocation for other subjects, including science. Overall, the school provides a broad curriculum but it is not balanced, especially in Years 1 to 4 as too much time is spent on English and mathematics at the expense of other subjects. The school's curriculum policies and schemes of work need updating. The match of work to ability is currently unsatisfactory as the needs of many of the more able are not met, as the curriculum does not include sufficient challenge, problem solving and reasoning.
26. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs, and makes good provision for the range of needs of the children. It ensures that Individual Action Plans are relevant, up to date and provide specialised help so that children make good progress. The school takes care that all children at the school have equal opportunities for learning and that all groups of children are able to benefit fully from the whole curriculum.
27. The school's current provision of extra-curricular activities for its children is unsatisfactory. The new headteacher has a plan to address this issue in the new academic year.
28. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. The school has a policy for personal, social and health education but this needs updating. Sex and drugs education are appropriately taught, according to the school's policy.
29. The school has developed effective links with its community through visits to the church, theatre and museums. A wide range of visitors to the school last year richly contributed to the children's learning. The school has good relationships with its parents, and it has developed improved links with the local middle schools to facilitate improved transfer arrangements at the end of Year 4.
30. The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall and an improvement since the last inspection. The social aspects of the curriculum are very good and a strength of the school. Moral development is good. Cultural and spiritual provision are both satisfactory.
31. The school provides some opportunities in assemblies for children to reflect on values, feelings, belief, and aspects of right and wrong. However, within the curriculum few opportunities are taken to reinforce children's spiritual awareness.
32. Good provision is made for moral education. Children are encouraged to reflect on aspects of right and wrong, in the classroom, the playground and in assemblies. They take responsibility for their own behaviour and the behaviour of others. Teachers and other adults working in the school have the highest expectations for the behaviour of the children. The children respond well, and are kind, polite and thoughtful, often taking the initiative to help each other.
33. There is a positive ethos, which promotes the self-esteem of children. The school has a very good sense of community and older children, in particular, are encouraged to help the younger ones. Teachers devise opportunities for children to develop a sense of responsibility in the classroom. However, children could be encouraged towards greater independence. This is an area that is underdeveloped.
34. Provision for cultural education is satisfactory. There are opportunities for children to visit and enjoy the theatre, museums and art galleries. The celebration and respect of the cultures of others is underdeveloped. There are opportunities to celebrate some festivals like Divali and there are a limited number of stories and resources that reflect cultural diversity. However, the range and quality of other provision is limited but improving. Some of the books in the library are dated and present a limited and biased view of the world, not in keeping with the ethnic and

cultural diversity of British society, and the contribution many cultures have made to the benefit of the world community. The headteacher is aware of this area of weakness and is already addressing it.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school continues to take satisfactory care of its children's health and well being. All members of staff know individual children very well, recognise their needs and respond well to them. They work very hard to give children personal support to ensure that the management of children's behaviour is consistent and fair. There are good links with health advisors and contact with a child's home can be made quickly.
36. The headteacher has not yet undertaken training in child protection but plans to do so as a matter of urgency. The school has recently been provided with the local authority's 'Guidelines on Child Protection' and the school plans to review its policy imminently in the light of this.
37. The procedures for monitoring attendance are very good, with the headteacher and office manager playing crucial roles. Parents are reminded regularly of the need for good attendance. The procedures for dealing with incidents of unauthorised absence are sound.
38. The teachers' promotion and monitoring of good behaviour is very good and helps the children to achieve well. The introduction of systems of awards and incentives, coupled with constant special praise for caring, listening, attainment and overall help and care are all very effective methods employed to monitor and support the development of children, both academically and personally. The children are supervised very well at breaks by conscientious staff who are alert and vigilant. Experienced and very efficient midday assistants undertake lunchtime supervision and the standard of care is very high.
39. The school's overall care for children's well-being is illustrated by how members of staff show particular pride in whatever they undertake, even menial and routine tasks. The procedures for the monitoring and eliminating of bullying are very good. The excellent relationships between staff and children ensure any difficulties are quickly identified and resolved. The school has strong links with other schools, particularly the pre-school group in the village. A satisfactory programme of visits for children in their final term ensures that they are well prepared socially and academically for the next stage of their education.
40. Apart from the weaknesses in child protection arrangements, other procedures for ensuring the children's health and safety are satisfactory. A detailed health and safety policy exists and there were no areas of concern highlighted during the inspection. However, safety audits of the premises are not frequent enough and are not recorded adequately. Members of staff have completed specialist first aid training and are competent to administer basic medical procedures for the children. Appropriate written records are made of all incidents.
41. The school's procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress are satisfactory overall. The school carries out the statutory assessment at the end of Year 2 effectively. Use is made of optional tests in Years 3 and 4. The school's assessment policy needs updating. Often, though, marking does not take account of children's progress and therefore teachers do not build up a secure assessment of what the children know and can do in order to help them plan for future work. This contributes to unduly slow progress for some children, especially the more able in the mixed age classes.
42. There is a clear and effective structure for the identification and assessment of special educational needs, which conforms to the revised Code of Practice guidance. The school maintains records of statement reviews, individual educational plans and contributions from outside agencies for children with special educational needs. Annual reviews are carried out appropriately and involve parents. All the requirements on children's statements are fully met. Individual education plans are drawn up in accordance with recently revised requirements.

