

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HAYDON ABBEY COMBINED SCHOOL**

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110276

Headteacher: H Goddard

Reporting inspector: J Woodcock  
1624

Dates of inspection: 11-14 November 2002

Inspection number: 246975

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Community
School category:	Infant and Junior
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Weedon Road Aylesbury Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP19 9NS
Telephone number:	(01296) 482278
Fax number:	(01296) 336709
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	B Brackley
Date of previous inspection:	6-9 June 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1624	J Woodcock	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9619	B Miller	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? Finance
23453	C Cressey	Team inspector	Citizenship English Music	English as an additional language Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
19897	A Evans	Team inspector	Art and design History Mathematics	Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Educational inclusion
30000	J Tresadern	Team inspector	Design and technology Geography Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
25461	J Walker	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education	Monitoring of pupils' attainment and progress (assessment) Special educational needs

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Haydon Abbey is bigger than other primary schools, with a current roll of 336 full-time pupils in Reception to Year 6, and a further 49 children attending a nursery class part-time. It serves the very disadvantaged ward of Gatehouse in Aylesbury. Attainment on entry covers a wide range of abilities but the proportion of five-year-olds entering the school with typical or higher attainment is very low in reading, writing and mathematics; this is a decline since the last inspection. More than 32 per cent of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Pakistani, with a few black Caribbean and black African; over 10 per cent are at an early stage of learning to speak English as an additional language; this is high. The school has identified 23 per cent of pupils as having special educational needs, which is average overall but there are very wide variations between year groups, in some the proportion is about 50 per cent. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs; as a proportion, this is below the national average and similar to that at the time of the last inspection. The proportion eligible for a free school meal is above the national average. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school each year, about one in five, is high. The number of teachers joining and leaving the school is also high. The buildings and grounds are adequate and are in the process of being improved. The school is beginning to benefit considerably from the nursery class for children aged three to four.

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

At the last inspection, the school had serious weaknesses in the standards attained in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology in Year 6. The quality of education provided, the climate for learning, and the management and efficiency of the school needed improvement. In the last eighteen months since the appointment of a permanent headteacher, the school has improved, particularly in Years 1 to 4, but this improvement is not fully evident in the 2002 test results in Year 6. Current work shows that the decline in standards in earlier years has been reversed and an upward direction initiated though much remains to be achieved. Current standards in Year 6 remain well below average in English, mathematics, and science compared to the majority of schools but are better than they were two years ago. Pupils are learning well and this should result in increased numbers of pupils attaining the nationally expected levels in 2003, though the proportion doing so will still be well below average. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with some good features, and has improved since the previous inspection. The school has effective strategies for promoting educational inclusion for all pupils. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and governors. There is a strong commitment by a hard-working team of staff to bring about school improvement, raise standards and share effective practice. The school provides satisfactory value for money and is an effective organisation.

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

- Many pupils make good progress and achieve well when compared with their attainment on entry to school.
- Pupils' achievement is good in art and design and the pace of their learning in information and communication technology is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Their spiritual, moral and social development is good. Relationships with each other and with adults are good.
- There is effective teaching and learning in the nursery and Reception classes.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are of high quality.
- The inclusive nature of the school community.

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

- Pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Attendance.
- The school library.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in June 2000 and the key issues are being appropriately addressed. The school has given high priority to the development of the education provided for children in the nursery and Reception year. Standards have improved during the last eighteen months, particularly in the nursery and Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. There continue to be wide variations in standards in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6, from being very low to average, with relatively higher standards in Years 3 and 4. Standards in information and communication technology have improved significantly and are now at the expected level for pupils of this age. The governors have secured teaching that is more settled for each class and the quality of

teaching and learning is improving. Attendance continues to be unsatisfactory. The very good leadership of the new headteacher, who is supported well by the governing body, is giving the school a strong sense of direction and purpose.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6, based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	E	D	E	C
mathematics	E	D	E	E
science	E	B	E	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The 2002 test results for pupils in Year 6 were well below average in English, mathematics, and science. Overall, the 2002 results in English in Year 6 were broadly the same as schools with pupils with similar backgrounds, not far behind in science, but considerably adrift in mathematics. The overall trend over time shows that the school is improving at a rate broadly in line with the national picture, though this will need to increase if standards are to catch up with national standards. Boys and girls in Year 6 achieve similar standards in English, mathematics, and science. Many Year 6 pupils make very good progress when compared with their attainment at the age of seven.

In the current Year 6, the proportions of pupils attaining or exceeding the nationally expected level are well below average in English, mathematics, and science. Nevertheless, pupils are making good progress and the school is likely to achieve the challenging targets it set for 2003 of more than two-thirds of Year 6 pupils in English and three-quarters in mathematics attaining the nationally expected level. Pupils with English as an additional language are acquiring fluency in English at a typical rate but are not likely to become fully fluent until the age of thirteen or fourteen; because of this, their current attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics is below the national expectation for their age. Nearly all of the pupils with special educational needs are making good progress and although some of them may not attain the expected national level, they are all likely to achieve their individual targets by the end of the year. Standards in literacy and numeracy are improving because of better teaching, though pupils' punctuation and grammar skills are unsatisfactory. In the Reception classes, children are making good progress towards achieving the expected standards by the end of the year; this is a significant improvement on previous years. At this stage of the school year, Year 6 pupils' attainment in art and design is above average; in all other non-core subjects, they are average. In the current Year 2, standards are above average in science but below average in English and mathematics; this is an improvement on previous years. The Year 2 pupils' achievements in most other subjects are at least satisfactory; achievement in art and design is above average.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are keen to learn and have a strong desire to improve.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are well behaved. They are aware that oppressive behaviour such as bullying will not be tolerated; no racist or sexist behaviour was seen although some pupils reported difficulties, which had been dealt with effectively by staff. A small number of pupils exhibit very challenging behaviour; this is managed well by the teachers. Each of the small number of exclusions has been managed in accordance with required procedures.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They have respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. Relationships between pupils and adults are good. Pupils are keen to be involved in all activities offered by the school.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory but improving. Unauthorised absence is above the national average.

A significant strength of the school is the inclusive ethos created by the headteacher, governors, staff, and parents; this is helping pupils develop positive attitudes to learning and to make good and often very good progress.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory with some good features	Satisfactory with some good features

*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, teaching is satisfactory with some good features; this is an improvement since the previous inspection. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught appropriately throughout the school. The teaching of information and communication technology is very good. Teaching in English, mathematics, art and design, music and physical education is good. Teaching in science, design and technology, geography, history, and religious education is satisfactory. The teaching of children in the nursery and Reception classes is good.

Throughout the school, lessons are well prepared and planned, with interesting activities that add to the pupils' enjoyment of learning. In the main, the tasks set meet well the differing needs of the pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge, manage pupils well and encourage them to work hard. Teachers make good use of classroom assistants to support learning. However, in a few lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, they lack sufficient challenge and the methods used are not always effective. The direct teaching methods used are contributing to raising standards. However, some learning is passive and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to engage in practical work or to develop their independent learning skills. When they are given such opportunities, for example, in information and communication technology and art and design, the standard achieved by higher-attaining pupils are above average. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress towards achieving the expected standards. The headteacher and members of staff recognise the importance of improving further the quality of teaching to help pupils achieve higher standards.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, and caters well for the differing interests and needs of the pupils. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the statutory curriculum. All pupils have equal access and the opportunity to participate fully in all learning experiences. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision and support enable pupils to make good progress. A team of well-briefed teaching assistants is used effectively to support learning. Targets set for pupils are realistic and achievable.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good. The pupils are fully included in all activities and are well supported by teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Provision for spiritual and social development is very good. Provision for moral and cultural development is good. Pupils are well prepared for life in a culturally diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are satisfactory. Good procedures are in place for monitoring pupils' achievements and for staff to be aware of pupils' social and emotional needs.

Overall, the school's links with parents are good. Annual reports are informative, clearly identifying pupils' progress and indicating areas for improvement. The school is working hard to involve parents more actively in the work of the school and in supporting their children's learning at school and at home. Procedures for monitoring attendance are unsatisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. The strong lead provided by the headteacher sets high expectations for the school community, and she is well supported by other key members of staff. The staff members are hard working and operate increasingly effectively as a team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors work effectively through committees to meet their statutory responsibilities. They are very well informed and effective as critical friends, particularly in monitoring the school's achievements and the budget.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring arrangements are good. Test results are analysed and used well to help determine priorities. Effective action is taken when weaknesses are identified.
The strategic use of resources	The budget is managed well. The school seeks to gain good value for money in all its expenditure.

The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. The school's evaluation of its performance is good. The governors have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The budget is managed judiciously and it is intended by governors that the deficit that remained at the end of the 2001-2002 will be remedied by the end of the 2002-2003 financial year. The school is staffed well. Resources for learning are satisfactory. The accommodation is adequate and in the process of being improved. The school library is unsatisfactory and lacks a sufficient range of non-fiction books to provide pupils with opportunities to develop their research skills.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and are well behaved.</li> <li>• Their children are taught well and are making good progress.</li> <li>• Teachers are approachable.</li> <li>• Teachers have high expectations of their pupils.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps their children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<p>An analysis of the 164 pre-inspection questionnaires shows that there were no significant areas for concern, however:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• some parents wish to have more information about how their children are getting on;</li> <li>• while, others would welcome a wider range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection team endorses parents' views about the strengths of the school. Parents believe that Haydon Abbey is a good school. Inspection evidence shows that the parents receive regular and appropriate information about their children's progress and that the school provides a good range of activities outside lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The 2002 National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. The results were broadly in line with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds in English but not quite up to the mark in science and considerably lower in mathematics. The proportion of pupils exceeding the nationally expected level was lower than the majority of schools in all of the subjects tested. Between 1998 and 2001, test results improved but then dipped in 2002 because of the high number of pupils with learning difficulties. The standard of current work in Year 6 is higher than 2002 because more pupils are on target to attain or exceed the nationally expected level and this is consistent with the long-term trend of improvement. The tests show that boys and girls achieved similar standards in 2002. Trends show that in all core subjects, the school improved broadly in line with the national trend between 1998 and 2002.
2. The 2002 National Curriculum test results for pupils at the end of Year 2 were well below average in reading and below average in writing and mathematics. The 2002 results in Year 2 were the same as similar schools in writing and mathematics but not as good in reading. The proportion of pupils achieving high standards was below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Between 1998 and 2002, test results improved at a faster rate than schools nationally, particularly in writing and mathematics. The tests show that the girls achieved higher standards in reading than did the boys. Boys and girls achieved similar standards in writing but girls did not do as well as boys in mathematics. Overall, the 2002 results in Year 2 are some of the best results the school has achieved during the last five years, particularly in writing and mathematics although reading was still an area for concern.
3. Since 2000, the school has concentrated successfully on improving standards in the nursery and Reception classes. Inspection evidence indicates that if the current progress is maintained the majority of children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the end of the Reception year. The majority of these children are expected to transfer to the infants. This is likely to improve significantly the children's standards on entry to school and has already started to influence and improve the standards that pupils' achieve in the current Year 1. Throughout the school, teaching is more consistent and the many newly appointed staff and their experienced colleagues show a good commitment to raising standards. The recently appointed headteacher is giving the school a strong and much needed sense of direction and, consequently, the school is on course to achieve its targets for 2003. However, current standards in Year 6, although better than 2002, are still well below average in English, mathematics, and science and the targets for 2003 even if achieved are lower than the average. The headteacher and her staff recognise that much remains to be achieved, particularly increasing the proportion of pupils who exceed the national average. Their strategy is to raise standards over the next two years, firstly to bring them in line with similar schools in all subjects and then to raise them to the average for all schools nationally.
4. At this stage of the school year, Year 6 pupils' attainment in art and design is above average; in all other non-core subjects, standards are average. The pace of learning in information and communication technology is very good and pupils' standards are rising. In the current Year 2, the proportions of pupils on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level are below average in English and mathematics and above average in science. This, nevertheless, is an improvement on previous years because more pupils are likely to attain or exceed the expected national level in 2003 than did so in 2002. The Year 2 pupils' attainments in the other non-core subjects are at least satisfactory except in art and design, where attainment is above average. Throughout the school, bilingual learners are achieving higher standards than test results indicate. Standards in literacy and numeracy are improving because of better teaching. However, pupils' punctuation and grammar skills are unsatisfactory and therefore standards are not as high as they could be. The majority of pupils with learning difficulties are making good progress and are likely to achieve their individual targets by the end of each year.
5. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low in all areas of learning and shows a measurable decline since the last inspection. The results of the most recent baseline assessments of children on entry to the Reception year indicate that attainment at this point in their education is still well below the expectations for children of this age. However, inspection evidence indicates that if the current good progress in the Reception year is maintained the majority of children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Lower attaining children are unlikely to do so especially in the areas of communication, language and literacy and social and emotional development. Most children are making good progress in ordering and sequencing numbers. They

show appropriate gains in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Children's fine motor control is developing. However, many younger children do not have the ability to form their letters and figures correctly. A large majority of children know their primary colours. The children sing songs and nursery rhymes tunefully especially the Reception class.

