

INSPECTION REPORT

BEARBROOK COMBINED SCHOOL

Aylesbury

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110318

Acting Headteacher: Mrs M Houghton

Reporting inspector: David Westall
2414

Dates of inspection: 31 March – 3 April 2003

Inspection number: 246981

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Fowler Road
Aylesbury
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Postcode: HP19 7QP

Telephone number: 01296 488331

Fax number: 01296 337432

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs E Young

Date of previous inspection: February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2414	David Westall	Registered inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1333	Elizabeth Forster	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
19302	Chris Perrett	Team inspector	Music Physical education Religious education	
3349	Jacqui Ikin	Team inspector	English Foundation Stage English as an additional language	
22840	Sarah Foulkes	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
30618	Paul Story	Team inspector	Information and communication technology History	Attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

There are 369 pupils on roll, aged between four and 11 years. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly in line with the national average, as is the percentage identified as having special educational needs. Three pupils have statements of special educational need, and 68 pupils speak English as an additional language. On entry to the school, there is a broad spread in children's achievements but they are mainly a little below average. At the time of the inspection, the acting headteacher had been in post for less than a term.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, this is a satisfactory school. However, there is considerable scope for improvement, particularly to ensure that leadership and management provide the school with a clear sense of direction, based on more rigorous self-evaluation procedures. This is appropriately recognised by the school, and means it is well placed to move forward under the leadership of the new headteacher who was appointed just after the inspection. There are important strengths in the school's provision for pupils' personal development, and these result in the good attitudes, relationships and behaviour which are apparent. In addition, the school caters well for pupils with special educational needs, and is a caring community. Pupils' progress in learning is satisfactory in most subjects and they achieve well in art and design and design and technology. However, elements of children's progress in reception need to improve, there are obvious weaknesses in pupils' learning in Year 1 and pupils do not achieve as well as they should in a minority of subjects. On balance, the school's strengths and sound features outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve above average standards in art and design and in design and technology.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning, and their behaviour is good.
- Good provision is made for pupils' social and moral development.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and staff, are good.
- Pupils have the opportunity to benefit from a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school is a caring community, where pupils' welfare is a high priority.
- Parents hold the school in high regard.

What could be improved

- Procedures need to be developed to identify, monitor and evaluate key priorities for school improvement so that a clear sense of direction and shared understanding are established.
- Pupils make insufficient progress in Year 1.
- Pupils' achievement needs to improve in writing, information and communication technology (ICT) and geography.
- In the reception classes, children need more opportunities to learn through well-focused play activities.
- Better use should be made of assessment information to improve standards.
- Provision for equal opportunities should be improved by ensuring that: pupils with English as an additional language receive the support they need; the highest attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged so they make better progress; and that pupils do not miss important elements of their learning when they are withdrawn from lessons for group work or individual support.
- Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use initiative and to develop decision making

skills in lessons.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made insufficient progress in Year 2 since its last inspection, in 1998. Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science needed to improve in 1998, and this is still the case, largely due to pupils' slow progress in Year 1. Curriculum monitoring, including by subject co-ordinators, continues to be a weakness and rigorous procedures are still not securely established to provide the school with a clear view about how to improve. There has been some useful progress however. The governing body has increased its involvement in the school and is now more effective. Assessment procedures have been improved, although the school has yet to make sufficient use of the information these procedures now provide.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	C	E	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	B	D	C	C	
science	A	A	C	C	

The table shows the results of the statutory tests in Year 6 in 2002 were in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science, and also matched the average results of similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that current standards are broadly average in mathematics and science, and represent sound achievement, given pupils' starting points at the school. In reading, current standards in Year 6 are average but standards in writing are below average and need to improve.

Standards are average in history and music in Year 6, and are in line with the expectations set by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In physical education, no lessons were seen in Year 6, but standards in Year 5 are average so pupils are on course to meet national expectations in their final year at the school. Standards in art and design and in design and technology are key strengths, and are above average. However, standards in ICT and geography are below average, and need to increase.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, are keen to learn and to do their best.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good, throughout the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form positive relationships with adults and with each other. They work together amicably on shared tasks and respect each other's opinions. They respond well when taking responsibility for routine duties around the school.
Attendance	Attendance is in line with the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

In the reception classes, the teaching is satisfactory, overall, and enables pupils to make sound progress in most aspects of their learning. As a result of the caring atmosphere created by the teachers, children settle quickly and develop positive attitudes. There is a strong emphasis on direct teaching of key skills in literacy and numeracy and, in the most effective lessons, teachers ensure that children's formal learning is supported by practical activities. Overall, however, teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for children to learn through well-planned, structured play activities. This weakness has a negative effect on most elements of children's learning and is particularly marked in their creative development.

When teaching in Years 1 and 2 is considered as a whole, it is just adequate. However, there is a notable contrast in its quality. In Year 1, teachers' expectations are usually too low, tasks are often poorly matched to pupils' learning needs and their overall progress is slow, as a result. In Year 2, the teaching improves considerably, and is often good. Consequently, pupils' progress increases in Year 2 and much, but by no means all, of the lost ground in pupils' learning is made up.