Pastoral care for children with special educational needs is good. Good links with the local middle school ensure a smooth transfer of children with already identified needs. Outside agencies are used well to help with assessment of needs and specific, additional support. Procedures for supporting children with special educational needs are good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school's partnership with parents is a particular strength of the school. Parents have favourable views of the school and speak positively of their relationship with it. They fully support the aims and values of the school and consider that it provides a very caring environment and that the interests of their children are very much at heart.
44. Parents are made to feel very welcome in school and are encouraged to discuss matters informally with staff. The headteacher and staff regularly meet parents at the beginning and end of the day; this is greatly valued by them.
45. Much of the information provided for parents is of good quality. The school prospectus and parents' handbooks are currently undergoing a major review to enhance the quality of information provided to parents. Frequent newsletters keep parents up to date with ongoing and special events. There are regular opportunities for parents to consult with teachers about their children's progress. Meetings are planned to help parents keep abreast of what their children are learning. Some parents feel, however, that there should be better ways of keeping in touch with their children's progress. The school is responding to this by reviewing its procedures. Some parents feel that the school provides insufficient opportunities for the children to participate in extra curricular activities. The school was aware of this concern prior to the inspection and is currently planning to introduce additional activities. The format of the annual report gives parents a clear and concise indication of what their children can and cannot do.
46. Parents show a high degree of loyalty to the school. Their help and encouragement motivates their children to do as well as they can in their work. The 'Friends of the School' is a very active group and provides strong support in a variety of ways. Successful fundraising events occur throughout the year, including the highly successful '100 Club' which involves not just parents but the whole community. There are many regular volunteers, including some who are not parents, who help in the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Overall, the leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and governors are satisfactory. Taking up her position in the last few months, the headteacher has been able to steer the school by taking positive action to bring about improvements. At present the headteacher provides satisfactory leadership, communicating a sense of purpose and direction to all members of staff and encouraging them to work well together. Appropriate leadership and management structures have been drawn up. At present there is no delegation of responsibilities to help shape the strategic direction of the school. For example, the subject leadership of many areas is currently unsatisfactory. This includes English, mathematics, art and design, history, geography, music, design technology and physical education. The new headteacher has put in place a new plan of delegation of responsibilities to take effect from September 2003. The school has made some improvements in addressing many of the issues from the last inspection report, for example, by improving the quality of provision for the under fives.
48. The school has a satisfactory set of aims and values that have had an effect in improving teaching and learning since the last inspection. The commitment given to the school by the governing body, headteacher, all members of staff and parents has also improved since the last inspection.
49. The governors fulfil many of their statutory responsibilities well, but not those in relation to child protection procedures. The leadership of the governing body is effective. They have an increasing grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses but their role in monitoring and evaluating the

school's performance is underdeveloped. The governors' annual report to parents contains all the information required. Regular governors' meetings take place. In addition to these, various working parties and committees also meet. The governors receive information from the headteacher at these meetings on a range of issues, including the school development plan. Governors make regular visits to the school and are beginning to contribute to the formulation of the school development plan. Through their work on the finance, personnel and other committees, governors are able to be more effective in the management of the school. They apply the principles of Best Value in a satisfactory way.