6. The pupils enter school with very weak skills in speaking and listening, as measured by baseline assessments. In Year 2, their skills of speaking and listening are below average but all pupils enjoy discussing the books they are reading. In Year 6, standards are still below average; pupils are beginning to talk in a lively manner when giving their opinions of books. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and are becoming more confident when speaking to an adult in a small group or one-to-one situation. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to answer questions and to express themselves using interesting, technical and grammatically accurate language. However, teachers sometimes accept one-word answers or simplistic explanation without encouraging more thought-provoking responses. When pupils are given opportunities to discuss their experiences, ideas and feelings with one another, standards improve. They have too few opportunities in lessons to practise their skills of speaking and listening through role-play and drama. In those lessons where pupils are required by their teachers to engage in conversation and to give full answers to the questions asked, their attainment is higher than when they are passive listeners and learners. Teachers' plans clearly identify the subject-specific key words and phrases needed to help widen pupils' vocabulary and to communicate effectively, but in many lessons opportunities are missed or not made explicit to develop this work. In lessons and subjects where efforts are made to extend subject specific vocabulary, the pupils make good progress and achieve higher standards, such as in art and design, information and communication technology and physical education.
7. Baseline assessments show that the pupils enter school with very weak early reading skills compared to those expected for their age. In the current Year 2, standards in reading are well below the national average but have improved because more pupils are on course to attain or exceed the expected level compared to the 2002 tests. Throughout the school effective strategies are used to develop an understanding of phonics, word families and spellings. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are becoming confident readers and use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. However, lower attaining pupils still need considerable support to read simple books. Year 2 pupils are eager to read and most can explain what they like best in their current reading book. In Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected national level is well below the national average but has improved compared to the 2002 tests. In Year 6, pupils' achieve well in their reading compared to their attainment on entry and the weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed. In Year 6, pupils express a preference for favourite authors and choose books because of particular interests. Higher attaining Year 6 pupils understand plot, setting, and characterisation and are able to make deductions and inferences from their reading. Lower attaining pupils make mistakes when reading aloud and this detracts from their comprehension. The plans for the teaching of reading are good. However, reading records are not always as rigorous as they should be and do not record what pupils need to do next in order to improve their reading skills. Pupils use dictionaries, thesauruses, and encyclopaedias well. However, the school library is unsatisfactory and lacks a sufficient range of non-fiction books to provide pupils with opportunities to use their developing research skills. Pupils are encouraged to take books home and share them with family members; this has a positive effect on their progress.
8. The pupils enter school with very weak skills in writing, as measured by baseline assessments. Standards in writing across the school vary from being very low to average but overall they are improving. In the current Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the nationally expected level is below average. In the current Year 2, standards are below average. In some aspects of their writing, pupils achieve very well and the quality of their independent writing has improved since the last inspection. The youngest of pupils are learning to write interesting sentences and individual and group targets encourage them to use full stops and capital letters accurately. However, in most year groups, there is a lack of consistency and rigour in ensuring pupils use correct punctuation and grammar. As result, standards are not always as high as they could be. In the infants, pupils are encouraged to write for a variety of purposes and using a story planner to help with sequencing their work. Higher attaining pupils use interesting vocabulary, which catches the imagination of the reader. In Year 6, pupils are developing their ability to write for different purposes using a wide range of styles. Poems, letters, scientific, geographical, and historical accounts feature as part of a drive to raise pupils' standards in literacy. Higher attaining pupils often start off their work well using paragraphs, and correct punctuation but they do not sustain this standard for long enough and the quality of the writing deteriorates. Information and communication technology is not used as effectively as it could be to support learning, particularly for lower attaining pupils. Handwriting is mostly neat and work is well presented. In formal handwriting lessons, pupils are taught to join their letters together, however, they are not encouraged to do so when writing independently, which would help raise standards further.

9. In mathematics in the current Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected national level has increased since the 2002 tests but is still well below average. In the current Year 2, the proportion is below average but larger than in the 2002 tests. The pupils enter school with well below average skills in mathematics. Overall, standards are improving and pupils are making good progress, particularly in the infants. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils can make quick mental recall of number facts to 10 and sometimes to 20. Other pupils find this much harder, particularly subtraction. Although, most of the pupils can recognise and order numbers to 100, their knowledge of place value is weak. Pupils enjoy working with money and recognising the value of different coins. The pupils are able to weigh and measure objects with increasing accuracy. They recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes successfully, but are less confident in naming three-dimensional shapes. In Year 6, weak literacy skills and limited vocabulary mean that many pupils find it difficult to solve mathematical word problems. Many pupils have a poor understanding of place value in numbers up to 1000. Higher attaining pupils have a satisfactory understanding of equivalent fractions. The pupils are able to calculate the area and perimeter of simple shapes and they are familiar with the language of angles. They are beginning to make some use of their numeracy skills in other subjects, particularly in handling data collected as part of investigations in science.
10. In the current Year 6, standards in science are well below average. In the current Year 2, standards in science are above average. The pupils enter school with weak scientific knowledge and understanding. In Year 2, pupils make good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to school. Nearly all pupils have acquired a basic knowledge and understanding of scientific enquiry and life processes and living things. Pupils enjoy investigating what happens to different materials when they are bent, squashed, twisted or stretched, and record their findings appropriately. Higher-attaining pupils understand the principles of conducting a fair test. They can carry out a simple enquiry into grouping and changing materials by heating different foods, making predictions and describing what happened and interpreting their results. They show a developing understanding of forces when they investigate the movement of a range of stationary and moving objects. In Year 6, pupils with typical attainment levels have a broad knowledge of science. They investigate forces successfully and enjoyed predicting the outcomes, recording their findings and drawing their own conclusions. Pupils have a developing knowledge of the properties of light and they all understand the importance of a fair test when undertaking a scientific investigation. They know the differences between solids, liquids and gases. Pupils are aware of the different functions of the human body and the importance of healthy living. In the infants and juniors, there was little evidence of information and communication technology being used to support learning in science. Some pupils' progress is slowed by a lack of good speaking and listening skills. However, when they are given appropriate scientific words to use, their progress rapidly improves.
11. In the current Year 2, in reading and writing, the rate at which pupils are learning and making progress is often very good because of better teaching. Nearly 60 per cent of pupils increase their attainment by more than one National Curriculum level, which is twice the national average for progress. In mathematics, 43 per cent pupils achieve similar rates of progress. In this year group, approximately 30 per cent of pupils have learning difficulties and 30 per cent speak English as an additional language. When compared with their attainment on entry, which was very low, the current Year 2 pupils' achievement in reading, writing, and mathematics is very good. Gains in knowledge are significant for individual pupils compared to attainment on entry but have less impact on National Curriculum test results because too few pupils can make sufficient progress to exceed the expected national level for their age, although standards are becoming closer to those achieved in similar schools. In science, the rate at which pupils learn is very good because of some very good teaching.
12. In the current Year 6, in reading and writing, the rate at which pupils are learning and making progress is good and is improving now that teaching is more settled with fewer changes in personnel. Approximately, 30 per cent of Year 6 pupils increased their attainment by more than two thirds of a National Curriculum level in the past year; this is above average progress. In mathematics, 12 per cent pupils achieve similar rates of progress. In this year group, approximately 55 per cent of pupils have learning difficulties and 30 per cent speak English as an additional language. When compared with their attainment on entry, which is low, pupils' achievement is often very good. These gains are significant for individual pupils but have less impact on National Curriculum test results because too few pupils achieve higher levels of performance, although standards are becoming closer to those achieved in similar schools in English, however, they continue to be well below average in mathematics. In science, pupils are making satisfactory progress.
13. About 17 per cent of the full-time pupils speak English as an additional language. The majority of these pupils enter school with much lower than expected levels of attainment and a number are not fluent users of English and need additional support to access the curriculum. In Year 6, the majority of pupils with English as an additional language are attaining similar levels to their peers. However, the school has identified that a significant number of pupils with English as an additional language have been underachieving in Years 5 and 6. Therefore, a

variety of strategies have been put in place to improve the situation. When pupils are given additional support, either in class, in small groups or as individuals, their progress is good; this is helping to raise standards.

14. Over 23 per cent of pupils have identified learning difficulties. In some year groups, it is significantly higher, particularly in the current Year 6 but is much lower in Year 1. Overall, these pupils make good progress in relation to their prior achievements, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The pupils with learning difficulties make particularly good progress when they are withdrawn from their class and taught by the special needs teacher. In most cases, the detail in pupils' individual education plans means that targets are clear and understood by the teachers and learning support assistants. Consequently, the work undertaken is focused and the learning support assistants are able to give very good support. There are good up-to-date records and procedures for monitoring the progress of these pupils.

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

15. Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good; this is similar to the last inspection report. In 64 per cent of lessons, pupils' attitudes and behaviour were good or better because of effective teaching. In the nursery and Reception classes, children's attitudes are good. Children are keen to learn because the work they do is stimulating and captures their interest. In the infants and juniors, pupils' attitudes are good. Nearly all children are keen to come to school and are eager to learn. In most lessons, pupils listen attentively and undertake written and practical tasks conscientiously. They respond well to their teachers and almost all are able to work cooperatively when given the opportunity. During lessons pupils concentrate well and show enthusiasm when the quality of teaching makes lessons interesting. This was particularly evident during a Year 5 physical education lesson when pupils gave their full attention to the teacher as she explained the reasons for warming up before participating in vigorous physical activity. The pupils enjoy listening to stories in assemblies and often join in sensibly at appropriate points. They respond very well to praise and rewards, taking much pride from having their achievements recognised on a notice board in the hall.
16. In the nursery and Reception classes, behaviour is good as children play well together and learn how to co-operate with each other. In the infant and junior classes, pupils are well behaved and considerate of the needs of others; this is similar to the last inspection. Ninety three per cent of parents and carers who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire agree. The vast majority of pupils clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and how what they do may affect others. Behaviour observed in the dining hall, during assemblies and in the playground, was, for the most part, good. Five pupils have been excluded in the past year; this is an increase since the last inspection. Most incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with effectively although a few pupils feel that incidents at lunchtime are not always resolved satisfactorily.
17. Pupils with special educational needs are developing positive attitudes to learning and are growing in confidence. They enjoy coming to school and feel valued and supported by the teachers, the teaching assistants and other pupils. Their behaviour is invariably satisfactory and, at times, good. However, when behaviour is disruptive, most teachers and learning support assistants deal with it in a caring but firm way. A few pupils, who have very challenging behaviour, do not have positive attitudes to work and need much encouragement to complete work to a satisfactory standard.
18. Pupils' personal development, social and health education, and experience of citizenship are satisfactory. The oldest pupils respect the feelings of others and take advantage of good opportunities to exercise personal responsibility by undertaking successfully jobs in classes and representing others on the school council. However, pupils are less successful at organising their own work and taking responsibility for their learning. They have too few opportunities to develop independent learning skills, particularly in English, mathematics and science. However, when pupils are given the opportunity, such as in information and communication technology, to work collaboratively or independently, their progress is very good and standards rapidly improve. The school's setting of individual targets helps pupils to be aware of how to improve, but they are not used consistently by teachers to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are aware of health and safety issues, particularly in design and technology, science and physical education lessons. They have appropriate opportunities to discuss with teachers and visiting health professionals' issues relating to healthy living.
19. Relationships amongst pupils and between staff and pupils are satisfactory. Pupils are polite to each other and adults. They get pleasure from helping others. Pupils, particularly those in the nursery and Reception classes, respond well to the good provision for their personal, social and emotional development. All pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own values and beliefs. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are fully integrated into the life and work of the school. There have been isolated incidents of racial and other unkind

remarks being made by pupils; these are dealt with effectively by staff. There is no evidence of vandalism or graffiti around the school grounds, and learning resources and property are treated with respect.

20. Attendance remains below the national average but has improved since the last inspection. Unauthorised and authorised absence rates remain high and above the national averages. This is due in the main to families taking extended holidays in term time and through pupils' ill health. These absences are having an adverse affect on the attainment and progress of the pupils concerned. Attendance is monitored but not in a rigorous manner; this is unsatisfactory. Not all absences are followed up quickly and appropriate action taken when trends are clearly identified. Overall, punctuality is good but a small number of pupils are persistently late and this disrupts the start of the school day.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with some good features. In 63 per cent of lessons, teaching was good or better; it was very good in 13 per cent of lessons; two lessons were unsatisfactory; this an improvement since the last inspection. In almost every year group there were examples of good or very good teaching. Although the recruitment and retention of teachers continues to be a difficulty, pupils have been receiving more settled teaching since the last inspection. However, the proportion of good or better teaching is below that of a typical school. Therefore, pupils' rates of progress are not sufficient for them to achieve the average standards for similar schools as a first step towards achieving at least national average levels of performance when compared with all schools, particularly in the juniors. This is not the situation in the nursery and Reception classes where teaching is consistently good. From a very low baseline, the nursery and Reception children are making rapid progress toward achieving the standards expected for children of this age. Overall, teaching is satisfactory with some good features in the infants and juniors.
22. Teaching in the nursery and Reception classes is consistently good; all lessons were judged good or better. The teaching is based upon good planning that identifies clear learning targets, which are set for small group of children in all areas of learning. Groups of children are organised well and have good access to resources, which fosters the purposeful working atmosphere and good behaviour of the children. There are good assessment procedures for tracking children's progress, which the staff use successfully to plan the next step in children's learning. Learning support assistants are deployed effectively in lessons and make a positive contribution to children's learning.
23. The teaching of English is good in 72 per cent of lessons and very good in 17 per cent of lessons; this is similar to a typical school. Although, 17 per cent of teaching in mathematics is very good, only 60 per cent were judged good; this is just below the standards expected of a typical school but, overall, the standard of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory. Teaching has improved in English and mathematics since the last inspection, because of better planning, improvements in teachers' subject knowledge and the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These developments are reflected in the improving standards in these subjects. In science, teaching is satisfactory overall, but the amount of very good teaching in the infants is well above that of a typical school and consequently standards are improving rapidly. However, no lessons were judged very good in the juniors and therefore standards here have not been improving as quickly as they have in the infants. The teaching of information and communication technology has significantly improved since the last inspection and standards have risen from being well below average to average. Teaching in art and design, music and physical education is good. The teaching of pupils with learning difficulties and for pupils learning to speak English as an additional language is also good. Teaching in design and technology, geography, history, and religious education is satisfactory.
24. When teaching is very good, teachers have high expectations and manage pupils well, and relationships are very good. This helps create a good ethos for learning. In Year 1, the teacher's very good use of mathematical resources and well-matched practical tasks helped pupils make good progress. In Year 2, the teacher's high expectations and very good modelling of sentences helped pupils improve their ability to use capital letters and full stops correctly. In a musical session for Year 4 pupils, the very good management of a large group of pupils and the enthusiastic use of voice and actions by the teacher enhanced the pupils' enjoyment when learning about pentatonic scales. In a Year 5 physical education lesson, very good relationships and challenging questioning encouraged the pupils to work with sustained interest when performing and evaluating increasingly complex sequences of movement associated with the stability of balances and body shapes. In a lesson on information and communication technology in Years 6, the teacher's very good subject knowledge and effective demonstration helped pupils to use the Internet successfully to research their history topic.