Overall, the teaching of English is satisfactory across the school but there is scope for improvement. While the teaching enables pupils to make sound or better progress in reading, they often need more informed guidance to help them to do better in writing. In mathematics, science, music, physical education and religious education the teaching is generally satisfactory, and pupils consequently make sound overall progress. In art and design and design and technology, the teaching enables pupils to progress well, and this is a strength of the school. However, in ICT and geography teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to achieve as well as they should.

Across the school, lessons are characterised by positive relationships between teachers and pupils and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. Teachers have secure classroom management techniques and high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work habits. Consequently, pupils are keen to learn, listen attentively to their teachers and persevere with their tasks. In the most effective lessons, teachers use skilful questions to probe pupils' understanding and provide well-informed guidance to help pupils to make good progress. Weaker practice is evident when teachers rely too heavily on worksheets to determine pupils' learning, when pupils have insufficient opportunities to make decisions in lessons and when the highest attaining pupils mark time because their work is too easy.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The planned curriculum in the reception classes largely reflects national guidance, with an emphasis on the goals for literacy and numeracy. However, it does not provide children with sufficient opportunities to learn through practical activities which include well-focused, structured play. This weakness has a negative effect on children's learning, and means the reception curriculum is unsatisfactory overall. In Years 1 to 6, all the required subjects are taught and the school's use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy is mainly satisfactory. However, the curriculum for these pupils is unsatisfactory overall because: the statutory Year 2000 National Curriculum requirements have not been fully implemented in some subjects; pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop and use ICT skills; and there is an over-use of teacher directed tasks which give pupils little opportunity to make decisions in their learning. Strengths include the very good range of extra-curricular opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes good provision for these pupils and they progress well, as a result.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Overall, the provision for these pupils is unsatisfactory, and the school should do more to meet their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes sound provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development and good provision for their social and moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a caring community, where pupils' welfare is a high priority. Procedures for assessing pupils' academic attainment and progress are satisfactory but better use should be made of assessment information to raise standards.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher is conscientious and her good interpersonal skills are helping to promote increased teamwork amongst staff. Overall, however, the leadership and management of the school are unsatisfactory. The established procedures for evaluating the school's performance are not sufficiently focused or rigorous, and areas for improvement need to be addressed with greater precision and determination. Insufficient attention has been given to the development of the monitoring roles of co-ordinators, and the school needs a clearer

	sense of direction.
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How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body provides sound support for the school. The governors with particular responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs take a keen interest in the school's work in these important areas, and a range of appropriate committees are established. However, statutory requirements are not met in relation to curriculum provision in geography and history, and because pupils are withdrawn for tuition during collective acts of worship.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The senior management of the school has undertaken a range of sound monitoring procedures including the observation of teaching. However, the information gathered has not been rigorously evaluated or used to make a positive impact on school improvement. Co-ordinators do not have a sufficiently clear understanding about the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	The school budget is analysed carefully and financial planning is appropriately linked to the priorities in the school improvement plan. The principles of best value are satisfactorily applied.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Most parents believe that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • teaching is good and children make good progress; • the school expects children to work hard and to do their best; • the staff are easy to talk to; • the pastoral care is a strength. 	<p>Some parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more homework to be set; • more information on children's progress.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views about the pastoral care for children, the ease of communication with staff and the high expectations for children's work habits. They are a little less favourable in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, which are both mainly satisfactory. A reasonable amount of homework is usually set. Arrangements to keep parents informed about pupils' progress are satisfactory although the school accepts that there is a need to review the arrangements for the frequency and timing of parent consultations.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to reception, children's communication, language and literacy skills are below average. In other aspects of their learning, standards are generally higher but are a little below average, overall. In the reception classes, children make mainly sound progress in their learning. However, there are limited opportunities for them to learn through structured and purposeful play activities, and this restricts their achievement. This is particularly marked in their creative development, where their achievement is unsatisfactory.
2. On entry to Year 1, pupils' standards in English are below average, while standards in mathematics and science are a little below average. The results of the standard assessments tests (SATs) in Year 2 in 2002 were well below the national average and the average results of similar schools in reading. In writing, the results were well below the national average and were below the results of similar schools. A similar pattern was evident in the mathematics results in Year 2 and in the statutory teacher assessments in science, which were both well below the national average.
3. In English, mathematics and science, inspection findings show that pupils do not achieve as well as they should in Year 1 due to weaknesses in the teaching. However, their progress accelerates in Year 2 so that most reach the expected level for their age by the end of the year. However, it is not possible to make up for all the lost ground from Year 1, and overall standards in English, mathematics and science are below average in Year 2, as a consequence.
4. The results of the SATs in Year 6 in 2002 were in line with the national average and the average results of similar schools in English, mathematics and science. Inspection findings broadly reflect these results, and show that current standards in Year 6 are average in mathematics, science and in reading. In these important elements of their learning, pupils' progress is considerably more consistent than across Years 1 and 2, and the standards achieved represent sound overall achievement. However, standards in writing are below average in Year 6, due to inconsistencies and weaknesses in aspects of the teaching of writing skills.
5. In reading, most pupils in Years 1 and 2 read simple texts accurately and are beginning to use their knowledge of phonics to decode new words. However, too many pupils achieve at the lower levels because they do not have a sufficiently wide range of strategies for reading more complex words and do not fully grasp the meaning of the text. By the time they reach Year 6, however, most can read a wide range of books confidently, can justify their choices of reading matter and demonstrate sound standards for their age. Standards in writing are below average in Years 2 and 6 because pupils often lack the skills to structure their work appropriately, or to use suitably complex sentences, adjectives and adverbs to make their writing more interesting. The lack of opportunity for pupils to write at length, and the over-use of inappropriate worksheets, also restricts pupils' achievement.
6. In mathematics, Year 6 pupils have sound numeracy skills, show a satisfactory understanding of shape, space and measures, and demonstrate average standards when handling data. In science, Year 6 pupils have sound knowledge and can follow their teachers' instructions to conduct systematic investigations. In both subjects,