50. The school's evaluation of its own performance is unsatisfactory at present. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching and learning is not systematic enough and does not pinpoint strengths and weaknesses in order to raise standards. The school development plan is an adequate working document but it does not fully focus on educational priorities to raise achievement. The governors are beginning to have a firmer understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The school is now ready to carry out a thorough analysis of its performance in order to further raise standards.
51. The match of teachers to the needs of the curriculum is good. There is a mixture of experienced and new colleagues, with a good range of curriculum expertise. There is a high level of commitment from both full and part-time members of staff. The learning support assistants are very effective in their role and give good support to children with special educational needs. Teachers know their children well. The school secretary and other administrative staff enhance the smooth running of the school. The midday and kitchen staffs support the school ethos along with the caretaking and cleaning staff who maintain the buildings to a very good standard.
52. The provision made for children with special educational needs is good and supports the school's aims and inclusive values, but there are some clear areas for development. The role of special needs co-ordinator has not been appropriately delegated. The school's budget expenditure for meeting special educational needs is targeted appropriately. Individual education plans are kept well.
53. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are adequate. Provision from the local education authority is used well, but opportunities are not always shared amongst the whole staff as there is no delegation of responsibilities. The induction of new members of staff and newly qualified teachers is good. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is satisfactory.
54. The accommodation is very well cared for and enhances the children's learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the under fives were taught with the infant class, a situation that was judged unsatisfactory. This has now been resolved with the building of an extra classroom in September 2002. Good displays were seen throughout the school. The two classrooms for the younger children have direct access to the hard-surface playground, which has recently been upgraded and is very good. The school has a small, neglected nature garden and a short walk from the school is the playing field. This is a valuable resource but currently underused. Learning resources are adequate in most areas. Some are outdated and in need of replacement. The library is currently out of action but it is soon to be re-established at the centre of the school. Information and communication technology facilities are adequately used but unimaginatively.
55. The school's administration systems are satisfactory. The budget is managed efficiently by the governors, who are well supported by the headteacher and her administrative officer. Financial planning is sufficiently well directed towards educational priorities. The finance committee works effectively and reports regularly to the full governing body meetings. Specific grants and additional funding made available to the school are used effectively. Specific grants for special educational needs are also used effectively.
56. Taking into account the standards achieved by the pupils, the quality of provision, the leadership and its ethos, the school is giving satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to build on the progress the school has made since the last inspection and further raise standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Improve the monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching and its impact on the school's performance and standards throughout the school. (Paragraph 50)
 - (2) Set in place effective delegation of some key responsibilities of leadership and management. (Paragraphs: 47, 90, 102, 122 and 128)
 - (3) Improve the standards achieved by the more able children, especially in the infant and Junior classes by planning work more closely matched to the upper end of the ability range in each class and by setting targets for every child on the school's register of more able children. (Paragraphs: 17, 98 and 141)
 - (4) Make sure that teachers use their ongoing assessments of the children to help in their planning of subsequent work. (Paragraphs: 41, 96 and 132)
 - (5) Improve the balance and relevance of the curriculum in Years 1 to 4 by reducing the amount of time given solely to literacy and numeracy in order to release more time for other subjects and to make time to effectively apply literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. (Paragraphs: 25, 78, 80 and 105)
 - (6) Implement the plan for expanding the provision for extra curricular activities as soon as possible. (Paragraph: 27)
 - (7) Meet the requirements for child protection. (Paragraph 36, 40 and 49)
 - (8) Health and safety audits of the school building, playground and fields. (Paragraph 40)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	64

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	17	9	0	0	0
Percentage	0	0	65	35	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 nearly 4 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)	0	46
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	8

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	5	7	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	4	5
	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	10	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (83)	92 (83)	100 (83)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	5
	Girls	7	5	7
	Total	11	9	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (83)	75 (83)	100 (83)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	46	0	0
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian			
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, 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)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.9:1
Average class size	15.3

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	50

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002 - 2003
	£
Total income	177,144
Total expenditure	164,018
Expenditure per pupil	3565
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,843
Balance carried forward to next year	13,126

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.6
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	46
Number of questionnaires returned	26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	42	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	58	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	46	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	62	12	0	4
The teaching is good.	58	35	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	27	46	15	4	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	19	12	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	35	0	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	19	50	15	4	8
The school is well led and managed.	31	38	15	4	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	35	8	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	4	35	31	23	4