25. Where teaching is good, nearly all pupils increase their knowledge and skills appropriately by the end of the lesson. Basic skills and subject content are clearly explained and there is a good emphasis on correct terminology, such as in an information and communication technology lesson in Year 3. In a Year 4 art and design lesson, the teacher explained clearly how the pupils should concentrate on the correct facial proportions and this helped them to draw some realistic Tudor portraits. In a Year 5 information and communication technology lesson, the work was planned well and built successfully on the pupils' prior attainment as the pupils worked hard to make sense of a secret message to a person called Harry.
26. Teachers' have satisfactory levels of subject knowledge and expertise in all subjects. Lessons are planned well and, in the main, the tasks set meet the differing needs of pupils. All the staff are technically competent in teaching phonics and other basic skills, however, there is a lack of consistency and rigour in teaching punctuation and grammar, as a result, standards are not always as high as they could be. The teaching methods used in English and mathematics follow those of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies; they have been implemented appropriately and standards have been improving. However, pupils have limited opportunities to improving speaking and listening skills through discussion work, role-play and dramatic activities.
27. The direct teaching methods used are contributing to raising standards. However, some learning is passive and pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to engage in practical work or to develop their independent learning skills; this is limiting their progress in some lessons. When they are given such opportunities, for example, in information and communication technology and art and design, the standards achieved by higher-attaining pupils are above average. In all subjects, teachers need to reinforce the key words, phrases and definitions as pupils work in groups or individually, as a significant number forget between one lesson and the next. Assessment at classroom level is not always used consistently to plan future lessons to cater for the pupils' varying needs. Generally, marking lacks consistency and constructive comments are not written in the pupils' books to help them improve, except in English where comments are helpful and give pupils good guidance on how work can be improved.
28. The teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils well and encourage them to overcome difficulties. However, in a few lessons, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve although satisfactory could be higher and there is insufficient challenge to extend pupils' thinking, particularly higher attaining pupils. This is especially important as standards improve in the nursery and Reception classes, in the infants, and as these pupils move into the juniors, where currently standards are much lower. Pupils generally enjoy class discussions but, in a few lessons, teachers do not engage the attention of all the pupils sufficiently to probe the extent of their knowledge and understanding. At the end of many lessons, more could be made of checking pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, reinforcing language development and providing opportunities to reflect on what they have learnt and the progress they have made, in order to improve further. Homework arrangements are satisfactory and there are appropriate systems for communicating with parents. The headteacher and members of staff recognise the importance of improving further the quality of teaching to help pupils achieve higher standards.
29. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, time is not used well and a significant minority of pupils are not engaged in the task set because of too much talk by the teacher, such as in a physical education lesson in Year 1. In a religious education lesson in Year 4, expectations were not high enough and pupils were not managed well.
30. In nursery and Reception classes, the rate at which the children learn is often very good because of consistently good teaching. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low in all areas of learning and shows a measurable decline since the last inspection. Inspection evidence indicates that if the current very good progress is maintained the majority of children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. This is likely to make a significant impact on the standards achieved by pupils in the infants and juniors in future years. In the current Year 2, in reading, writing, and mathematics, the rate at which pupils are learning and making progress is good, and often very good, because of better teaching. In science, the rate at which pupils learn is very good because of some very good teaching. In the current Year 6, in reading and writing and mathematics, the rate at which pupils learn and make progress is satisfactory and sometimes it is good now that teaching is more settled with fewer staff changes. In science, pupils are learning at a satisfactory rate.
31. Although the number of lessons observed in non-core subjects varied, in most subjects the teaching is effective. In the substantial majority of lessons, pupils know what they must do to improve to meet the individual learning targets set by the teachers. However, they have only limited opportunities to develop their own independent learning skills. In most subjects, teachers' planning has identified the key words and phrases needed for pupils

to communicate effectively, but only limited use is made of these at the beginnings and ends of lessons to reinforce learning. When they are used explicitly, pupils' progress and standards improve.

32. The teaching of personal, social, health education and citizenship is good. Teachers use interesting ideas for developing pupils' skills in listening, expressing feelings and reflecting on experiences. In a Year 6 class, good use was made of praise to improve pupils' self-esteem, particularly for the less confident ones. The pupils made good progress in learning to work cooperatively on a shared task. In Year 2, the teaching had a positive impact on standards because of very good classroom management that encouraged the pupils to participate fully when discussing the need for a healthy diet. During circle time, pupils improved their ability to concentrate and to listen to the thoughts and feelings of their peers. The teachers' confidence and command of the subject are illustrated well by the way pupils' participate enthusiastically in the school's council.
33. Pupils with learning difficulties receive good teaching because it is carefully planned using the targets set in their individual education plans. These are used well to design activities to meet their differing needs and to help plan the next stage of their learning. Teachers ensure these pupils are fully integrated into the life of the class. Some pupils are withdrawn from their class and are taught well by the special educational needs teacher. The learning support assistants are very effective in enabling pupils to participate fully and with confidence in all learning tasks. The special needs co-ordinator provides good support and assists teachers as and when required.
34. Overall, the teaching for pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. Class teachers and learning support staff work effectively together to ensure that pupils have good access to the national curriculum. The specialist teaching is focused well on those pupils who have the greatest need. For example, Year 6 pupils receive support in history lessons where the vocabulary and context is more difficult to understand and higher attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5 receive additional help in mathematics to enable them to reach the expected levels. When appropriate and where available, the bilingual skills of some of the teachers and learning support assistants are used well to assess children's attainment when they first enter school. This enables staff to build on what pupils already know and can do and helps the pupils make good progress.

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

35. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets well the interests, aptitudes and particular needs of pupils; this is similar to the last inspection. A good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum. All subjects are taught in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school gives good emphasis to literacy and numeracy. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and pupils learning to speak English as an additional language is good. Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship is good. All pupils have equal opportunities and access to the curriculum.
36. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is broad, balanced and of good quality. Activities are relevant and suitably based in play, and this interests and motivates the children to take part. The curriculum provides the children with challenging work that ensures a smooth transition into the National Curriculum. The curriculum is enriched through some imaginative teaching and an effective balance between whole-class, teacher-directed and child-chosen work.
37. The curriculum is planned well although a two-year cycle of topics used at the time of the previous inspection has not yet been fully phased out. The problems it creates are being overcome as the school adapts its planning to cater for classes with pupils from one age group instead of classes that sometimes have pupils from two year groups. Policies and schemes of work in all subjects now guide planning and provide continuity in pupils' learning. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented with enthusiasm and standards are beginning to improve. Provision has been strengthened by the recent introduction of teaching pupils in small groups based on their prior attainment, particularly in the juniors in English and mathematics. This is helping to raise standards but has not yet been reflected in National Curriculum test results. There is a growing emphasis on investigative and experimental science, which needs to be extended to allow pupils more freedom to plan and carry out their own investigations. Provision for information and communication technology has improved greatly with the development of the suite where pupils learn and apply the basic skills. They are being provided with an increasing number of opportunities to apply these skills in other subjects. Religious education is firmly based on the local agreed syllabus. All subjects have an appropriate allocation of time. Extra tuition is available weekly from a peripatetic teacher of violin, cello and recorders. The governing body's

curriculum committee is well informed and meets regularly to monitor, evaluate and review the curriculum with the senior management team and co-ordinators. Each governor responsible for a subject area regularly visits the school to gain first-hand knowledge and understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their area of interest to help inform the school development plan.

38. Provision for pupils' personal, social, health education and citizenship is good. A detailed programme provides well for sex education and teaches awareness of the misuse of drugs. Regular lessons such as in circle time and science help the pupils learn about healthy foods and human reproduction. The school council helps pupils to become active citizens as it relates to their everyday lives. Preparations have been made for a programme to improve relationships that will help pupils develop the appropriate abilities to mediate with and for each other. Outside agencies such as a doctor and the school nurse are used well to support the development of health education. The school nurse operates 'drop-in' sessions each week to counsel pupils who need support. Pupils and their parent's value this.
39. In addition to the statutory curriculum, the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities for boys and girls. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to participate in competitive sports and receive appropriate coaching from football and rugby clubs. They participate with enthusiasm in netball, tag rugby, football, hockey, art and design, and cookery. There are good opportunities for older pupils to take part in a residential experience offering adventure and study activities. They regularly support charities, in particular those concerned with cancer and the Red Cross.
40. The school's links with the community provide a satisfactory enrichment of the curriculum. Links with the local Christian church and the Moslem mosque and visits to local museums, study centres and the theatre enrich the pupils' cultural development. The curriculum is enhanced by visits from local performance artists such as the 'Spellbinder' storyteller. The school is used well for training purposes such as initial teacher training students, student nurses and secondary pupils on work experience and this helps widen pupils' learning experiences. The school's relationships with partner institutions are good. In addition to liaison meetings, Year 7 coordinators from local secondary schools visit to meet the pupils and work with them. This helps pupils to get to know the staff and eases their transition to the next stage of learning. Older pupils benefit when teachers from the local grammar school help with the teaching of science and design and technology. A homework policy is in place, clearly setting out a programme to support the curriculum; it gives good guidance to parents on how they can support their children's learning.
41. The school provides effectively for pupils of all ages, gender and ethnic diversity. The curriculum provides equality of access and opportunities for all pupils to make good progress in lessons. There is a strong commitment to educational inclusion. The school successfully meets pupils' special educational and physical needs by providing a good level of well-trained support. Teachers use this support well to ensure that these pupils are fully included in lessons. The individual education plans and statements of educational needs are carefully drawn up and accurately identify new targets for pupils' development. However, the shortage of speech therapists has hampered some pupils' progress. The curriculum for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. Through additional support in subjects, such as mathematics, geography and history as well as in reading and writing, pupils are able to experience the same curriculum as other pupils. The school is developing a harmonious atmosphere in which the pupils' first languages, cultures, and religions are valued and respected.
42. Overall, provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and a considerable strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when provision was satisfactory. There is very good provision for the pupils' spiritual development. A clear Mission Statement aims to help the pupils develop respect for others. Assemblies make a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual development, on themes such as working together, kindness, remembrance and bravery. The local Vicar and Imam are regular visitors to the school, where they often lead collective worship, and the pupils visit the local church and mosque. The teachers give the pupils the good opportunity to reflect on issues of concern. For example, when children in the Reception year talk about people who are special in their lives. In religious education, Year 4 pupils design shields and symbols that mean something to them and they talk about what feelings are evoked by people's everyday sayings. The pupils think about momentous events of recent times, such as the Queen's Jubilee visit to Aylesbury and the attacks on the twin towers in America. They write and paint about these events successfully. Older pupils use art effectively to describe how they feel about themselves. Collective acts of worship give pupils good opportunities to celebrate and worship through literature, drama, dance and music. They make an important contribution to the school's sense of community and to the sharing of common values.

43. Provision for moral education is good. Clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies help pupils know the difference between right and wrong. The school's rules are discussed frequently and displayed prominently; they emphasise care and respect for others. However, not all teachers refer to them in a consistent manner. Positive effort and behaviour are reinforced successfully through an effective system of rewards, involving house points and certificates. Pupils talk to adults during break times to seek their advice before disputes arise. When incidents happen, teachers help pupils through discussion to appreciate the effect their actions have on others. Teachers praise pupils for their kindness, consideration, effort and progress, and deal with transgressions quietly and unobtrusively and seek appropriate help from the headteacher when this is not possible.
44. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. Almost all the parents feel that the school helps their children to mature and to become responsible. Pupils undertake everyday tasks in classrooms and older pupils have additional responsibilities such as prefects, house captains and vice house captains. Elected pupils help in decision-making as members of an active school council. They have shown responsibility by helping to organise support for various charities, through events such as 'Mad March Hair Day' and 'Odd Day'. In regular class circle time, the pupils have the opportunity to discuss issues that are of concern to them. Older pupils help younger children during the school day and on special occasions, such as sports day. The pupils can develop social skills by participating in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, sports matches, visits, assemblies and school performances. For the first time for many years, older pupils recently developed social skills during a residential visit to Shortenhills. Year 6 pupils enhance their personal development by visiting Hazard Alley in Milton Keynes and Stoke Mandeville Hospital. The pupils are increasingly aware of environmental pollution and the need for conservation and recycling. They use their art and computer skills to design effective posters on these themes. In many lessons, the teachers encourage the pupils to work collaboratively whenever necessary and most pupils respond well to this.
45. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is good. Visitors to the school, including theatre groups, authors, poets, storytellers and dancers help to enhance pupils' cultural development. Visits made to places such as the RAF Museum at Hendon, Bedford Toy Museum and Holdenby House help to broaden pupils' experiences. In history, the pupils learn about the legacy of past cultures, such as the Romans and the Victorians, and they have participated in special Victorian and Egyptian days. They learn about the work of some famous artists. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing a criticism in the previous inspection report about provision for multicultural education. A clear multicultural policy gives useful guidance on how this might be promoted across the curriculum. The teachers ensure that the pupils are well prepared for life in a culturally diverse society and that they develop respect for people of differing faiths. In religious education lessons, they learn about some of the major world religions. Important festivals in the Christian, Hindu and Islamic calendars are celebrated appropriately. A grandmother recently spoke to the nursery children about Diwali. The local Imam visits school regularly and the pupils visit the mosque as part of their work in religious education. An Indian dance group has worked successfully with the pupils.