however, pupils' skills in problem solving and investigation are restricted because they have too few opportunities to generate and try out their own ideas to arrive at their own conclusions.

7. Pupils' standards are average in Years 2 and 6 in history and music, and are in line with the expectations set by the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In physical education, standards are average in Year 2. No physical education lessons were seen in Year 6 but standards in Year 5 are average so pupils are on course to meet national expectations in their final year at the school. In all these subjects, pupils' progress is mainly sound.
8. In art and design and in design and technology, pupils achieve well and these subjects are strengths in the school. In art and design, standards are a little above expectations in Year 2 and are clearly above average in Year 6. For example, the carnival masks and wire and plaster sculptures created by Year 6 pupils represent good achievement. In design and technology, standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. Cushions, designed and made by Year 6 pupils, demonstrate a range of good making skills, and these pupils also achieve well when creating products using a vacuum former, helped by a visiting teacher from the nearby technology college.
9. In ICT and in geography, pupils do not achieve as well as they should, and standards are below average in Years 2 and 6. In ICT, pupils' progress is too slow because they have insufficient opportunities to learn and consolidate their skills, and to apply them to support their learning in other subjects. When pupils do have the chance to use the computers they often make good progress, frequently extending the tasks by using techniques they have learned on computers at home. In geography, pupils' progress is too slow because key study units are not taught or are misinterpreted by teachers.
10. In the reception classes, no pupils have been identified as having special educational needs. However, the teaching enables the less advanced learners to make satisfactory progress, overall, in these classes. In the older classes, pupils with special educational needs generally progress well in relation to their starting points, as a result of the effective support they receive. The progress of pupils with English as an additional language is more spasmodic and is unsatisfactory overall because the school makes insufficient provision for their needs. The achievements of the higher attaining pupils are also a weakness because tasks often lack the challenge these pupils require. Across the school, pupils' achievements are often inhibited by the lack of opportunities for them to develop their decision making skills and to use their initiative.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Overall, pupils' attitudes to the school and learning are good and the positive picture found by the last inspection has been maintained. Pupils quickly settle into the reception class. The rapid establishment of good routines means they develop positive attitudes to their work and an ability to concentrate on the task in hand. They are helped by the teaching to develop a sense of achievement and to enjoy learning. They listen carefully to instructions, learn to maintain concentration and persevere with tasks.
12. As pupils progress through the school, these good attitudes remain with them. Good relationships mean that pupils and adults work well together in a climate of mutual trust and respect. Visitors cannot fail to note the calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons and around the school. In most lessons, the teaching stimulates pupils'

interest well and they are eager to learn. They are keen to contribute and there is no shortage of responses to teachers' questions. For example, pupils in Year 2 were quick to offer suggestions and ideas as artefacts were taken out of an evidence box during a history lesson. In assemblies, all join in singing hymns and songs and are ready to contribute when asked.