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

58. There have been considerable improvements for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection when provision and curriculum delivery were judged unsatisfactory. The new dedicated classroom and the appointment and training of a Reception class teacher have had a very good effect and now the children in the Reception class receive a good start to their education. The standard of teaching is good and children make good progress as a result. Planning for the Foundation Stage is thorough and is carried out jointly by both teacher and nursery nurse. Their management of the class is seamless, making a very rich environment in which the Reception children learn. Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average.
59. Activities, experiences and high expectations in all six areas of learning for the Foundation Stage, and the very good progress made by the children, stand them in good stead at transfer to Year 1. A one-day induction visit to Year 1 is planned later this term. However, this does not amount to a sufficiently comprehensive induction plan to meet the children's needs and give the Year 1 teacher an opportunity to meet her new class members.
60. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The Reception teacher has accurately identified the next steps for improvement.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. Provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Good teaching enables children to make good progress in taking turns, working co-operatively together and listening to each other and adults. The family atmosphere in the rest of the school and the support given to younger children by the older ones, both in the playground and at family-grouped tables at lunchtime helps here, too. This term, Reception children have started joining the rest of the school for whole-school assembly in the mornings. They participate readily, answering question with hands up, joining in the prayer, listening appropriately and showing great sense of the occasion. The children's attitude to learning is very good. The adults build up their confidence by ensuring that they succeed but, because they over-direct them, they are not developing enough self-reliance.
62. Adults provide good role models, always treating children and each other with respect. Teachers use imaginative devices to regain the children's attention. For example, in a physical development lesson in the hall the teacher called the children "back to base" which was a tractor made out of large cardboard boxes and hoops. Music is played as the signal to clear up. Support staff and parent helpers work well as part of a cohesive Foundation Stage team.
63. Teachers ensure equipment and resources are well prepared and ready to use. Thus children make good personal choices among activities and tidy away efficiently. By the summer term children achieve the early goals in this area.

Communication, language and literacy

64. The children love listening to stories and join in with chorus words appropriately and with enthusiasm, reinforcing concepts such as number and time. They enjoy and appreciate the humour in stories. They look at books readily with each other and adults.
65. Elements of the National Literacy Framework are used well, preparing the children for the next step of their education. With individual white boards and marker pens teachers are able to help children form letters and words. Children are used to drawing and labelling. Games encourage writing and spelling of simple words.

66. Children are confident talkers and initiate conversations with adults. The visit to Wimpole Hall earlier this term has had a great impact and the children took great delight in explaining what happened during the day using suitable vocabulary. The Reception teacher recognises that the role-play area is underused. This is a lost opportunity. Other activity areas, like the block building, the wormery and the computer all encourage talk well.

Mathematical development

67. This area is taught well and by the end of the Reception year all children have exceeded the early learning goals and are well prepared for Year 1. All children can count forward and backwards to 10 and some beyond. The children recognise and can name the regular two-dimensional shapes.
68. Teachers encourage the children to see mathematics all around and take every opportunity to count objects and practice comparative words in relation to height and time. Great emphasis is placed on writing numbers correctly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. This is another area where children exceed the expectations of the early learning goals. They develop an inquisitive interest in the world around them as a result of imaginative activities planned by the teachers.
70. For example, the making of pancakes was well documented in a class book with illustrations and labels. The wormery is checked regularly for developments and three children were able to explain that the worms pull the leaves they put on the surface down into the earth for their food. Careful planning ensures a balance of learning about the local environment as well as the wider world. A recent visit was particularly inspirational for the children and was well recorded in pictures, collages and photographs. Children know the names of animals. Other visits have included the Sandy Sorting Office and Sandy Library, to which the children travelled on a service bus.

Physical development

71. Children in the Reception class have access from their classroom to the outdoor area, which is appropriately equipped with large toys like trikes, bikes and climbing apparatus. Teachers take full advantage of planning for the children to use the outside whenever possible, in the good weather especially. Plans are underway to make a covered area outside the door to maximise potential in the future. Children use outdoor equipment safely and are adventurous in their approach to climbing and riding.
72. Children show good control of their bodies. During an imaginative indoor physical education lesson the teacher had set up equipment, including huge cardboard boxes, tubes, benches and jumping canes, to represent a farmyard. The children devised ways to move round the "farmyard", jumping, sliding, balancing, crawling and so on. After three trips round they were becoming quite adventurous and, rightly, were reminded about safety. Children are also taught cutting and sticking to help gain safe control of finer movements.

Creative development

73. Children make good progress to reach the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Teachers provide a wealth of well-planned and inspirational creative activities including painting, knitting, dying wool, weaving, model making, drawing and collage. Resources are always well prepared and explanations clear. Activities are too often adult-led, giving little room for independent creative development.
74. Children can reproduce rhythms well in musical activities. They enjoy playing percussion instruments and all know how to thread a triangle and which beater to use, as well as knowing how to use each instrument appropriately.

75. Singing is not as strong. The children's singing voices do not match the volume evident when they are engaged on other activities. At the end of the day the children become tired and distracted and are reluctant to join in with the teacher.