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

46. The pupils have continued to be provided with a caring and supportive environment since the last inspection. There are satisfactory procedures for ensuring that pupils are safe and looked after well; this is similar to the judgement of the last inspection report. Child protection arrangements are securely in place. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are effective. Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress are good; this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school makes good use of its own, and external, expertise in the teaching of healthy living.
47. Pupils are provided with a caring and supportive learning environment. Parents are pleased with this and say that their children like school. The satisfactory provision for pupils' welfare and guidance that were identified in the last inspection report has been improved and is now good. Procedures for child protection are satisfactory and well understood by staff. Teachers have undertaken training to ensure that they are aware of the issues. Midday supervisors are appropriately briefed when there may be concerns about a child, and links with outside agencies, such as school nursing, are very good. Governors are well informed about child protection legislation and supportive guidelines; they implement them effectively.
48. The procedures for monitoring health and safety are satisfactory. There are regular safety inspections, and appropriate action is taken where necessary. Suitable first-aid arrangements are in place for dealing with accidents and illness, and there is a consistently good standard of pastoral care. A healthy lifestyle is promoted well in lessons. Effective use is made of visiting health professionals to enhance pupils' learning. Formal written risk assessments are beginning to be developed before external trips, checks on structures, the testing of equipment, and fire drills are all organised well. A policy with appropriate guidance is in place for staff to follow to ensure that pupils have safe access to the Internet.
49. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality have improved since the last inspection but are unsatisfactory overall. There are regular meetings with the educational welfare officer to identify those pupils who are regularly absent from school and to take appropriate action as necessary. However, registration and follow up procedures are not always quick enough and the identification of current trends is not well established; this is unsatisfactory. Good arrangements for promoting high standards of behaviour, including measures to prevent bullying have been developed since the last inspection. There are simple rules for pupils, rewards for good behaviour and a range of sanctions for dealing with anti-social conduct. The rules are consistently applied by most of the staff and are having an impact on improving pupils' behaviour.
50. Teachers show concern for pupils' personal development and the school gives good support to individual pupils with problems. There are now formal systems in place to monitor all pupils' personal development and this is an improvement since the last inspection. A caring teaching staff knows the pupils well, particularly their social and emotional needs. Effective use is made of circle time and the sex education lessons to track pupils' personal development. However, the school recognises that there is a need to give pupils more opportunities to work independently. The personal support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs are dealt with sensitively and supportively. There are high levels of awareness among teachers and teaching assistants of the differing needs of these pupils. Other pupils give them constructive and appropriate support to help them feel valued members of the community. The arrangements for monitoring and promoting the progress of pupils towards the appropriate targets on their individual education plans are good.
51. The school has a clear assessment policy, which gives appropriate advice to staff. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic performance are good overall. The teacher, nursery nurses and support staff constantly assess children in the nursery and Reception classes during lessons and results are used to inform future planning; this also helps the process of monitoring the children's' progress more accurately. Baseline assessment carried out at the beginning of the Reception class is good and used to group the children appropriately; these arrangements are constantly monitored and reviewed by the Foundation Stage coordinator. Children's personal development is also assessed throughout the nursery and Reception classes. All staff have a very good knowledge and understanding of each child's strengths and areas for improvement including their ability to work co-operatively and sustain interest in the set activities; this is good practice.
52. Overall, procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. However, day-to-day assessment is not always used consistently to plan future lessons to cater for the pupils' varying needs. Throughout the school, in English and mathematics, assessment is used to identify pupils who may need extra support. Sometimes, more-able pupils are insufficiently challenged and their progress slows. Generally, insufficient attention is given to marking and comments are not written in the pupils' books to show them how to improve. Assessment

records are variable across the school and do not always contain precise information about what pupils do well and what they need to do next in order to improve; the school has identified this as an area for improvement in the school development plan for this year.

53. The school's appropriate use of National Curriculum test results to guide planning is beginning to underpin the improvements made since the last inspection. Tracking systems are good and assessment data and test results are analysed to plot the fluctuations in attainment from year to year. This enables the senior management team, governors and subject co-ordinators to identify clearly any areas for improvement. For example, analysis showed that writing was an area for development, so the school introduced grouping pupils by their prior attainment for teaching; this is beginning to raise standards. The coordinators for English, mathematics and science are beginning to moderate pupils' work with individual teachers to standardise teachers' judgements on attainment. The school is also working towards developing a consistent school system for all other subjects linked to recent national guidance.
54. There are good procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs, which help them to make good progress. Pupils' special needs are identified at an early stage; this begins successfully in the nursery and continues throughout the school. Assessment procedures are good and pupils' individual education plans are specific and identify learning objectives to aid class teachers in the planning for these children. There is a high proportion of pupils with lower levels of attainment and few higher attaining or gifted in the infants and juniors. However, this is not the situation for children under the age of five and soon higher attaining and gifted children must start to influence the planning of teaching and learning in the infants if their individual needs are to be met.
55. The assessment procedures for pupils who speak English as an additional language are good. Useful records are maintained indicating pupils' progress towards agreed targets and National Curriculum levels. The analysis of these records is used well to deploy teaching and support staff more effectively. This is helping to improve pupils' fluency in English and raise their attainment across the curriculum. Currently, the school does not analyse test results sufficiently to identify, which aspects of the curriculum pupils learning English as an additional language find most difficult; this is unsatisfactory. However, teachers monitor individual pupil's progress carefully in order to identify specific learning difficulties and to help them judge more accurately when these pupils are ready to learn at a faster rate.

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

56. Parents believe that Haydon Abbey is a good school. There are no significant areas of concern identified by them. The school is beginning to develop a good partnership with parents and carers; this is similar to the finding reported at the time of last inspection. Parents' views of the school as expressed in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting were positive. They value the accessibility of staff and the high expectations that staff have for the pupils. Parents are encouraged by the progress their children are making and support the aims and values fostered by the school. Only a very small minority had some concerns about the amount of homework set and the range of activities provided outside lessons.
57. The information provided by the school for parents is good. Parents are well informed about the school's events and curriculum matters through newsletters. Consultation meetings with the class teacher about progress take place each school term and a significant number of parents attend. The school is considering increasing the number of these meetings because parents value them highly. The annual reports appropriately identify areas in which pupils can make better progress and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Parents comment that the reports clearly show how well their children are making progress. The governors' annual report and the prospectus contain helpful information for parents and meets requirements, overall.
58. The school's links with parents are good. The school is beginning to put time and effort into developing stronger links with parents and seeking ways of more actively involving parents in the education of their children but has not been as successful as it would have liked. Several of the parents help with the younger children and the school actively encourages all parents to participate in the life of the school. Many parents have little involvement with the school and the contribution that they make to their children's learning is often limited. This is particularly the case for some parents from minority ethnic groups who find communication with the school difficult because they are themselves in the process of learning English as an additional language. The school has recognised this issue and has recently appointed a bilingual welfare worker to improve communications; many parents have welcomed this development. There are a number of dedicated parents involved in the running

of the Haydon Abbey Combined School Association and they raise funds for learning resources that are much appreciated by the school.

59. Parents of pupils who are experiencing learning difficulties are informed at an early stage and provided with appropriate information about the progress of their children. Parents are invited to attend the annual reviews for pupils with statements and the termly reviews for pupils with individual education plans, enabling them to discuss their child's progress; this is good practice. Home visits are arranged for all pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language. Where possible, bilingual support is available to help parents to discuss their concerns with the teachers and headteacher; this support is greatly appreciated. Ninety-eight per cent of the parents who returned their questionnaire said that they find the staff approachable. Parents are confident that any concerns that they have will be listened to and acted upon. They are particularly pleased with the way in which the school has improved since the appointment of the current headteacher eighteen months ago.

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

60. The school has passed through a very turbulent period in its history with many changes to its leadership and management. However, since the appointment of a permanent headteacher eighteen months ago and many new governors, the situation is more settled and the leadership and management of the school are now good overall, with the headteacher's contribution being very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. However, the challenge of raising standards in English, mathematics and science remain. A good start has been made in the nursery and Reception classes to improve the children's literacy and numeracy skills. This is already having a beneficial effect in the improving performance of pupils in the infants; however, much remains to be achieved in the juniors.
61. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are very good. She is supported well by the senior management team. Their evaluation of the school's performance identifies accurately its strengths and weakness. The headteacher has a very clear view of how she wants the school to develop. This is conveyed to staff and they share her commitment to providing a top quality education for the pupils. The school's aims are met very well. The headteacher has high expectations of staff and provides them with positive and constructive advice on their performance. There has been a high number of staff leaving and joining the school since it was judged to have serious weaknesses but, under the new headteacher, staff morale is now good. Coordinators are working hard to develop their subjects. They recognise the strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility and give appropriate advice, support and guidance to their colleagues such as in English, science and information and communication technology. The coordination of mathematics has been a problem and results have suffered but the new coordinator has developed a well-constructed action plan to bring about improvements in teaching and to raise standards.
62. The governing body shares and affirms the headteacher's plans for the future educational direction of the school, is fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses and takes effective action to bring about improvements; this is an improvement since the last inspection. The governing body is very effective in fulfilling its statutory responsibilities. It works effectively through appropriate committees. Governors are well informed, interested and enthusiastic about the school. They fulfil their role as critical friends effectively, particularly when monitoring the school's performance, the budget and the quality of teaching. Governors with specific responsibilities for the curriculum, numeracy, literacy, science and special educational needs visit the school regularly and have very good working relationships with the teachers and pupils. This has helped governors acquire a better knowledge of the problems the school experiences and has been instrumental in their efforts to improve the provision for the teaching of information and communication technology; the provision for children under five; and improvements to the buildings and grounds.
63. All staff and governors are involved in the process of identifying priority areas for improvement, based on a careful analysis of the current situation. The school development plan is constructed well and clearly identifies costs, training needs and success criteria to bring about continuous improvement over the next two years. A system for target setting is now well established. In the past, the targets set were unrealistic and did not take into account of the measurable decline in pupils' attainment on entry to school. Current targets for each year group of pupils have been appropriately adjusted but if the improvements observed by the inspection team in the nursery, Reception and infant classes continue standards are likely to rise. The school is on course to see standards improve from being well below average to being very close to national averages within the next two years if current practices are sustained.

64. Good analyses of test results and a detailed system of tracking the attainment of pupils have been developed by the headteacher. These have enabled the school to identify as areas for improvement pupils' writing, the performance of girls in reading and the need to increase the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science by the ages of seven and eleven. Challenging but appropriate targets have been set for different cohorts of pupils. These take into account the very wide range in the numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and those learning to speak English as an additional language in each year group. In some year groups, over 50 per cent of pupils experience these factors, but inspection evidence shows that many make good progress in overcoming these difficulties. The more settled teaching workforce is working hard to raise pupils' levels of achievement.
65. The headteacher rigorously monitors the quality of teaching and learning by direct classroom observation. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved but the proportion of good and very good teaching is just below that expected in a typical school and there is scope, given the now better recruitment and retention of staff, for higher levels of performance to be consistently achieved. Subject coordinators are beginning to sample pupils' work across the school in order to gain a better understanding of pupils' levels of attainment and what needs to be improved. Together with the headteacher, they have set realistic and challenging targets for improvement for their areas of responsibility.
66. The leadership and management of pupils with special educational needs are good. The team has weekly meetings and all staff are informed of any new initiatives and updated on any changes to pupils' individual needs. The special needs co-ordinator is allocated time for management tasks, which is used well to update records and attend meetings. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and the funds available are used effectively, including money made available from the school's main budget. The code of practice is fully complied with. The targets set in pupils' individual education plans are realistic and give good guidance to teachers on what has to be achieved.
67. The leadership and management of pupils learning to speak English as an additional language are good. Systems for the early diagnosis of these pupils' needs and the monitoring of their progress are good and this helps with the effective deployment of teachers and learning support assistants as pupils join or leave the school. The staff work effectively as a team in developing an inclusive ethos for learning and in particular to improve the speaking and listening skills of these pupils' and many of them are beginning to make rapid progress.
68. A clear equal opportunities policy commits the school to education for all. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have equal access to the full curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. There is an appropriate race equality policy, the implementation of which is closely monitored by the headteacher. The school recognises that there is a need to improve the analysis of assessment information relating to different racial groups. Withdrawal of pupils from some lessons for extra support in literacy and numeracy is carefully managed, so that they cover the same work as their classmates, though at a different level. There is careful analysis of assessment data by gender. This currently shows no significant patterns in different attainment between boys and girls.
69. Teachers are well qualified and sufficient in number to provide a good education for the pupils. All teachers hold appropriate subject responsibilities that enable the curriculum to be efficiently delivered and monitored. In the Reception class, there is good provision of a teacher and nursery nurse to meet the full range of learning experiences for children under five years of age. Learning support assistants are experienced and knowledgeable and give good support and guidance to the pupils in their care. The school office is managed in a friendly and efficient manner and provides a welcoming point of contact for parents and visitors. The midday and kitchen staff have good relationships with pupils and other adults.
70. There are very good procedures in place for introducing new staff to the policies and routines of the school. Newly qualified teachers are provided with time and good support from experienced mentors. The threshold assessment procedures are well in place. The professional development of staff is good; it is linked well to the school development plan and affords training that is beneficial for staff and the school. Teachers and learning support assistant's train well together and share a commitment and determination to bring about school improvement. The training in literacy and numeracy is beginning to have an impact in raising standards.
71. The accommodation provided is satisfactory. The building is maintained appropriately, kept in a clean condition and is in the process of being improved. Outside, the grounds are bleak and lack interest to stimulate productive play; however, like the buildings; they are about to be modernised. A good start has been made in providing an

exciting area for the outdoor education of pupils in the nursery and Reception classes. The large hall and a carpeted studio are used well for a wide range of activities. However, the school building does not currently provide disabled access, toilets and other physical features for any children, staff or visitors, who may require them. The school library is unsatisfactory and the number and range of non-fiction books provided is unsatisfactory. The facilities provided for the education of children in the nursery and Reception classes are good. Overall, the school has an adequate range of learning resources, which teachers and pupils use well; this is an improvement since the last inspection. The computer area is developing well, is used effectively, and pupils' achievements are improving rapidly.