13. Pupils with special educational needs generally have the same attitudes and values as their peers. The relationships between support assistants and the pupils are very positive, and this helps to raise the self-esteem of insecure pupils and give them the confidence to try. These good relationships reflect the caring ethos of the school, where every child is valued. Boys and girls work well together in lessons and mix freely at play. Pupils are happy to accept others, regardless of ability, ethnic background or personal circumstances and instances of racist behaviour or name-calling are rare.
14. Behaviour in lessons, assemblies and around the school is good, even when pupils are not directly supervised. Pupils listen to their teachers, respond well to the school's behaviour policy and follow the class rules they have helped to formulate. On the rare occasions that inattention occurs or concentration wanders, this is quickly and suitably corrected and does not interfere with pupils' learning. Pupils are clear about the standards of behaviour that are expected and this is reinforced through assemblies, class rules and sessions of circle time or personal, social and health education (PSHE). There has been one exclusion during the last academic year. No signs of bullying or aggressive behaviour were seen during the inspection. In discussion, pupils report that arguments are quickly resolved and are clear that if there is a problem they would go to an adult and that it would be dealt with. They appreciate the opportunities provided by circle time for promoting tolerance and harmony. Parents' views closely echo inspection findings, with almost all having a positive view of pupils' behaviour.
15. The good relationships that exist throughout the school are having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning, making them feel valued, secure and well supported. Pupils listen well to one another and to what others have to say. They are encouraged to look after each other and respect others' views and beliefs, which they do with increasing sensitivity as they become older. They are polite and courteous to staff, visitors and each other. Pupils are aware of the effects of their actions and considerate of others' feelings. They appreciate the opportunity to contribute ideas for improvement offered by the School Council. A strong programme of PSHE plays an important part in developing pupils' confidence and self-esteem.
16. From an early age, pupils are encouraged to have a responsible attitude towards their own and others' property. Older pupils set out equipment and materials for lessons, act as corridor monitors and prepare the hall for assembly. They take these monitoring roles very seriously, providing good role models for the younger pupils. Pupils are actively involved in fund raising for the school and support a wide range of charities. They sometimes work collaboratively on tasks without direct support, for example, in numeracy and literacy sessions. Although often encouraged to work independently, opportunities for them to develop decision making skills and take responsibility for their own learning are not so frequent.
17. Levels of attendance at the school are satisfactory, being similar to that found nationally. There are low levels of unauthorised absence and parents, who take their children on extended holidays to see relatives abroad, generally plan to minimise their absence by visits around school holidays. Registration procedures fully meet

statutory requirements and registration sessions are well used to ensure a calm start to morning and afternoon lessons. Nearly all pupils arrive in good time for the prompt start of school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 19 out of every 20 lessons seen during the inspection. Good teaching was evident in towards half of all lessons and included sessions taught by visiting teachers, such as physical education tutors. Overall, the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in their learning and there are strengths in art and design, design and technology and in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. However, evidence clearly shows the teaching in Year 1 needs to be more effective and that teachers of reception children should provide better opportunities for children to learn through structured play. In addition, teachers need to provide more challenging tasks for the higher attaining pupils in their classes, sometimes take too little account of the particular requirements of pupils with English as an additional language, and need to ensure pupils make better progress in writing, ICT and geography.
19. In the reception classes, the teaching is satisfactory, overall, and enables children to make a sound start at the school. As a result of the caring atmosphere created by the teachers, children settle quickly into well-established routines and develop positive attitudes to learning. There is a strong emphasis on the direct teaching of key skills in literacy and numeracy and, in the most effective lessons, teachers ensure that children have ample opportunities for practical activities to support their learning and ask skilful questions to draw on children's ideas. However, opportunities for children to learn through well-focused, structured play activities are too few and this inhibits their learning. Often these activities are not adequately planned, are poorly resourced and take place at the periphery of teachers' attention. This weakness has a negative effect on most elements of children's learning but is particularly marked in their creative development which is unsatisfactory, as a consequence.
20. In English, mathematics and science, an examination of pupils' completed work, together with lesson observations, shows the teaching has important weaknesses across Year 1 and results in pupils making slow progress. Expectations for pupils' potential achievement are too low in Year 1: too many tasks have limited value and are poorly matched to their learning needs. During the inspection, the teaching in Year 1 was notably enhanced by the effective work of a supply teacher who was temporarily covering teacher absence in one of the two Year 1 classes. However, it is clear that the good progress pupils made in her lessons was not characteristic of their usual achievement across the year. In all of the above subjects, improved teaching enables pupils to increase their progress in Year 2 and much, but by no means all, of the lost ground is made up.
21. Across the school, teaching in English is satisfactory but its overall quality is too variable. It enables pupils to make sound or better progress in reading but should be more consistently effective in promoting pupils' writing skills. In the best practice, teachers ensure that pupils have clear guidance about the structure and organisation of different types of writing. However, in some classes there is: an overuse of worksheets which do little to promote pupils' skills; insufficient use of well-judged questions to help pupils to analyse and evaluate writing; and a lack of pertinent advice to enable pupils to structure their work effectively.