ENGLISH

76. The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2 have gone down over the last four years but showed some improvement in 2002. However the small numbers in each year group from year to year make it difficult to see trends over time or draw reliable statistical comparisons. The current results in 2003 show that all children, except those with special educational needs, are attaining in line with national expectations, with half attaining above this in reading. They performed slightly less well in writing. In this year's optional tests for Year 4, children show improvement, all children reaching reading levels above the national average. Standards in English have remained fairly constant since the last inspection.
77. The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory and in half of the lessons seen it was good. Teaching is better in Years 1 and 2. The teachers show a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. They use the literacy framework well to plan lessons, choosing appropriate texts and activities that appeal to children's interests. Literacy targets were introduced for Years 1 and 2 last year and these have improved the assessment of children's work. Targets are shared with children and parents and revised termly. The children's progress is checked both during lessons and by regular marking. Children with special educational needs make good progress. Support staff are highly effective. English and literacy lessons have an over generous amount of curriculum time allocated to them at the expense of time available for other subjects.
78. The headteacher assumes the role of literacy co-ordinator as well as that for all other subjects. There is a satisfactory policy for English but there is no plan to show how weaknesses, such as the excessive time spent on the subject, are to be addressed.
79. Children's speaking and listening skills are satisfactory. Children in both classes speak confidently and respond enthusiastically to questions. They particularly enjoy active participation; for example, in Year 4 children were chosen to adopt the role of a character in a story and answer questions from their classmates. They express themselves with appropriate knowledge. For example, in an assembly with floral messages as the theme, several children were able to articulate occasions when flowers were used, such as funerals, and weddings.
80. Children's reading skills are good. They enjoy books and read regularly at school and at home. Home/school reading records are used effectively by all children. Comments from both parents and teachers are helpful and provide a useful dialogue between the parties. Children in Year 2 enjoy improving their phonic work through imaginative games which help their skills in both reading and spelling. Silent reading and spelling activities occur daily after lunch for children in Years 3 and 4. These sessions are too long and do not add to the children's achievements. Spelling practice is appropriate and effective.
81. The library is currently out of action but there are plans to improve it and relocate it in a more central position with new display and storage units. Reading resources are enhanced by "topic loans" from the library service, a good collection of "Big Books," new purchases of group readers for Years 3 and 4 and a good collection of tapes and videos.
82. Children's writing skills are satisfactory. They are confident writers who readily transfer their skills to other subjects. For example, Year 3 children were very at ease in writing a letter to a fictitious character, asking questions about his village in Africa as part of a geography lesson. The children often show imagination and use complex sentences. For example, in Year 4 a boy wrote, "I covered my face with my wet hands and.....WOOSH(*whoosh*)...A mosy (*mosquito*) flew in front of me." Handwriting is mostly legible but not joined consistently. Some children use ink. Presentation is satisfactory. No use of information and communication technology for

writing was seen during the inspection in Year 4, although a good example of word processing related to the trip to the Victorian School was on display.

83. Year 2 write stories, accounts for history lessons, poems and information sheets. They are keen to write and work well independently. They used information from the Internet well in their writing on whales. Children show good understanding of punctuation, including question and exclamation marks. Imaginative use of language and presentation of poetry was stimulated by poems on water, like "After the Bath" by Aileen Fisher, as in this example by an above average Year 1 girl:

*The pinchy crab came
Out of the sea
Out of the sea*

*A splashy wave
Swept him away from me
Swept him away from me*

*He tried to swim back
Tried to swim back.*

84. Classes are well managed and children behave well. The best lessons feature activities that are matched to children's abilities and not merely varied according to how the children respond. A good pace is maintained and concentration enhanced when children are allowed to be active in lessons. Homework is set but not sufficiently systematically.

MATHEMATICS

85. Attainment is at the national average at the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 4. Children in Year 4 make good progress, attaining good standards. There are no marked differences in the performance of boys and girls. Children with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
86. The school has adopted the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and all areas of the mathematics curriculum are taught well. Teaching at the end of Year 2 is good and at the end of Year 4 satisfactory. Where teaching is good there is secure subject knowledge; teaching is enthusiastic, and the focus of the lessons is shared with the children. Mathematical vocabulary is used effectively by teachers. Teachers ask challenging questions. Work is varied to meet the needs of all the children. Comments in children's books indicate what has been achieved during the lesson. Support from teaching assistants is appropriately targeted. Where teaching is satisfactory there is insufficient interaction to enable the children to answer questions and the plenary part of the lesson is under-developed. It is not given sufficient time to encourage the children to reflect on their learning or use what they have learned in different ways. Expectations are not always high enough for the more able pupils.
87. In Year 2 children learn number bonds up to 50 and know that addition can be done in any order. They are able to construct symmetrical shapes. They draw simple bar graphs in their design and technology books. Year 4 children were working on number bonds to 100, which is too easy for this age group, but they were able to recognise a line of symmetry and translate shapes on a grid. They are developing strategies for addition and subtraction and are moving towards standard forms of notation.
88. The children ask searching questions both of their peers and of the adults in the room. They were set an investigative task that challenged their thinking. Once the children had established that 'difference' and 'subtraction' were one and the same they used a variety of strategies to find the largest and smallest differences between two numbers which they generated themselves. They began to show a systematic approach. In this situation the children were more accurate in

their calculations when using informal methods rather than a standard algorithm.