72. Financial control and administration are satisfactory. The school has effective and efficient working practices to plan, manage and monitor its finances; this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school is in the process of turning a deficit budget in 2001-2002 into an appropriate surplus this year, 2002-2003. The school governors now have a secure overview of expenditure and this is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The budget is now firmly linked to the school development plan and reflects well the educational needs of the pupils. Specific grants received by the school are used for the purposes for which they are intended and there is a detailed record of how the money has been spent. Financial statements are prepared and submitted to each meeting of the governing body and most of the recommendations of the latest external audit have been implemented successfully. The governors take satisfactory steps to ensure that best value is obtained for supplies and services. Other funds and grants are used for their correct purpose.
73. At the time of the last inspection, the school was giving unsatisfactory value for money; it now gives satisfactory value for money. This judgement takes into account pupils' personal circumstances and their prior attainment. Pupils' achievements are now good although attainment is well below national averages in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. Pupils' attitudes, values, and personal development are good. The quality of education provided is now satisfactory, particularly the teaching, with some good features. The leadership and management of the school are now good. It also takes into account the unit costs of education that are average for a school of this size. Since the last inspection, the school has improved and is now more effective.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

74. To bring about improvements, the headteacher and staff with the support of the governing body should:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science to the average for similar schools and then to the national average for all schools by:
  - i) improving the proportion of good and very good teaching;
  - ii) improving the teaching of basic skills, particularly punctuation and grammar;
  - iii) raising teachers' expectations and increasing the levels of challenge in lessons;
  - iv) improving the day-to-day use of assessment to inform the next stage of learning;
  - v) engaging all pupils in class discussions by more effective questioning to probe their knowledge and understanding;
  - vi) creating more opportunities for pupils to work in small groups to explore, through practical work, the knowledge, skills and understanding being acquired after direct teaching has been given;
  - vii) increasing the opportunities for pupils to develop independent learning skills;
  - viii) improving speaking and listening skills through discussion work, role-play and dramatic activities;
  - ix) increasing the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment by providing more targeted support;

(Discussed in paragraphs 1 to 14, 18, 21 to 34, 52, 87 to 96, 99 to 103, 105 to 112, 129, 136, 146,151 and 152

- improve pupils' attendance by:
  - i) rigorously monitoring attendance, following up absences quickly and taking appropriate action when trends are clearly identified.

(Discussed in paragraph 18 and 49)

In addition, the governing body should consider the following areas for inclusion in their action plan:

- improving the school library, particularly the range of non-fiction books provided.

(Discussed in paragraphs 7, 71 and 91)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	102
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	56

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	13	51	35	2	0	0
Percentage	0	13	50	35	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	24.5	336
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	76

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	76

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	59

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	27	21	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	20	24
	Girls	16	18	19
	Total	33	38	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (73)	79 (73)	90 (90)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	23	21
	Girls	18	17	19
	Total	36	40	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (75)	83 (88)	83 (90)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	27	19	46

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	12	21
	Girls	14	9	16
	Total	29	21	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (71)	46 (67)	80 (98)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	14
	Girls	7	9	12
	Total	18	21	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	39 (64)	46 (71)	57 (79)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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	200	6	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	3	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	51	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	1	0

*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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	26.0

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	223.5

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	55
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	82.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	5.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16.0

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	734369
Total expenditure	752402
Expenditure per pupil	2337
Balance brought forward from previous year	-9282
Balance carried forward to next year	-27315

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	358
Number of questionnaires returned	164

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	41	2	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	48	47	3	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	54	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	41	10	1	11
The teaching is good.	50	42	1	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	45	11	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	36	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	35	0	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	39	52	6	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	51	41	1	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	48	1	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	42	11	2	16

### Summary of parents' and carers' responses

All significant issues raised by parents are included in the parents' summary.

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

75. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good; the quality of teaching and learning is good. The children make good progress including those with learning difficulties, pupils from ethnic minority background and those for who are learning to speak English is an additional language. This is an improvement since the last inspection when provision and teaching and learning was considered satisfactory.
76. The children enter the nursery on a part-time basis in September of the year they have their fourth birthday. They transfer to the Reception class on a full-time basis in the September of the year in which they become five. At time of the inspection there were 49 children attending a nursery class part-time and 43 children in the Reception year attending full-time. The satisfactory induction procedures, together with the good relationships, mean that the children soon feel secure; this enables most children to settle quickly into their class routines.
77. Attainment on entry to the nursery is very low in all areas of learning and shows a measurable decline since the last inspection. The results of the most recent baseline assessments on entry to the Reception year indicate that attainment is improving but is well below expectations for children of this age. Assessment procedures are good and are used well to plan the next steps of learning. Inspection evidence indicates that if the current good progress in the nursery and Reception class is maintained then the majority of children are likely to achieve the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. However, lower attaining children are unlikely to do so especially in the areas of communication, language and literacy and social and emotional development.
78. The quality of teaching in the nursery and Reception classes is consistently good. This is one of the reasons why the children's progress, which ranges from satisfactory to very good progress, is good overall from the very low level of their prior attainment. Teaching is planned well, drawing on the "stepping stones" in the Foundation Stage curriculum, with all members of staff showing very secure subject knowledge. Teaching is usually very practical and visual. The teachers choose resources carefully to help engage the children's interest and to motivate them. Teachers use praise well to ensure that children understand that their contributions are appreciated and valued. Children of all abilities enjoy school and quickly develop positive attitudes because of the good teaching. They learn to listen, share, and respect their peers and the adults with whom they come into contact. The teaching of children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. These children are quickly identified and receive appropriate support to meet their differing needs.
79. The co-ordinator for the early years and the nursery nurse are new to the job and have already created a good team spirit. Already there are signs of the children making good improvement from the very low levels of achievement on entry to the school. Accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage are good. All classrooms are kept tidy and provide stimulating and interesting activities for all children. Staff regularly change displays to sustain children's interest and demonstrate that they value the children's work. Parents are made to feel welcome to come into the classes at the beginning or end of sessions and some help on a regular basis.

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

80. The personal, social and emotional development of the children in the nursery is well below that expected for their age. Progress is good and in the Reception class, the substantial majority of the children are likely to attain the nationally agreed goals for early learning in this area by the time they enter Year 1. Children in the Reception class are co-operative, get on well with each other, and want to do well in their work. They share equipment and help each other such as when using the painting table in the Reception class. A minority of children in the Reception class, together with many in the nursery, find it difficult to share equipment and often need the support of the staff to be persuaded to let others have a go. The children learn from each other as well as from their teacher, nursery nurses and support staff and listen to what their peers say. However, a few children stay on the edge of the group and do not take a full part in the listening and speaking activities. One or two of the children have the confidence to share their ideas in discussion groups or in front of the class. Many children have difficulties in speaking in sentences and tend to use only words or short phrases to explain their thinking. The majority of the children know the difference between right and wrong and that their teachers expect them to work hard. The staff provide very interesting activities that are well planned to improve their personal, social and emotional development.

## Communication, language and literacy

81. Standards in the nursery are well below average but the children are making good progress. In the Reception class, a substantial majority of children are catching up quickly and on course to attain the nationally agreed early learning goals for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The majority of children achieve well over time compared to their attainment on entry because of good teaching in the nursery and Reception classes. Even so, the speaking, listening and reading skills of a sizeable minority remain well below that expected for children of this age. Although staff work very hard to introduce and consolidate new vocabulary, children do not always retain it. According to records, the majority of children with English as an additional language speak only their first language at home and, consequently, they receive most of their experiences in speaking and listening in English at school. The staff are very careful to model the use of language for a particular purpose. For example, while children were making a wormery in a Reception class, the staff introduced such words as 'worm', 'soil', and 'sand'. The children were able to see and touch worms, sand and soil, and therefore the words had a meaning for them. The staff encourage all the children to participate in conversation. Questioning is good and challenges children's thinking. Therefore, the children gain new knowledge week by week and their understanding is built up in such a way that most children can cope with it.
82. Books have a prominent place in the classrooms and library corners look inviting. When the children first attended the nursery many of them did not know how to hold a book and were not interested in looking at the pictures. Most of them can now sit quite quietly looking at and enjoying the pictures. A few higher attaining children identify the main objects and what is happening in the pictures. Only a small minority of children in the Reception class can read, though much of the school year remains for progress to be made. Most of them know individual words such as being able to recognise the days of the week and a number of frequently used words. Few children attempt to decode words although phonic skills are taught well. Most children know the initial sounds of the alphabet and a few can name a word that begins with a given letter such as 'p' for 'painting'. Most of the children in the Reception class can write their own names unaided but their letters are not always clearly shaped or formed correctly. In the nursery and Reception classes, almost all children recognise their own name. For example, they use their name cards to record their chosen activities on the appropriate activity board.

## Mathematical development

83. Standards are well below average in the nursery but progress is good. The children enter the Reception class with mathematical skills that are well below those expected for children of a similar age, although their understanding of number is better. Currently, progress is good in the Reception class and a substantial majority of the children are on course to attain the relevant early learning goals by the time they enter Year 1. Most children in the nursery can count to five with accuracy. The use of the 'Haydon Teddy Bear' to help counting activities is good and children remain interested in these types of activities. They sing number songs such as 'Tommy Two' with enthusiasm and enjoy doing the actions. However, a few children continue to show less confidence and tend to watch rather than joining in with the activity. In the Reception class, most children can count and recognise numbers to ten and more able children much further. They learn and know several number rhymes and enjoy playing number games. Through practical activities such as water, sand and cooking, children are developing their mathematical thinking. They have the opportunity to develop problem-solving skills through using and playing with games and construction kits. For example, in the nursery the children were trying to build towers that were taller than they were. The nursery nurse asked them if their towers were as tall as she was. The two children involved answered her question correctly using appropriate mathematical vocabulary and they were beginning to understand 'taller than' and 'smaller than'. The staff use every opportunity to develop children's mathematical thinking. For example, during snack time in the Reception class, the teacher asked one group 'Were there enough pieces of apple for everyone to have a piece?' Most children were able to count the number of children and apple pieces correctly. Most children throughout the nursery and Reception have a satisfactory knowledge of shapes and can name squares, circles and triangles and describe in simple terms their properties. Higher attaining children in Reception have a knowledge and understanding of more shapes such as rectangles and ellipses and name some solid shapes such as a cube. Children continue to find difficulty in retaining and using correct mathematical vocabulary although it is introduced and consolidated systematically by the staff.

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

84. Standards are well below average but improving in the nursery. Progress in the Reception class is good and a majority of the pupils are likely to attain the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of the school year. Children make satisfactory progress in the development of their knowledge and understanding of the world. This is because the teacher and nursery nurses thoroughly plan lessons that are stimulating, interesting and appropriate to the varying needs and abilities of the children. Higher attaining children talk about their families and where they live. They become curious and interested in the world around them. For example, the children have been looking at the Hindu festival of Divali. They made model candles and designed colourful patterns on cut out hands. Children begin to be aware of the different weather conditions. For example, every day the weather is discussed and they record accurately what they see such as wind, rain and sunshine. Most children successfully use equipment such as paintbrushes and use scissors with improving dexterity. Using computers, they begin to gain knowledge and understanding of the use of technology, especially when closely supervised and supported by an adult. In the nursery, the children successfully 'dress the teddy bear' on the screen. In the Reception class, they enjoy using the computer suite, make shapes, and colour them using the program 'Colour Magic'. Children begin to gain an understanding of forces by experimenting with sand and water and as they push the pedals on their large-wheeled toys in the outside areas. The children have a sense of time and know when it is their snack time or playtime. They know the sequence of the days of the week. In the Reception class, the children are beginning to know and understand that what happened in the past is called history. The majority of children are sensitive to other children's culture and beliefs.

## **Physical development**

85. Standards are well below average but improving. Children's fine hand movements are developing. However, many children in the nursery do not have the ability to form their letters and figures correctly. All children enjoy using paint, pencils, chalk and crayons. A few children continue to have difficulty in putting their coats on but most can with a little help from the staff. There is a good outside play area for the nursery children and they have regular opportunities to play with large wheeled toys. These activities help them to improve their physical skills. The majority of Reception children are on course to attain the nationally agreed goals for early learning by the end of the school year. They have good opportunities to apply their physical skills when using the newly completed outdoor area near their classroom. This is an improvement since the last inspection when no outside play was available. The school hall and activity rooms are appropriately equipped for indoors physical activity; they are used regularly and well to develop the children's physical skills. For example, when the nursery children had the opportunity to use a colourful parachute, they tried to get small toys through a centre hole by lifting and shaking the parachute. This activity produced squeals of delight and wonder when they succeeded in completing the task. Pupils' attitudes are good because the staff plan a great variety of activities to stimulate their interest and enthusiasm for learning. Older children enjoy talking about and are proud of their work but few know how well they are doing and what they need to do next to improve. Most children lack confidence and the behaviour of a few of them occasionally disrupts the class. However, staff deal with these lapses of behaviour in a calm but firm way.

## **Creative development**

86. The children enter the nursery with very poor skills in this area of learning but good teaching helps them to learn to control mark-making tools such as brushes and pencils. In the nursery and the Reception class, the children are developing satisfactory working routines and should attain the early learning goals by the end of the school year. For example, without being reminded, they put aprons on before they paint or do cooking. They enjoy painting, gluing and drawing. During the week of the inspection, the nursery children made cakes that later were turned into chocolate hedgehogs. They also made salt dough hedgehogs and homes for them to live in. The children imaginatively explore colour, texture and sound. Their skills in cutting and sticking are developing because of the well-planned opportunities for practice. A large majority of children know their primary colours. The children sing songs and nursery rhymes and often sing in tune especially the Reception children. They understand that instruments make different sounds. The teacher in the Reception class rarely misses an opportunity to develop the children's skills such as when they were singing a rhyme to reinforce the sequence of the days of the week and at the same time accompanying the singing on tambourine during a class discussion lesson.