22. In mathematics and science, the teaching is satisfactory, overall, and enables most pupils to make sound progress in these important subjects. The weaknesses already identified in Year 1 are balanced by mainly satisfactory and sometimes good teaching in the older classes. However, in mathematics, teachers focus too much on exercises from commercial schemes and on tasks which give pupils little opportunity for problem solving. In science, a similar situation exists since, although teachers give pupils experience of conducting experiments, they rarely have the chance to generate their own hypotheses, and to conduct their own simple experiments to test their ideas. In both subjects, the quality of teaching is not sufficiently consistent, and ranges from good to unsatisfactory. While the most significant area for improvement is in Year 1, the lack of co-operative planning between the two Year 6 teachers, who teach parallel mixed ability pupils, also contributes to variability in pupils' progress.
23. In music, physical education and religious education, the teaching is satisfactory and enables pupils to make sound progress in their learning. In art and design and in design and technology, insufficient lessons were observed to make judgements about the quality of teaching. However, a careful analysis of pupils' completed work, together with the few lessons which were seen, provides secure evidence that the teaching enables pupils to make good progress in both subjects. In history, the teaching is satisfactory and pupils make steady progress, although weaknesses in teachers' planning means they do not experience the full range of learning opportunities specified by the National Curriculum. In geography, weaknesses in planning are more serious and mean that pupils' overall progress in the subject is unsatisfactory. In ICT, too few lessons were seen to judge the quality of teaching but evidence from pupils' work shows that teachers are not providing enough opportunities for them to develop and use their skills in the subject. As a result, pupils' progress is too slow in ICT.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enter school with a wide variety of needs that are identified early in their school careers. Class teachers identify pupils with causes for concern, and these pupils are then screened by the special needs teacher to identify their specific difficulties. All pupils have individual action plans containing targets for development to address these needs. The support given in lessons is at least sound, and pupils in Years 3 to 6, in particular, benefit from good teaching when they are withdrawn for individual support. In these sessions, work is carefully planned for these pupils to meet specific targets and their progress is rigorously monitored. The support assistants know their pupils well, and use a variety of appropriate, interesting methods to enhance the pupils' learning. They are well trained to support a range of needs, and the co-ordinator gives effective help to a few pupils who have behavioural targets, through a programme of anger management and social skills training. There is good liaison between the teachers, learning support assistants, and the special educational needs co-ordinator, to ensure that work is set at an appropriate level. It is clear, therefore, that pupils with special educational needs generally achieve well when withdrawn from classes for additional support. However, teachers do not always ensure that those pupils do not miss important parts of their education when they are withdrawn. For example, pupils should not miss collective acts of worship, or, as seen during the inspection, be withdrawn during the middle of a whole class circle time which was specifically designed to foster self-esteem and class cohesion.
25. Overall, teachers are making insufficient provision for pupils with English as an additional language. There are limited opportunities for supported speaking and listening, and insufficient differences between the way that these pupils and pupils with special educational needs are taught. The highest attaining pupils should also

make better progress, and their achievement is often inhibited by tasks which provide them with too little challenge. This is particularly evident in the achievements of these pupils in writing, mathematics and science.

26. Across the school, lessons are characterised by positive relationships between teachers and pupils, and an orderly atmosphere in lessons. Teachers' expectations and instructions are clear, and the learning intentions of lessons are appropriately identified in their planning and are usually shared with the pupils. Teachers have secure classroom management techniques and high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work habits. As a consequence, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to learning, listen attentively to their teachers and persevere with their tasks. Skilful questioning which probes pupils' understanding is evident in the best teaching, and pupils benefit from well-focused, informed guidance in these lessons. Weaker practice is evident when teachers rely too heavily on worksheets to determine their teaching, when pupils have few opportunities to make decisions in their learning, and when tasks are not well matched to their needs.

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

27. The planned curriculum in the reception classes largely reflects the areas that have been identified for learning in the national guidance for this age group, with an emphasis on the goals for literacy and numeracy. However, there is insufficient use of the rich and stimulating experiences that young children need to develop learning through exploration, experimentation and making decisions for themselves. When the school was last inspected, the curriculum for reception children was satisfactory overall. However, there were weaknesses resulting from the prescribed nature of many of the tasks which gave children little opportunity to make choices and develop independence as learners. Similar weaknesses still exist.
28. At the time of the last inspection, the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 was found to be broad and generally well balanced. This is no longer the case. Curriculum provision for these pupils is currently unsatisfactory because the Year 2000 statutory National Curriculum requirements have not been fully implemented in all subjects.
29. In ICT, for example, pupils have insufficient opportunities to develop, consolidate and use their technology skills, and to apply them across the curriculum. In geography, provision is unsatisfactory because key study units are not taught or are misinterpreted, and pupils have limited opportunities to develop the practical skills of geographical enquiry through fieldwork. The history curriculum is imbalanced due to a lack of overall guidance for the subject. This means that some study units are addressed superficially, including the required local study. The school's strategies for teaching numeracy and literacy skills are mainly satisfactory, although pupils' writing skills need to be promoted more effectively. Provision for science, religious education, music and physical education is satisfactory, and for art and design and design and technology it is good.
30. Another key weakness of the curriculum is the overuse of teacher directed tasks, photocopied worksheets and commercial schemes. This means that provision for the key skills of learning is underdeveloped with few opportunities for pupils to initiate work of their own or to make choices and decisions. Overall, therefore, weaknesses in curriculum provision are having a negative impact on standards. A long-term overview of the curriculum is urgently needed to ensure that all subjects receive the appropriate amount of attention and are taught in all year groups. Clear expectations for each

subject also need to be established and monitored. This will help to ensure that pupils not only gain knowledge and understanding but are also able to use and apply their skills in meaningful investigations and research of their own.