89. Attitudes and behaviour were good in all lessons seen. The children enjoy their lessons, especially the mental mathematics at the beginning of the session. They respond positively to the good pace of this part of the lesson. In Year 2 children show involvement and concentration in their work. In Year 4 the children support each other in their group work. They are well motivated.
90. Resources are adequate, although some are in need of replacement. Calculators are an underused resource. The subject management and leadership are unsatisfactory. The subject leader is new to the post and is aware of the relevant issues.
91. Since the last inspection teaching has improved. There is no longer reliance on worksheets and the subject is now exciting for children. Investigative work was a weakness in the last inspection. Now the children's skills of logical thinking are improving. The children use and apply their mathematical knowledge. Whereas previously numeracy across the curriculum was only evident in science and design technology.

SCIENCE

92. By the end of Year 2 children attain standards in National Curriculum tests in line with national expectations. There is no significant variation in boys and girls performance. Results have remained constant in recent years and are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. Compared with schools with children from similar backgrounds children's performance is below average. In lessons the children's attainment is mainly average.
93. Progress is satisfactory throughout the school. In Year 1 children carry out simple investigations and handle apparatus competently. Some are able to make reasoned predictions. For example, children in a Year 2 class were able to find out about different parts of plants and record their findings accurately.
94. Children make satisfactory progress in Year 2 and those with special educational needs make good progress, reflecting the high level of support. Progress in individual lessons is good where teaching is lively and sharply focused. By the end of Year 2, children have experienced a sound introduction to a range of scientific ideas. For example, they understand forces involving pushing and pulling things. They have connected a simple circuit with battery and bulb.
95. Pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of Year 4 and those with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils know an appropriate range of scientific facts and ideas and use technical vocabulary with reasonable precision. They carry out investigations and record with sufficient care and attention. For example, in a Year 4 class they were able to plan a fair test to compare different soils. They carried out their investigation effectively and accurately, reaching appropriate conclusions. They were making good use of their numeracy skills, recording time and charts in a systematic way that contributed to their correct analysis of the results.
96. Teaching is generally good in both key stages. Teachers have adequate subject knowledge. However, some lack confidence. The best teaching demonstrates clear appreciation of the facts and methods involved and the ability to develop a topic logically and in an interesting way. Lesson planning is good. There is some helpful and careful marking but assessment of children often is not taken into account when planning subsequent work. Teachers manage their classes well and some are particularly skilled in the use of questions to help children learn.
97. Attitudes are good throughout the school. Children are attentive, keen to answer questions and able to work independently. Their responses are usually good and older children co-operate well in preparing practical sessions and class presentations. They enjoy practical work.