## ENGLISH

87. Since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in the provision for English and in the quality of teaching and standards are beginning to rise, particularly in the nursery and Reception classes and in the infants. Overall, the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who attain or exceed the expected national level is well below average. Pupils' attainment on entry to school is very low. However, throughout the school, pupils are now achieving well and the majority of them are making good progress. In just under twenty per cent of lessons, the pupils' progress is very good and they make rapid gains in their literacy skills and are working competently within the expected level for their ages.
88. The National Curriculum test results for pupils in Year 6 show an improving pattern over recent years. Although standards remain well below the national average, the results in 2002 were in line with schools in a similar context. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment was well below average when compared with all schools national and similar schools. The 2002 tests results for pupils in Year 2 show that standards in reading were well below the national average but are better in writing although they are still below the national average. When compared with schools in a similar context, reading was below average but writing was average and this is a good improvement. Recent test results indicate no significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support from class teachers and learning support staff. This enables pupils to take full part in English lessons and to make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make similar progress to their peers. Higher attaining pupils and those at the very early stages of English acquisition are given additional help to enable them to make the progress they are capable of achieving.
89. Improvements in the recruitment and retention of staff, more effective systems of assessing pupils' attainment and progress, along with the impact of the good provision in the nursery and Reception classes are helping to improve standards. The school has implemented the additional literacy support program and booster classes to provide extra support for those pupils needing more help to reach the expected standard. In Years 3 and 4, the wide range of abilities has prompted the school to group pupils by their prior attainment for teaching. This has enabled work to be matched well to the pupils differing needs. Pupils are encouraged to use their literacy skills in other subjects such as science, history, design technology and geography.
90. In Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' skills of speaking and listening are below those expected nationally at the end of the infants and the juniors. In assemblies, they listen attentively to music and stories, joining in when it is appropriate. In lessons, pupils have appropriate opportunities to answer questions and to express themselves using interesting, technical and grammatically accurate language. However, there are occasions where teachers do not always take full advantage of appropriate situations to improve the pupils' skills. Pupils' responses to teacher's questions are not always extended. Teachers sometimes accept one-word answers or simplistic explanations without encouraging more thought provoking responses. When pupils are given opportunities to discuss their experiences, ideas and feelings with one another, standards improve. In those lessons where pupils are required by their teachers to engage in conversation and to give full answers to the questions asked, their attainment is higher than when they are passive listeners and learners.
91. Pupils achieve well in their reading compared to attainment on entry and the weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been addressed. Even so, standards are below average in Year 2 and are well below average in Year 6. Throughout the school, effective strategies are used to develop an understanding of phonics, word families, and spellings. This gives pupils confidence in tackling unfamiliar words and has a positive effect on the progress they make in becoming fluent and confident readers. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are becoming confident readers and use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words. However, lower attaining pupils still need considerable support to read simple books. In the juniors, pupils continue to improve their reading skills. Year 6 pupils express a preference for favourite authors and choose books because of particular interests. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils understand plot, setting and characterisation. They show a mature understanding of different writers' styles and accounts and are able to make deductions and inferences from their reading. Pupils enthusiastically engage in conversations with adults about the success of J K Rowling and compare the style with that of Charles Dickens. Pupils are developing independent research skills as they use dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopaedias and CD-ROMS. However, the school library is unsatisfactory and lacks a sufficient range of non-fiction books to provide pupils with opportunities to use their research skills. The school is aware of this and funds have been allocated to improve the library facilities in order to enhance pupils' reading skills further. Well-planned guided reading groups help teachers to identify pupils' individual needs and to provide good support for all of them. However, reading records are not always as rigorous as they should be and do not record what pupils need to do next in order to improve their reading skills. Pupils are encouraged to take books home and share them with family members; this has a positive effect on their progress. Many parents and

carers make positive comments in reading diaries to help their children improve and to communicate progress and any difficulties with the teachers.

92. In some aspects of their writing, pupils achieve very well and the quality of their independent writing has improved since the last inspection. Standards in writing in Year 2 are still below average, though this represents an improvement. Standards in Year 6 are well below average. The youngest pupils are learning to write interesting sentences and individual and group targets encourage them to use full stops and capital letters accurately. However, there is a lack of consistency and rigour in ensuring pupils use correct punctuation and grammar, as result standards are not always as high as they could be. In the infants, pupils are encouraged to write for a variety of purposes, such as recording their discoveries about materials as part of a science lesson or writing exciting stories using a story planner to help with sequencing, setting and characters. In the juniors, pupils learn to write in a variety of styles, such as reports, imaginative stories, letters and poetry. Higher attaining pupils use interesting vocabulary, which catches the imagination of the reader. For example, as part of a topic on sound one Year 3 pupil wrote 'it was so calm that I could hear my brain sending a message to my mouth telling me to speak'. In Year 6, pupils progressively develop their ability to write for different purposes using a wide range of styles. Work shows an awareness of the need for different presentation skills, vocabulary and style. Pupils produce diagrams and posters to support their work well in other subjects, such as posters on healthy eating. Poems, letters, scientific, geographical, and historical accounts feature as part of a drive to raise pupils' standards in literacy. Higher attaining pupils often start off their work well using paragraphs, correct punctuation, complex grammatical structures and rich appropriate vocabulary to enliven their writing but they do not sustain this standard for long enough and the quality of the writing deteriorates.
93. Poetry is given a good emphasis throughout the school. Older pupils write their own high quality Haiku poems using rhythm and well-chosen vocabulary to create atmosphere. Information and communication technology is not used as effectively as it could be, particularly for lower attaining pupils. Handwriting is mostly neat and work is well presented. In formal handwriting lessons, pupils are taught to join their letters. However, they are not encouraged to do so when writing independently, which would help raise standards.
94. Pupils show very favourable attitudes to learning, are well behaved and enjoy positive relationships with their teachers. This makes a considerable contribution to their rate of progress. Pupils are usually eager to learn, stay on task and show very good levels of independence and concentration. Opportunities to work collaboratively and to develop personal skills are well used. Pupils enjoy English lessons and respond very well to the structure of the literacy hour.
95. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In 72 per cent of lessons, teaching is good or better and no lessons were unsatisfactory. All teachers are confidently implementing the National Literacy Strategy. Teaching is carefully structured and planned well to meet the differing needs of the pupils. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the beginning and end of lessons, involving them well in their own learning. In their drive to develop pupil's independent writing skills through the use of improved grammar, structures and vocabulary, the need to improve basic skills, such as phonic awareness, spelling and punctuation is not always given the priority it should be and this lowers standards. Occasionally, the introductions to lessons are too long and as a consequence pupils have less time to take part in practical work. Teachers use praise, comments and questions effectively to check understanding but they do not always extend thinking further. Displays in classrooms remind pupils of the skills they need to use to improve their work, such as good handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation but these are not consistently referred to and as a consequence standards vary across the school. A few teachers give insufficient opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking and listening skills through role-play and drama; when they do, standards improve, such as in personal and social education, and physical education, particularly dance. Teachers' plans appropriately identify subject-specific key words and phrases. However, these are not always taught explicitly at the beginning of and during lessons to enable pupils to widen their vocabulary and to communicate more effectively; when they do, pupils make very good progress, such as in information and communication technology. Teachers mark work on a regular basis and most teachers provide pupils with helpful suggestions on how they can improve their work.
96. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, knowledgeable and effective in the drive to improve standards. Assessment and record keeping are good. National Curriculum tests and school tests are used effectively to track individual progress in order to raise standards and to identify areas for improvement such as speaking and listening. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and those learning to speak English as an additional language is good. Support staff and specialist teachers are used very effectively to give additional help to these pupils. Their contribution greatly enhances the learning opportunities for the pupils. The school is aware of the need to improve the school library and the range of non-fiction books provided and funds are now available. The school's action plan for English identifies key areas for development,

including giving further attention to pupils' speaking and listening skills, as well as to their reading, writing and spelling. However, only limited attention given to the ways in which pupils' learning can be made more interesting by adding variety to their work so that they can become more-independent learners. The headteacher and coordinator recognise that these are important areas for development and form the basis of the next phase in raising standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

97. Standards in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for mathematics at the end of Year 6 were well below average, which reflects the findings of the last inspection. Many of these pupils entered school with well below average mathematical skills and school records show that the majority did make good progress. This particular group of pupils had experienced many changes in teaching personnel, the number of pupils joining and leaving the school had been high and over 40 per cent of them had learning difficulties. Standards were also well below average when compared with similar school. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels was well below average with no girls achieving this level of performance. In the current Year 6, approximately 55 per cent of pupils have learning difficulties and 30 per cent speak English as an additional language. Inspection evidence shows that more pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of the year than did so in 2002 but that the proportion is still well below average. Pupils in Year 6 have good attitudes to learning. Pupils who speak English as an additional language are making good progress because of better support. Similarly, pupils with learning difficulties are making better progress because of the good support they receive from learning support assistants. Currently, there is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.
98. Standards in the 2002 National Curriculum test for pupils at the end of Year 2, were below average when compared with all schools but average when compared with schools that have a similar intake; this is an improvement since the last inspection. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and those learning to speak English as an additional language was less than previous years at about 25 per cent and they achieved better standards than expected. Similarly, the number of pupils achieving higher levels of performance increased for the first time for several years. These are the best results the school has achieved for many years. They have been achieved by more consistent teaching, better planning and hard work. In the current Year 2, pupils attainment in entry was very low showing a decline when compared with previous years. However, inspection evidence indicated that Year 2 pupils are making good progress with nearly 50 per cent making very good progress; the proportion on course to attain or exceed the nationally expected level by the end of the school year is larger than in 2002 but is nevertheless below average.
99. Throughout the school, teaching is more consistent and the newly appointed coordinator is beginning to give the subject a much-needed sense of direction. However, much remains to be achieved, particularly by increasing the proportion of pupils who exceed the national average and to raise standards overall to be broadly in line with the national expectations for all pupils by the end of Year 6.
100. In Year 2, higher attaining pupils can make quick mental recall of number facts to 10 and sometimes to 20. Other pupils find this much harder, particularly when the calculations involve subtraction. Most of the pupils can recognise and order numbers to 100, though some are reversing their numerals and many are unsure of place value in tens and units. The pupils can recognise simple number patterns, and odd and even numbers. They are able to use coins to make totals, but are less confident with calculating change. The pupils are able to weigh and measure objects accurately. They recognise and name common two-dimensional shapes successfully, but are less confident in naming three-dimensional shapes. In Year 6, weak literacy skills and limited vocabulary mean that many pupils find it difficult to solve word problems. They are often unsure what information is being provided for them and what exactly they have to find out, particularly if the problem involves more than one step. Many pupils have a poor understanding of place value in numbers up to 1000. They can add two and three-digit numbers, but they find subtraction more difficult. Higher attaining pupils have a satisfactory understanding of equivalent fractions. The pupils are able to calculate the area and perimeter of simple shapes and they are familiar with the language of angles. They are beginning to make some use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. For example, in art and design, pupils in Year 5 practise their compass skills by creating effective patterns and in science, pupils in Year 4 draw accurate bar graphs to record the results of an investigation into magnetism.
101. Pupils have good attitudes toward the subject. They show this by their willingness to answer questions and to display their calculations on small individual boards in mental numeracy sessions when given the opportunity. Pupils enjoy practical work and work with sustained concentration and interest. The numeracy lessons are

successful in creating positive attitudes to the subject and making it interesting. However, a few pupils with weak listening skills do not pay attention and sometimes behaves inappropriately.

102. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good. In nearly 60 per cent of lessons, teaching is good or better and no lessons were unsatisfactory. The teachers plan their lessons well and share the learning objectives with the pupils. They work hard to ensure that all the pupils are fully included in learning. Teachers organise lessons well and the tasks set are appropriately matched to the widely differing needs of pupils, even when pupils are taught in small groups based on their prior attainment. Nevertheless, at times, teachers do not challenge higher attaining pupils sufficiently, whilst below average pupils have to tackle work which is too hard for them. During effective plenary sessions, the teachers recap learning, assess the pupils' understanding and set regular worthwhile homework tasks.
103. In the infants and with lower attaining pupils in the juniors, the teachers make good use of practical apparatus to aid learning. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher used a 'flip strip' effectively to help the pupils count on and back in ones and two's up to 10 and beyond. She also made good use of a number square successfully to help the pupils to understand 10 more and 10 less than a number. In a Year 6 lesson for lower attaining pupils, the teacher made effective use of large place value grids, which helped some of the pupils to multiply and divide numbers by 10 and 100. The teachers use pupils' mistakes constructively to make appropriate teaching points such as when asking the pupils to explain how they had worked out their answers. In a lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils, this helped them to double and halve two-digit numbers more successfully. The teachers encourage the pupils to use correct mathematical terms. In a Year 5 lesson on units of time, the teacher displayed the key vocabulary clearly. In another Year 5 lesson on the same topic, the teacher played an appropriate bingo game, which helped the pupils to convert analogue to digital time and to learn time on a 24-hour clock. In a Year 6 lesson, this helped the pupils to understand the idea of probability and the use of the 0-1 probability scale. The teachers have high expectations for behaviour, but in practice, some teachers manage the pupils better than others do. Where a few pupils shout out answers, fail to listen sufficiently or are unsure what to do next, the pace of learning drops. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively. However, the quality of marking, and its usefulness in giving the pupils ideas as to how they might improve is too variable.
104. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The school has experienced considerable difficulties in recruiting and retaining a mathematics coordinator. However, the newly appointed coordinator has made a good start in managing the subject. She checks colleagues' planning and samples pupils' work and visits some lessons to assess the quality to the teaching. The coordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and recognises that standards need to be improved quickly. She has developed a clear action plan, which seeks to address this. Since her appointment, staff training has improved and good use is being made of external numeracy consultants to work with staff to improve their expertise. Planning is satisfactorily based on the National Numeracy Strategy, supplemented by a commercial scheme of work. There are good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and for tracking their progress. The headteacher and coordinator have analysed the results of national tests, in order to highlight areas of weakness in the pupils' performance. Information from this analysis and from other half-termly assessments is being used well to match work to the differing needs of the pupils. This has also helped in the introduction of teaching pupils based on their prior attainment and as a consequence standards are beginning to improve, particularly when pupils are given the opportunity to participate in practical activities. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' social development, for example, when they are encouraged to work collaboratively. The coordinator is aware of the need to revise and improve the teaching of the use and application of mathematics, and to increase the opportunities for pupils to design their own investigations. Pupils' numeracy skills, particularly data handling, are used well to promote learning in other subjects. This is supported well by the use of appropriate skills in information and communication technology.