31. There is provision for sex education and for combating drugs abuse, taught through the school's effective programme for PSHE. Extra-curricular provision is very good and is a strength of the school. There is a wide range of lunchtime and after-school activities which are well supported. All pupils have access to these, to the Breakfast Club and to free music tuition. Unsurprisingly, parents are very complimentary about this provision. The school also enriches the curriculum with a sound range of visitors and visits to places of interest. This includes a biannual residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6; and a shorter residential visit to an environmental centre for pupils in Years 3 and 4.
32. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The Code of Practice is fully implemented, and pupils with special educational needs have access to the same curriculum as their peers. All pupils on the special needs register have individual education plans to address their individual needs, and progress towards these targets is closely monitored. However, the timetabling of additional support causes pupils with special educational needs to miss acts of collective worship regularly and to sometimes miss other important elements of their learning. This means that statutory requirements for these pupils are not met. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language has diminished since the last inspection when the school employed two bilingual support assistants. Opportunities for these pupils to benefit from supported speaking and listening are too few, there is a lack of culturally relevant visual aids and other resources to aid their learning, and pupils' first language is not used effectively to help them to learn English. The school includes some promotion of the diversity of society but does not specifically promote the richness of the culture of a significant proportion of its pupils.
33. The school makes satisfactory use of the community to enrich the curriculum. Pupils make occasional visits to facilities in the town, such as the church or mosque, but there are no established links with their leaders to visit the school to contribute to assemblies or religious education. However, good use is made of the expertise of the local services such as the police, fire service and the school nurse in the programme for PSHE. Pupils are encouraged to think about others less fortunate than themselves through charity fund-raising activities and occasionally initiate suggestions for supporting good causes. The school has few business links but takes every opportunity to promote the school in the local press through positive publicity about events and successes.
34. Pupils benefit from a good range of links with other schools, which provides considerable enrichment to their learning as well as opportunities for staff to see examples of specialist knowledge put into practice. Teachers from local grammar schools regularly take lessons in dance and science, and pupils benefit from tuition from college students in their football sessions. Pupils regularly mix with others in sporting fixtures.
35. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. Overall provision for this is good and the school has done well to maintain this position since the last inspection. It is particularly strong in both social and moral development and reflects the school's emphasis on the importance of an ordered and caring community.

36. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Daily assemblies for classes or the whole school provide pupils with moments for prayer or quiet reflection. Pupils enjoy singing the hymns and songs that accompany these, and stories are well chosen to illustrate issues relevant to their lives such as friendship and honesty. Personal and social education provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own feelings and emotions. They have opportunities to consider others' emotions in subjects such as history and literacy, to wonder at the beauty of their world in science, or to reflect on their own or others' artistic work. Opportunities for wonder often occur spontaneously, for example, when children under five are making large bubbles. Ceremonies, such as marriage, are explored in different faiths and pupils are encouraged to consider what it means to be a member of a major world faith. However, opportunities are not systematically planned and there is no over-arching policy to promote pupils' spiritual development.
37. Provision for moral development is good and reflects the school's aims and values. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong as a direct result of the effective guidance provided. Staff are good role models through the care they show for their pupils. Pupils respond well to the expectations of adults and this is promoted through the positive and systematic use of rewards and the emphasis on restorative justice. Personal and social education provides good opportunities to consider why rules are necessary and this is well reinforced through pupils' annual participation in devising and agreeing the rules for their class. In religious education, pupils look at the rules of the major faiths, and stories with moral aspects in assemblies reinforce the importance of establishing codes of conduct. Pupils show respect for the views and beliefs of others in discussions and when responding to questions. Older pupils, including those with specific responsibilities, show integrity in dealing with other pupils, particularly younger ones. They care for their environment and have clear ideas about how it might be improved, as well as working to keep the grounds and school tidy.
38. Provision for social development is also good and is central to the school's aims of creating 'a sense of self respect, individual worth and an ability to work together'. The success of this can be seen in the way in which even younger pupils work together in pairs or small groups often without direct supervision. Older pupils will often include the younger ones in games, and pupils generally care for one another showing concern over injury, illness or upset. Pupils are given opportunities to develop personal initiative as they readily set out or clear away equipment and materials in lessons, return registers or undertake other tasks. Older pupils conscientiously complete monitoring roles by preparing the hall for assembly, managing pupils in the corridors or carrying messages. Visits to places of educational interest, after-school clubs and whole school productions provide good opportunities for pupils to socialise and work together. Older pupils have the valuable opportunity of a residential visit to broaden their experience away from home. The School Council provides pupils in Years 3 to 6 with good opportunities to take responsibility within the school community, a good example of this being their creation and management of the toy library. Pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of their responsibilities in the wider world through a wide range of charitable events. However, opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to develop decision making skills in lessons are too few.
39. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils have sound opportunities, for example, to explore the national culture in the course of English, music and history. Pupils' understanding of their immediate locality and the national culture is extended through visits to museums and historic venues. Opportunities also exist for pupils to develop an understanding of other cultural traditions or beliefs, for example pupils in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class learned about marriage ceremonies in