ART AND DESIGN

98. No art and design lessons were seen during the period of inspection. The school's planning procedures, scrutiny of children's work from the present and past, informal discussions with children in Years 3 and 4 and displays throughout the school show that attainment continues to be in line with national expectations. Little progress has been made in the subject since the last inspection. Children still do not have the opportunity to develop individual creativity and there is no reference to children who are artistically gifted or talented, nor evidence that they are challenged. The two-year curriculum cycle works well for both classes, with clear reference to the National Curriculum.
99. Work produced is sometimes of good quality and good links are made to other subjects, particularly design and technology. Children are taught to mix colours, colour in with pastels and crayons, paint, use collage and draw in both classes. Too few opportunities to use these techniques to produce pictures and paintings of their own making impede children's creative abilities. Nevertheless, some good examples of artwork are displayed throughout the school linked to work in other subjects. For example, children posed in period costume with relevant artefacts to represent a painting of a peasant girl by Vermeer, each child's replication having been recorded with a digital camera. Another example is the display of Joseph's Coat of Many Colours, a design and technology project in which children collaborated to join tie-dye embroidered squares to make a life-size patchwork coat and used collage of various materials to make smaller, paper versions decorated with symmetrical patterns.
100. Children in Years 3 and 4 enjoy art and design and good links have been made to a project on India, papier maché elephants painted and decorated using a choice of materials are displayed for all to see in the entrance hall. Colour mixing exercises and pattern making samples are kept for reference in purposeful art folders and there is some evidence of additional work in drawing and painting having been added during this year. Progress is satisfactory.
101. Resources are satisfactory. There are many paints, other colouring media, and a variety of types of papers from which to choose. All children apply drawing techniques appropriately to illustrative work in history, geography and English.
102. A lack of designated subject leader impedes the school's capacity to reflect on and evaluate progress in the subject. Assessment procedures in art and design are underdeveloped.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards of achievement at the end of Year 2 and Year 4 are satisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There is evidence now that the children design, make and evaluate their work. Year 4 children followed this process to make free standing photo frames and Year 2 children constructed theatres in which to stage their own stories. Children with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.
104. Overall teaching is satisfactory or better. Where teaching is good, teachers have good subject knowledge, their questioning is effective and encourages the children to make choices about the materials they are going to use and to refine their ideas. Children build on their previous knowledge. In some lessons expectations are not high enough and the more able children are not always challenged.
105. Children in Year 2 developed a range of appropriate skills through the cross-curricular project on 'Joseph's Coat' and this made a good display in the hallway. These skills included different ways of joining materials, tie-dyeing and sewing. The children made appropriate progress. Children in Year 4 adequately plan and evaluate the photo frames but their constructional skills are unsatisfactory. A selected group of Year 3 and 4 children had entered a local competition to design a bridge that would hold a weight of 4.5 kg. Two Year 3 children came fourth out of 40

schools. They clearly demonstrated that they knew about the design and construction process and were able to test their results. The younger children work with care and attention to detail, taking pride in their work. Insufficient time is allocated to Design and Technology and this adversely affects the children's progress in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Standards in geography, since the last inspection, have remained in line with national expectations in all year groups.
107. Planning is linked to the national curriculum and QCA advice and, in both classes, mixed age groups are catered for with a two-year cycle programme of work. Examination of children's past work and two lesson observations during the inspection indicate that the quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. Progress is satisfactory throughout the school.
108. Children are well motivated and inspired by appropriate topics for study. They demonstrate inquisitive minds. Year 4 children were able to devise questions to ask a fictitious Kenyan living in a village in Africa. They showed good recall of things learnt previously, such as the difference between a country and a continent, and remembered with accuracy some Swahili words taught to them in earlier lessons. They also know compass directions and use them in describing the location of various African countries. Good use is made of the Internet. The lesson came alive at this point; children were keen to find out information about Kenya and enjoyed discussing their findings, making notes and printing them out. Children with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.
109. Children in Year 2 were well motivated by their study of Venice and experienced an awe-inspiring moment when shown a picture of a gondola on the canals. Children and adults take "Barnaby Bear" on holidays, visits and trips in the UK and abroad. His trips are documented by photographs and written accounts and shared with other children on his return. Children enjoy taking him away and this does much to increase their knowledge and understanding of the world. Plans are in hand to develop a "Barnaby Bear" link with other schools.
110. The teaching is satisfactory and enables children to develop their understanding of the differences between their own locality and localities world-wide. This work is beginning to benefit cultural development and understanding in the school. Marking is carried out regularly but does not give sufficient indication of how children can improve.
111. The lack of a designated subject leader impedes the school's capacity to reflect and evaluate progress being made in the subject.

HISTORY

112. No history lessons were seen during the inspection but there was other evidence, such as the school's planning procedures, a scrutiny of children's work from the present and past, informal discussions with children in Years 2 and 4 and displays throughout the school. This indicates that attainment continues to be in line with national expectations. Good progress has been made in developing the subject since the last inspection and teaching is now often imaginative and children's progress overall is good. Children with special educational needs make good progress. The more able make insufficient progress due to lack of challenge.
113. All of the children in Years 1 to 4 visited the Victorian School and Museum in Hitchin earlier this year, which has left a remarkable and lasting impression on them. The visit did much to enhance the children's social and historical development. They talk with great knowledge about how it felt to be at school in Victorian England and can articulate the differences between then and now. Work on display in the hall on this topic shows good progress with a mixture of factual and personal accounts of the trip. Some of these are hand written and others demonstrate children's developing word processing skills. Photographic records of the children

in Victorian costume were well used.