## SCIENCE

105. Pupils currently in Year 6 attain standards that are well below those expected for their age; this is better than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment in literacy and communication skills and, by Year 6, a significant number still experience problems when explaining their work and making task-related observations. However, based on their prior attainment, they make satisfactory progress. The standards being achieved by other pupils in the juniors is improving because of the use of a detailed scheme of work supporting a more consistent approach to teaching the subject in most classes.
106. Pupils currently in Year 2 attain standards that are likely to be above average when compared with those in all schools nationally and those with a similar intake. Standards are significantly higher than those found at the time of the last inspection. This is the result of some very good teaching between the ages of five and seven. The support received by pupils with special educational needs enables most of them to make satisfactory progress. The teaching effectively develops the learning of boys and girls equally.
107. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, standards were well below average when compared with all schools and those with a similar intake. The proportion of pupils achieving higher levels was also well below average. Boys and girls achieved similar standards. Trends over time show a significant improvement since the last inspection but the 2002 results were adversely affected by the high number of pupils with learning difficulties and pupils learning to speak English as an additional language. Similarly, teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2002 showed that standards were well below average when compared with all schools and those with a similar intake. Better teaching, improved planning and the higher priority that the school now gives to the subject have stopped the decline in standards.
108. In Year 2, pupils make good progress in relation to their attainment on entry to school. Nearly all pupils have acquired a basic knowledge and understanding of scientific enquiry, life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. They can carry out a simple enquiry into grouping and changing materials by heating different foods, making predictions and describing what happened and interpreting their results. The pupils are able to group, measure and communicate their findings using tables and graphs. For example, they sort foods into healthy and unhealthy categories, undertake a simple survey into their favourite foods, make a tally chart of their results and turn this into a block graph. Pupils can identify and describe the properties of some common materials using terms such as 'smooth', 'bendy', 'rigid' and 'transparent'. They show a developing understanding of forces when they investigate how objects start and stop, speed up, slow down and change direction when they are pushed and pulled.
109. In Year 6, pupils with typical attainment levels have a broad knowledge and understanding of scientific enquiry, life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. They investigate forces successfully by exploring the extent to which an elastic band stretches when different forces act upon it. Pupils enjoyed predicting the outcomes, carefully describing the procedures, measuring and tabulating the results and drawing their own conclusions. In earlier work on light, the pupils learned that more light passes through some materials than others do by testing the power of a torch beam to pass through opaque and transparent sheets of material. They all understood the importance of a fair test. The pupils are able to explain the main differences between solids, liquids and gases. Pupils have a developing understanding of the different functions of the human body and ways in which we can help to keep healthy. For example, they were able to explain how the heart works in maintaining the blood circulation system and the parts played by proteins, fats and carbohydrates in providing a balanced diet. In the infants and juniors, there was little evidence of information and communication technology being used to support learning. Some pupils' progress is slowed by a lack of good speaking and listening skills. However, when they are given appropriate scientific words to use, their progress rapidly improves. Currently, the proportion of pupils achieving average and higher levels of attainment is well below the national average.
110. Overall, pupils show satisfactory attitudes to their work. They respond well to practical activities and co-operate well in the tasks set. This was seen in a Year 3 lesson where the pupils shared the duties involved in testing the ability of light to pass through different materials and handled the equipment with care. However, a significant number of pupils are inattentive in whole class oral work, particularly in the junior years. There was little evidence of fair test judgements being recorded in their written work and some work was incomplete; this happened in classes where pupils' attitudes were unsatisfactory. However, when attitudes were very good, pupils took a pride in the presentation of their work, used scientific language correctly and behaved well.

111. The quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons is satisfactory, overall; it is good in the infants, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In the best lessons, teachers use their good subject knowledge to share with pupils the purpose of the lesson and carefully match the tasks set to meet the differing needs of the pupils. These were seen in a Year 1 lesson in which the pupils were exploring the properties of a range of materials. The teacher used previous learning thoughtfully by helping the pupils recall the scientific vocabulary needed during the lesson. She monitored carefully and encouraged the pupils to practise their listening, speaking and reasoning skills. The teacher quickly involved those who were not offering responses with a variety of supportive questions and constructive comments that helped the pupils to sustain their interest, meet their differing needs and challenge and extend their thinking. When teaching is less effective, the tasks set do not challenge the thinking of higher attaining pupils and the work is not demanding enough. Teaching is also less effective when there is a lack of consistency in the approach between different classes in the same year group, for example in the teaching of scientific enquiry skills; in one lesson, it was very practical and the other suffered from too much teacher talk.
112. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed to the post and is already aware of weaknesses in the subject but has not yet had time to influence teaching and learning. A good policy is in place and the medium-term plans provide clear direction for the work of each year group. The coordinator, who is a very experienced teacher, is beginning to use well her previously acquired good monitoring skills for the benefit of the subject. Staff training has been correctly identified as part of an annual review and incorporated into the subject's action plan to raise standards. Assessment information and record keeping systems are beginning to improve the tracking of pupils' progress and the standards achieved, in order to establish priority areas for teaching and learning. Resources are generally good although the use of information and communication technology to support learning is underdeveloped.

## ART AND DESIGN

113. Standards attained are above those expected in Year 2 and Year 6; this is an improvement since the last inspection. All the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. Boys and girls are doing equally well. The pupils enjoy their lessons and have good attitudes towards the subject. They work hard and are keen to improve.
114. In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of how to mix primary colours to produce different tones. They understand how red can produce the feeling of a hot picture. The pupils can use pastels, paint and textiles well in creating effective pictures and collage in the styles of Georgia O'Keeffe, Cezanne and Van Gogh. They are able to use their information and communication technology skills successfully to make computer pictures of bonfire night and scary monsters, in a variety of colours. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of line and tone in producing good quality still life drawings in pencil and pastel. They also draw some very good pencil sketches in the style of Lowry. In work linked to a literacy topic on painting a picture with words, the pupils make good observational sketches of natural objects. They create well-designed sporting stencils in black and white, using mathematical shapes. The pupils are able to use their information and communication technology skills well to generate effective computer images and pictures.
115. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and confidently introduce pupils to the work of a variety of well known artists. They use the pupils' artistic skills well to support work in other subjects, such as in history, geography and religious education. Lessons are planned well and teachers ensure that there are plenty of visual stimuli in the classrooms. They demonstrate skills and techniques effectively with a particular emphasis on the specific skills of drawing and careful observation work. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the teacher explained clearly how the pupils should concentrate on correct facial proportions and this helped them to draw some realistic Tudor portraits. This teacher did much to develop the pupils' confidence in art, by encouraging them to experiment with their own ideas. She also gave the pupils the opportunity to evaluate their own work and that of others. This helped the pupils to talk about difficulties they had encountered and how they might improve. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to develop their own ideas by saying *Don't copy the picture; take note of Lowry's style and use his techniques*. This helped the pupils to begin building up an urban scene in the painter's style, using card, tissue paper and pencils. They showed good skills in building the pictures up in layers, with tissue paper representing the dominant buildings. The teachers emphasise the need to observe pictures carefully, noting details in people and backgrounds. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher showed the pupils how artists such as Rembrandt, Goya and Picasso have represented faces and this helped them to learn how to draw their own portraits with increasing accuracy.

116. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator is an enthusiastic teacher, who leads the subject well. She checks colleagues' planning and samples of pupils' work, but she has not yet had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching. A clear policy gives good guidance to teachers and planning is satisfactorily based on national guidelines. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and for using this information to plan future work. The coordinator has written an appropriate action plan to develop the subject. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning. Overall, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, in lessons in Years 3 and 4, the teachers gave the pupils the opportunity to reflect on the relationships and feelings depicted in photographs and prints. Older pupils have illustrated posters successfully to encourage people to take care of the environment. Some pupils have participated successfully in a local school's art competition; this has created interest throughout the school and their success has contributed to the pupils' good attitudes towards the subject and to the improving standards.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

117. No lessons were observed during the inspection because of timetable arrangements. However, other evidence, including discussions with staff and pupils and an analysis of pupils' work in their books and on display, indicate that standards attained by pupils are in line with those expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress; this is similar to the findings at the last inspection. Planning has improved and follows the national guidelines. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. Overall, pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and, in some classes, they make good progress.
118. In Year 2, pupils use a variety of basic tools safely such as scissors and staplers and can measure, mark out and cut materials accurately. They use a range of materials such as card, fabrics, string and glue successfully. They enjoy making simple models and products such as, wheeled vehicles and moving pictures. The pupils investigate the main features of products before they proceed to the design and make stages; for example, they study pictures of houses, identifying essential features such as windows, chimneys and doors. They explore the working of simple mechanisms such as hinges, using paper, scissors and pens. After making their models, the pupils identify how they might have proceeded differently, suggesting future improvements. They also review their own learning noting new words and skills that they have learned.
119. In Year 6, pupils have a sound knowledge of the designing, making and testing process and apply these successfully to a range of familiar products. For example, they make musical instruments such as wind chimes, having gained ideas from a video programme about using waste materials for their construction. They plan their work using labelled sketches and detailing the materials they will use. The pupils then proceed to make the instruments and to test them against agreed criteria. This same process was used before they drew the mechanism for making a pop-up toy using wood and a cardboard spring mechanism inside a box. The pupils made good links with their scientific knowledge when studying food technology and health living. They incorporated all these features when making biscuits by using their own designs, selected healthy ingredients and made wrappers for their products. The pupils are able to use pneumatics to power moving mechanisms. However, there is little evidence of them working with control mechanisms by using information and communication technology equipment and program.
120. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They are enthusiastic about their work and keen to explain and share what they have achieved. In Year 2, pupils talked eagerly about the moving pictures they had made incorporating sharks and dolphins. Pupils in Year 6 became excited as they recalled their products they had made such as the musical instruments and moving monsters.
121. As no lessons were observed, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. However, teachers' planning is satisfactory. Teachers have collected good examples of products made by pupils to show the range of work covered. However, little written work is saved either in pupils' folders or as a portfolio to show a full record of the design process. Discussion with pupils also revealed that they had been taught about the design process but have an insecure understanding about the importance of studying real products and of evaluating their own products once they have been completed.
122. Overall, the leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed to the post but is already aware of weaknesses in the subject but has not yet had time to influence teaching and learning. She is in the process of improving her own expertise in the subject. An appropriate policy

is in place and a revised set of medium-term plans is almost complete, based upon national guidelines. A related commercial scheme has been purchased to give further support for teachers' planning. Overall, resources are satisfactory although the use of information and communication technology to support learning is underdeveloped, particularly control technology. At present, there are no appropriate systems in place for tracking pupils' progress or for using assessment information to inform the next stage of learning; this is unsatisfactory. However, the school is aware of this and is in the early stages of designing such a system.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

123. Judgements are based on observations of two lessons, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and the subject coordinator. Currently, standards are broadly in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6; this is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The use of national guidelines is supporting the teaching of the subject and producing a consistent approach and similar standards in different classes. Progress is satisfactory in the infants and juniors. Opportunities are being provided for fieldwork but the structure of geographical enquiry is not well developed and some of the studies of distant places lack rich experiences for the pupils to sample. There is no clear progression in the development of mapping skills throughout the school. The teaching effectively develops the learning of boys and girls equally. Pupils with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.
124. In Year 2, pupils enjoy studying the different types of buildings they have observed in the area surrounding the school. They are able to identify changes that have happened to the environment in which they live by following the progress of building work and road construction. Pupils can draw plans of the school to help them follow a route about the building. They understand how to use a map of the world to locate the places visited by the class toy bear and are becoming increasingly familiar with the names of the oceans and continents. The pupils are able to identify the similarities and differences between different places. For example in Year 2, the pupils formulate their own questions about Mexico and through the study of a settlement can describe, using drawings, the appearance of a typical house and write sentences about similarities and differences with their own homes. They are able describe a day in the life of a Mexican child and compare it with their own experiences, particularly going to school.
125. In Year 6, pupils have some knowledge and understanding about their home area and of selected contrasting places in the world. They are developing a satisfactory knowledge of human and natural environment features and the need for conservation projects. Pupils can use a world map to locate the continents, major oceans and selected capital cities, particularly in Europe and Britain. The pupils can describe and explain the formation of a variety of features found in river valleys with the aid of computer generated illustrations. They undertake observations in the local area in order to describe the damage that can be done to the environment by litter and explain how improvements can be made. The pupils are able to explain how the human and physical characteristics of places in the developing world affect the activities and lives of people living there such as when pupils in Year 4 studied the life of people in a village in India.
126. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In an effective lesson, the teacher made good use of resources to help pupils develop an understanding about different parts of the world that they could not visit. For example, in a Year 3 lesson about desert areas, the teacher combined use of the overhead projector and the board effectively to help illustrate the features of a cactus plant and in particular its root system. The pupils were highly motivated when provided with real cactus plants to examine. However, teaching is less effective when the pupils have to describe places and features from a limited resource base and write about them without being given learning experiences that create a feeling of being there.
127. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinator has good background experience in the subject. She is already aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject but has not yet had the opportunity to influence teaching and learning. A good policy is in place and the medium-term plans provide clear direction for the work of each year group. However, the teachers are not confident in their subject knowledge and the co-ordinator has identified improvements in this as a priority for staff training. Pupils are now assessed at the end of each study unit and a system has just been implemented that will allow the progress of individual pupils to be tracked appropriately. Resources are good and include study support packs, aerial photographs, fieldwork equipment and maps. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used to support learning.