the Christian, Hindu and Muslim faiths. Although the school makes some use of opportunities as they occur to prepare pupils for life in multicultural society, it could do more to develop pupils' awareness of the richness and diversity of other cultures through its planned curriculum. Multicultural resources are very limited and this aspect does not enjoy a high profile in displays and notices around the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. Bearbrook provides good pastoral care for its pupils. It is a caring community where teachers and support staff know the pupils well. Adults are good role models in their relationships with pupils and treat them with respect, encouraging them and nurturing their self-esteem. Support staff, including lunchtime supervisors and office staff, are sensitive and caring in their roles. Each child is valued and pupils consequently develop confident attitudes to school and positive relationships with each other. The school makes good use of specialist support for pupils with special educational needs and all pupils benefit from regular medical and dental checks, as well as good support from the school nurse.
41. Arrangements for child protection are well established and all adults in the school have recently had training in awareness and procedures. Care is taken to ensure that all adults who might come into contact with pupils on the school site before or after school or on visits are properly vetted. Teachers and support staff are well briefed to ensure that pupils are collected from school only by known adults and they are aware of any parental access orders. Before and after-school clubs have recently been established to provide care for pupils whose parents may have work commitments, and these are rapidly growing in popularity.
42. The school makes good provision for PSHE; the comprehensive programme is carefully planned and includes appropriate drugs and sex education. There are also regular opportunities for pupils to discuss aspects relating to their personal development and feelings. These help them to articulate any worries and learn about the views and feelings of others. Pupils have planned opportunities to learn about personal safety, including talks on the fire and rail safety. The recent county initiative promoting safe routes to school, and the contribution of the crossing patrol person in projects about keeping safe, ensures that pupils have regular reminders about the importance of road safety.
43. The school provides effective support for pupils with special educational needs. Statements are reviewed annually, and parents and outside agencies are fully involved. Individual targets that are set by the co-ordinator are appropriate, progress towards these targets is monitored and reviewed regularly, and new targets set. However, the support provided for pupils with English as an additional language has reduced since the last inspection, and needs to improve.
44. Arrangements for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are good: the computerised registration system is well used to check on absence or lateness and concerns are appropriately followed up with parents. Pupils are keen that their class should win the teddy bear for best attendance that is awarded each week. There are satisfactory arrangements for induction, with parents and their children who are starting at school being invited to visit and meet the teachers before they join the reception class. Pupils who might find the transition to secondary school difficult are identified, and an agreed plan to support them is arranged in liaison with their new school. This is good practice.

45. The school is successful in promoting high standards of behaviour and a sense of pride in the school. This achievement is helped by the sensitive support provided for pupils who may have difficult home circumstances or who find it more difficult to meet normal expectations. For example, provision is made for pupils to have counselling from the school nurse, and for anger management programmes. This support helps pupils feel that their needs are taken into account and gives them a sense of trust that the school has their best interests at heart. Consequently, school is seen as a safe and caring environment where pupils can build up positive relationships and high self-esteem. All pupils have a clear understanding of the school rules and what is expected of them, and they are encouraged to develop good manners, to be courteous and to consider others in their actions. The behaviour policy is consistently implemented across the school and pupils' acts of kindness or helpfulness are recognised and celebrated at weekly assemblies. Pupils are confident that any concerns or worries shared with adults will be listened to and acted on. Consequently, the occasional incidents of bullying or racist name-calling that do occur are dealt with quickly and sensitively.
46. The school has well-established procedures for accidents, emergencies and medicines, and maintains good supporting documentation. Appropriate arrangements are made to meet the needs of pupils who require support for medical or physical conditions during the school day, and staff are scrupulous in keeping parents informed of any accidental injuries, particularly head bumps, that have occurred at school. The health and safety policy is implemented through regular inspections by the site manager and governors, and pupils are reminded of the importance of safe practice in lessons such as physical education. The recent risk assessment of fire safety in the school has highlighted the need for proper signage and this is shortly to be addressed.
47. Overall procedures for assessment are satisfactory and improvements have been made since the last inspection. However, some aspects still need to be developed further so that key teaching and learning priorities can be targeted for school improvement.
48. The last inspection report identified that the assessment policy was out of date and needed improvement, and this has been achieved through the hard work of the assessment co-ordinator. There is now a good policy document that provides clear and comprehensive information on all aspects of the assessment, recording and reporting process, including the use of targets. Evidence shows that the policy is being implemented and is improving assessment practice. Pupils have individual English and mathematics targets in their books, and their progress is tracked through termly teacher assessments recorded on tracking sheets. However, the information gained from tracking individual pupils' progress has not been evaluated with sufficient rigour or used to address inconsistencies in attainment in parts of the school. A more detailed analysis will aid the identification of particular pupils or groups of pupils who have made sound or better progress and those who have made little or no progress. This will assist the targeting of intervention to improve both teaching and learning.
49. Pupils' individual performance in national tests and their reading and spelling ages are recorded annually, and there has been an annual analysis of pupils' individual responses in the national tests at age 11. However, there has not been a detailed analysis of test papers and work from all age groups. This makes it difficult for senior managers and co-ordinators to identify whole school issues. For example, a detailed evaluation of all national test papers will help to identify specific areas for development in English, mathematics and science.