114. During the school year there has been a transition from a heavy dependence on worksheets, on which children entered only brief, prescribed responses, to tasks in which the children are free to write at length and in their own words. This has brought a great improvement in the extent to which they express themselves creatively and are able to empathise with people in the past. A Year 2 project and class book on "The Great Fire of London" shows clearly the enjoyment and care taken in producing an excellent record of the events of 1666. Good use was made of computer drawings and word processing, as well as hand written accounts. Use of the digital camera to record children in costume in a representation of a Vermeer painting of a peasant gave the children a sense of being "back in time" and helped them to understand the period fully.
115. Marking is carried out regularly but does not give sufficient indication as to how children can improve.
116. Resources are satisfactory and supplemented by relevant pictures, artefacts, computer software and topic loan books and enhance learning. There is no teacher with overall responsibility for history which makes it harder for the school to set up effective procedures for evaluating progress.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

117. Children's attainment in information and communication technology meets national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 4. During the inspection, very few classroom computers were seen in use but many examples of computer-generated work were seen, either on display or in children's books and folders.
118. Children in Year 2 use drawing programmes to develop their use of basic computer skills. They learn to switch on and off and use the mouse for clicking and drawing, and they learn about a range of facilities. They can create simple, word-processed items in different scripts, and can operate simple reading-support software effectively. By the end of Year 2 they can draw in different colours, spray-paint and erase, and type using different fonts.
119. Children in Years 3 and 4 can create a database, enter personal data on it and begin to interrogate some of their results.
120. Some whole class teaching was seen and this was satisfactory. Teachers had planned appropriately, and organised their lessons well. They explained the task clearly and managed the very enthusiastic children pleasantly but firmly. They intervened with good timing, and gave good opportunities for experimentation. However, some teachers' subject knowledge and understanding is limited. Their use of ongoing assessment too is unsatisfactory.
121. Children respond well to information and communication technology lessons. They behave well, are eager to try things out, and discuss problems and ideas together. They use the equipment sensibly, taking turns without fuss, and working independently.
122. The last inspection found a narrow information and communication technology curriculum and children learning without sufficient adult support. The curriculum has improved since then but many of the more able children are still not challenged effectively to further improve their standards of achievement in the subject.

MUSIC

123. By the end of Year 2 and Year 4 children attain nationally expected standards. No music lessons were observed during the inspection nor was there an opportunity to hear singing in assembly. However, the timetable indicates that class teachers are responsible for their own

class music and that a peripatetic music teacher teaches groups of children in Year 4; violin and recorder on Mondays and Fridays. These groups currently consist of girls. Overall there is sufficient provision for music.

124. There was evidence, on a tape, to show that the oldest class composed their own music and recorded it as a pictorial score. They used percussion instruments to depict 'flashes and switches turning on and off' in their 'Electricity Music'. Teacher comments on their scores showed that the children had used dynamics and worked in groups. Children conducted and performed these pieces to others in assembly.
125. The listening skills of the children to the pre-recorded music in assembly are good. In one assembly children responded with appropriate emotion and reflective understanding. They departed from the hall as if in a royal procession.
126. There are adequate resources, including a good range of tuned and percussion instruments, which are in good order. The school has a stock of violins.
127. At the last inspection the subject was reported to have 'good features'. The policy needs updating in the light of the National Curriculum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations for children at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. Children with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school.
129. Overall the teaching is satisfactory or better. Where teaching is good, activities are demonstrated clearly and encouragement is given to help children improve their skills. For example, the children were shown how to throw the ball up and over their shoulder and then run back to catch it in a controlled way. Some children made it more difficult by throwing the ball higher. In the less effective lessons the more able children were not given opportunities to develop their skills further and the teacher did not have high enough expectations of their abilities.
130. The children enjoy their physical education lessons and generally respond positively to their teacher's instructions. Children in Year 2 watched carefully as they were shown how to improve their skills and by so doing succeeded in making progress.
131. During the inspection lessons were observed in the playground and were planned around small apparatus activities to develop game skills. There are suitable proformas for recording assessments.
132. Since the last inspection the swimming pool has been filled in. Swimming is now at a local pool and is planned for the older children in the autumn term. Overall provision for swimming is adequate.
133. The school hall is an ideal setting for physical education sessions. Currently the hall is being used for storage purposes whilst the library area is being remodelled. There are benches, stools and mats to allow for gymnastic activities. There is a school field but this is used infrequently.
134. The school is represented at the local small schools' football competition by a mixed team. The children in Year 2 are currently involved in the 'Shine' athletics awards to develop and improve their athletics skills. This is offering an incentive to the children and during the inspection one Year 1 boy who was unable to skip in the lesson at the beginning of the week succeeded in skipping successfully around the playground by the end of the next lesson.

135. Physical education was a strength of the school at the last inspection. Since then the specialist teacher has left and class teachers deliver their own lessons, which are satisfactory but not as good as at the time of the last inspection.