## **HISTORY**

128. Standards attained by pupils are average in Year 2 and Year 6; this is similar to the findings at the last inspection. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language, are making satisfactory progress. Boys and girls achieve similar standards. Overall, the pupils behave appropriately in lessons, although there are some older pupils who have less positive attitudes to learning.
129. In Year 2, the pupils are beginning to have a satisfactory understanding of how things change over time. They know that modern household objects, such as vacuum cleaners, irons and washing machines, make life much easier than many years ago. The pupils know something about important events in British history, such as the Gunpowder Plot. They are able to sequence pictures about this story but their weak literacy skills hinder their ability to write clearly about it. In Year 6, the pupils have a satisfactory understanding of aspects of life in Britain before and during the Second World War. The weak literacy skills of many pupils hinder their ability to clearly record what they know. Nevertheless, higher attaining pupils write satisfactory accounts of pre-war times in adopting the role of a person on the Jarrow Crusade and as an evacuee from the Blitz. Pupils were interested to discover that Aylesbury was one of the places to which evacuees from London were sent. They are developing an understanding about life in ancient Greece and can recall the plot of legends, such as Theseus and the Minotaur. Higher attaining pupils use their literacy skills appropriately to write interesting accounts about the Trojan Horse, in the form of an ancient scroll. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a satisfactory understanding of aspects of life in Tudor England and the differences between rich and poor people.
130. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teachers maintain a satisfactory balance between giving the pupils information and allowing them to research facts for themselves from reference books, CD-ROM and the Internet. They make learning more real by giving the pupils the opportunity to observe and handle historical artefacts. This enhanced their learning about changes to household objects over time in a Year 1 lesson and about wartime Britain in a Year 6 lesson. In Year 2, the teachers made effective use of a video about the First World War. The pupils were enthralled by this and they learnt a lot about life in the trenches and the significance of poppies on Remembrance Day. The teachers emphasise the need to find clues about the past. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher asked *'How could you identify these buildings as being ancient Greek?'* This helped the pupils to look closely at different kinds of columns and how they have often inspired buildings of modern times. The teachers use questioning well, in order to make the pupils think carefully. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher asked *'Why does it have a long handle?'* This helped the pupils to understand how a Victorian dolly stick was used for washing. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher asked *'Why did the Germans target the railways?'* and this helped the pupils understand the significance of the transport of food and coal around the country.
131. Some teachers are better than others in managing the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils. At times, some pupils tend to shout out answers and this disrupts the flow of the lesson. Overall, however, the teachers organise their lessons satisfactorily and maintain a reasonably brisk pace to learning. They mark pupils' work regularly and positively. At times, the pupils spend too long on the carpet without being involved in active learning and, consequently, their concentration wanes.
132. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. A clear policy meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is satisfactorily based on national guidelines, adapted appropriately to meet the school's needs and resources. The coordinator monitors colleagues' planning, but there are no systematic checks on standards throughout the school or on the quality of teaching and learning; this is unsatisfactory. However, there are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment at the end of each topic and the teachers make appropriate use of this information to plan subsequent work. Resources for teaching and learning are good. The funds available have been spent well on purchasing good quality historical artefacts and CD ROM materials. Learning is enhanced by worthwhile visits to places such as the RAF Museum at Hendon, Bedford Toy Museum and Cogges Farm. The teachers also make good use of the local area to support learning. Actors who perform and tell stories from history have visited the school to enrich learning in topics such as the Romans. The subject thus makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

133. Overall, standards are average in Year 2 and Year 6 and rising because of very effective teaching; this is a significant improvement since the last inspection because the provision made for the subject is much wider, offering pupils a good range of learning experiences. The pace of development of the subject has significantly

increased during the last two years because of improved planning, very good staff training and the availability of better and more reliable hardware and software.

134. In Year 2, pupils can operate a computer with increasing confidence. They work hard, enjoying using the mouse and keyboard to construct checklists of words about the items needed for going on holidays. Pupils are able to save and print their work successfully and understand the difference between running text and text with line breaks. Pupils with learning difficulties successfully match words and pictures about holidays. Higher-attaining pupils talk with enthusiasm about classifying and recording different types of food using their improving spreadsheet and word-processing skills.
135. In Year 6, pupils can collect, sort and analyse information, and interpret their findings. They use spreadsheets well, entering data and formulae correctly when investigating the total costs of a weekly shopping basket. Pupils download relevant text from the Internet when studying evacuees as part of a history project. They successfully amend and combine a range of information from different sources when using a desktop publishing program. Pupils are improving their word-processing skills of drafting, editing and presenting their stories as part of the literacy hour.
136. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Pupils respond well to the teaching and show good levels of interest and concentration. Teachers have high expectations and have little difficulty in motivating the pupils, whom they manage well. All pupils are keen to learn and listen attentively to the advice and clear instructions from the teachers. Relationships between pupils, and between adults and pupils, are often very good; this creates a good ethos for learning and therefore many pupils make rapid progress. Teachers are becoming increasingly skilled in working with large groups of pupils before moving into small groups for more focused support. In the best lessons, the teachers' very good subject knowledge is used well to introduce, with clarity, the knowledge and skills to be learnt. Pupils' prior attainment is revised appropriately at the beginning of lessons and built on, so that the new knowledge and skills progressively develop. Very good attention is given to the acquisition of correct technical vocabulary so that the pupils can communicate more effectively with each other and their teachers. After short and effective introductions to lessons, the pupils are challenged by the practical tasks set and work well in pairs or smaller groups. Learning support assistants are used well to support the learning of less confident pupils, particularly at the ends of lessons when teachers are assessing what pupils know, understand and can do.
137. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The coordinator has very good subject knowledge and has identified the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. The subject's action plan is helping to order priorities and give its development purpose. All aspects of the subject are appropriately planned for in the scheme of work. The provision of hardware and software is good. The school is keen to use pupils' computing capability to enhance their learning in other subjects. The training teachers have received has improved their knowledge, skills and confidence; such improvements have helped raise standards rapidly during the last year. Pupils' skills in information and communication technology are beginning to be used well in some classes for work in English and mathematics, and to a lesser extent in art and design, geography and history.

## **MUSIC**

138. No lessons were observed during the inspection in Year 6 because of timetable arrangements. However, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and observation of lessons in other year groups indicates that pupils in the infants and juniors achieve standards that are in line with those expected nationally for pupils of their ages. The majority of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language, achieve well during their time in school and make good progress in developing musical knowledge, skills and understanding. The school has been successful in improving teaching and learning since the last inspection. The implementation of a more effective scheme of work and good support material has helped to raise staff confidence and increased their subject knowledge, resulting in improved teaching and learning.
139. Music makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and personal development and adds to the quality of assemblies and worship. The playing of an appropriate piece of music creates a reverent atmosphere for reflection and worship and has a calming effect on pupils. Pupils sing songs and hymns with enthusiasm, appropriate expression and clarity and are able to sustain a steady pulse. In Year 1, well-planned lessons with interesting activities enable pupils to practise keeping a steady beat as they play good quality percussion instruments. They enjoy learning and sing with enthusiasm a good range of songs. By Year 2, pupils show a

satisfactory understanding of musical ideas as they explore high and low sounds and respond to simple notation.

140. In the juniors, continued good and sometimes very good teaching helps the pupils to build progressively upon their earlier skills. All Year 3 pupils learn to play the recorder and are able to follow a simple score accurately. This makes a very positive contribution to pupils' standards in music, providing them with very good experiences to develop their skills in performing, appraising, and acquiring musical knowledge. Specialist teaching in Year 4 adds further to pupils' skills. Pupils make good progress in playing instruments, following more complex notation and developing considerable skills in composition as they create their own tunes. For example, pupils collaborated well to create a variety of tunes using the pentatonic scale. Continued high quality teaching in Year 5 ensures that pupils have very good opportunities to work in groups to compose their own graphic score. Pupils were able to reflect on their work and to evaluate their own and each other's compositions in order to make improvements. Members of the class thoroughly enjoyed performing their activities in front of their friends.
141. The quality of teaching and learning is good; it is very good in almost a third of lessons. Teachers are very confident in teaching music and they use the scheme well to build systematically on pupils' prior knowledge, understanding and skills. Pupils are given very clear advice on how to improve their skills. They are encouraged to think as musicians and to use correct musical terms. Music lessons are well structured and pupils are encouraged to experiment with sound. The tasks set are challenging and pupils are continually encouraged to improve their performance and consequently make good progress. A good number of pupils benefit from the specialist teaching of the violin, cello and woodwind. Through well-planned cross-curricular links pupils learn about music from continents such as Africa and India. The various instrumentalists and the school choir are involved in school and community performances. These activities make a positive contribution to the quality of teaching and learning and provide pupils with good opportunities to extend their creative skills.
142. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Music is successfully and enthusiastically managed and makes an important contribution to the aims of the school. The co-ordinator has specialist skills, which are used well to develop a full range of activities to improve staff confidence and promote effective teaching and learning. The scheme of work, the activities provided and assessments helps to ensure that there is progress and continuity in learning, providing pupils with good opportunities to extend their musical knowledge, skills and understanding. Specialist skills, visits and visitors are used well to develop a full range of activities to promote effective learning. The accommodation provided and the resources for learning are good. Some teachers are beginning to use information and communication technology to support learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

143. Pupils' achievements are broadly in line with those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has access to good facilities for teaching swimming, and standards are at the expected level for pupils of this age. On entry to school, pupils have appropriate physical skills and continue to make good progress in their dance and games skills. Pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress. All pupils follow a balanced curriculum over a year in units of work, which for the week of the inspection included dance, games and gymnastics. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good in the infants and very good in the juniors. They respond immediately to teachers' instructions and participate enthusiastically in all activities. Pupils co-operate well with others and thoroughly enjoy their lessons.
144. In Year 6, pupils are able to plan, perform and evaluate their movements successfully. They know and understand the importance of warm-up and cooling-down activities to protect the body from injury. Pupils are very aware of safety issues. They devise and perform a dance drama successfully. Pupils respond imaginatively to musical stimuli such as when dancing to mechanical music. In one example, higher-attaining pupils, in particular, captured the mood and feeling of the music and achieved good levels of performance. In mime, they show a good variety of appropriate body movements and facial expressions such as when the picture called the Market Place by Lowry inspired them. Higher attaining pupils show good body control and quality movements. Pupils learning to speak English as an additional language are actively involved in the lessons and improve considerably their speaking and listening skills when engaged in small group work. Pupils with known behavioural problems responded well showing imaginative movements, although one or two did on occasions become over-excited; they were managed well by the teacher.

145. In Year 2, pupils show increasing control when catching and passing a ball. They can discuss in a mature manner how to improve their technique, for instance, when they were seen performing a chest and bounce pass. In one lesson, higher-attaining pupils improved the accuracy of their passing and were challenged by repeating the activity when using small balls. In the same lesson, lower-attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties made good progress in improving throwing skills using large balls. Pupils with physical disabilities also make good progress because they receive very good support from the teacher.
146. The quality of teaching and learning is good; it is often very good in dance lessons. Teachers have good knowledge of teaching dance, gymnastics and games; this helps them observe and analyse movements and give good advice to pupils on how to improve. Lessons have a clear focus, and the skills to be learned are demonstrated well. Teachers give clear instructions and check carefully whether pupils understand the tasks set, and the pupils respond with enthusiasm. Work in lessons proceeds at a good pace and pupils are expected to improve such as in Year 6 dance lessons in which progress was very good. In this lesson, very good use was made of photographs, pictures by a famous artist and recorded music to stimulate the pupils' imagination. Pupils listen carefully and follow the teachers' guidance about working safely. Teachers encourage the pupils to speak clearly and use appropriate words when commenting on the performance of others. This they do with increasing confidence. Consequently, the ethos for learning is good and pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the subject are very good. In less effective lessons, too much time is given to setting out apparatus because the class routines are not firmly established; each stage of the lesson is adversely affected by too much teacher talk and over guidance consequently, the pupils are not engaged sufficiently in vigorous physical exercise.
147. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The coordinator has good subject knowledge and uses time appropriately to monitor the planning of teaching, which is good. She has appropriate opportunities to assess the quality of pupils' learning and to share effective practice with colleagues. The school's policy and scheme of work give good guidance on teachers' planning and the development of knowledge and skills; it is being revised to meet developments in the subject. The physical education programme is well balanced over a year. Good use is made of sports coaching staff to support activities. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to participate in competitive sport and extra-curricular clubs. Resources for learning are good and used well to promote learning.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

148. The attainment of pupils in the infants and juniors is in line with the levels expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus; this is similar to the findings reported at the last inspection. Pupils make satisfactory progress including pupils with learning difficulties and those for who speak English as an additional language. However, the quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection when it was judged to be good; it is now satisfactory.
149. In Year 2, pupils know that the Christian faith has important writings incorporated into the Bible and special symbols such as the cross, and clothes that play a significant part in various festivals and celebrations. They also know about special events that happen such as baptism and weddings and are beginning to learn about special events forming part of other faiths. During lessons observed in Year 1, pupils showed with enthusiasm the clothes they wear to the mosque and the teachers had brought a bridesmaid dress. In the class discussions that followed, the similarities and differences between the Christian and Moslem special clothes were identified. The pupils' use of specific religious vocabulary was good. In Year 6, pupils know and appreciate beliefs such as Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam. Their knowledge and understanding is strongest in Christianity. In the Year 4 classes, there were good links with English when the class studied uses of imagery and linked this to religious symbols, events and sayings. In one good lesson about Buddhism, the teacher asked the pupils to consider what it meant to be in the presence of a Supreme Being. Much class discussion followed with all pupils being thoroughly involved.
150. Overall, pupils develop a satisfactory appreciation of the central beliefs and traditions of various major world faiths. They recognise the significance of religious faith in the lives of individuals and groups, and develop an appreciation of the significance of signs and symbols. Pupils demonstrate satisfactory general knowledge about different places of worship, holy books, festivals and celebrations. However, few pupils have in-depth knowledge and understanding of faiths other than their own. During assemblies, time is given for quiet reflection. There are satisfactory links with pupils' personal and social development such as in class discussions. Pupils' knowledge of the use and function of prayer contributes to their spiritual development. There are satisfactory links with other

subjects such as English, art and design and music. There was little evidence that computers are used extensively to support this subject.

151. Pupils' attitudes to learning are satisfactory and better when teaching is good. When given the opportunity they enjoy class discussions. However, group discussions were rarely observed and therefore opportunities were missed for every pupil to extend their thinking and speaking skills.
152. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to good. Teachers' knowledge of the subject is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers ensure pupils understand the learning intention, have high expectations of behaviour and pupils' work. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher's expectations were not high enough and pupils' behaviour gradually deteriorated until it disrupted other pupils in the class.
153. The co-ordinator, who has been in post for two terms, has already made a considerable contribution to the leadership and management of the subject. She has observed the quality of teaching and learning in several year groups and given appropriate advice to the teachers. Scrutiny of pupils' work has taken place in Years 2, 4 and 6 to monitor standards and identify areas for improvement. The school follows an appropriate published scheme of work together with the locally agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was no scheme of work to support teachers' planning. New resources have been purchased and there are now sufficient artefacts and materials to support learning. The co-ordinator has liaised with the local community to arrange visits and visitors such as the vicar from the local church and iman from the mosque. Some teachers lack confidence in handling religious artefacts so arrangements have been made for the local authority advisor to visit the school and give a demonstration lesson on their use. Assessment procedures are in the process of being improved.