50. A school portfolio of examples of work is being compiled, and has involved all teachers in agreeing the standard of pupils' work in seven subjects. Reading records and records of pupils' personal development are also maintained, and each pupil has a record of achievement linked to the school's reward system. A comprehensive list enables information on pupils' achievements to be passed from class to class as pupils move through the school, and helps teachers to plan their work accordingly. On-going assessment information is used best to guide and adapt planning in English and mathematics, and targets are set for individual pupils. However, it is not systematic enough to provide sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils, and work in other subjects is often the same for all pupils. The last inspection report noted that marking was variable and this is still the case. There are examples of good marking, particularly in Years 2 and 6, and many teachers provide positive feedback to pupils. However, there are limited examples of guidance to pupils on what they need to do next to improve. There is a marking policy but this needs to be revised as it still makes reference to outdated practices.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Bearbrook is a school which is valued by parents. They welcome the school's open approach and find the staff easy to talk to. They praise the school for the pastoral care provided by dedicated teachers and support staff. Documentation about the school is clear and friendly and gives a sound indication of what its beliefs and expectations are. There is some information about the curriculum in the prospectus and this is supplemented at the beginning of each year with more specific details about what is to be taught in each year group. However, there is scope to increase the information to help parents support their children at home, for example, about how best to hear children read or encourage mathematical activities. The school accepts that further workshops for parents on the numeracy and literacy strategies would be timely. Parents enjoy the opportunity to see class assemblies and work on display on the annual open day. Monthly newsletters from the school and occasional ones from the Parents' Association keep everyone up to date with activities and events.
52. Some parents feel that they are not kept well informed about the progress of their children. Inspection findings show that there is some basis for this view, since there is only one formal consultation in the year, during the spring term. If any concerns arise in autumn, a meeting between the class teacher and parents is arranged, but the school recognises it needs to review the current arrangements to ensure all parents feel sufficiently informed during this term. Annual school reports in the summer term give sound indications of attainment and progress and targets for improvement. For pupils with special educational needs parents are involved at all stages of the Code of Practice, and informed as soon as concerns arise. They are invited to attend reviews, and there is a good partnership between the parents and class teachers, and parents and the co-ordinator. Homework expectations are appropriately shared with parents, and inspection findings generally show that the frequency and amount of homework set is satisfactory.
53. Parents are supportive of the school and most help with their children's learning at home. A few parents help regularly in classes and others accompany visits or assist with extra-curricular clubs. However, there is scope to encourage more parental help in school, particularly from the ethnic minority parents who would be prepared to share their knowledge and customs with the pupils. The flourishing Friends Association works hard to organise a variety of fund-raising and social events for the benefit of the school, and the substantial money they raise is well used to buy

additional resources and to subsidise special activities. Parents are also prepared to offer their services to help improve the environment. A small minority of parents do not appear to support their children's academic learning at home, and do not attend meetings to discuss the progress their children are making. This has a negative effect on pupils' standards.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. At the time of the current inspection, the acting headteacher had been in post for less than a term, having previously served as deputy headteacher at the school. Her good interpersonal skills are helping to promote increased teamwork amongst staff and to sustain positive relationships with parents. She is conscientious, has a sound understanding of many of the key areas for development, and is keen to foster a clearer sense of direction in the school.
55. When the school was last inspected, the school benefited from good pastoral leadership but there were weaknesses in the leadership of the curriculum. Systems were not established which provided the school with a clear view of the quality of teaching and the curriculum, and the monitoring roles of co-ordinators were underdeveloped. Consequently, the school was not in a strong position to identify strengths and weaknesses, and to target areas for improvement. Little progress has been made in rectifying these deficiencies, and they still represent important weaknesses in the school. A satisfactory programme of lesson observations has been established over the last year, mainly undertaken by the previous headteacher but sometimes by members of the senior management team. However, the information gathered from these observations, and from the improved procedures for pupil assessment, has not been rigorously evaluated or used to make a positive impact on school improvement. The year 2000 statutory National Curriculum requirements have not been fully implemented, and deficiencies in the curriculum are having a negative impact on standards. A contributory factor to deficiencies in curriculum provision in the school arises from continuing weaknesses in the work of the co-ordinators. Most co-ordinators do not have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and have not developed the necessary skills to monitor, evaluate and lead their subjects forward successfully. They would benefit from well-focused training in these areas, and are keen to develop their roles. However, they also require clearer guidance and stronger support from the senior leadership in the school to emphasise the importance of their work. Occasionally, co-ordinators have identified key areas for development but have not previously received the necessary support from senior management to address these issues effectively.
56. The last inspection found that the senior management team and the governors were insufficiently involved in strategic planning, and there were weaknesses in the school development plan, including the identification of how standards would be improved. The current plan, formulated in 2002, did involve staff and governors more fully, and is a useful management tool. Some pertinent issues are identified, and timescales and costings are appropriately included for initiatives in the current educational year. However, there remains scope for improvement. Deficiencies in the school's evaluation of its performance, beyond the results of statutory tests in Years 2 and 6, mean the school is not well placed to identify weaknesses which need to be addressed. Planning for some initiatives still lacks the required precision to show exactly how and why standards will be raised, and success criteria are not consistently relevant. In addition, planning beyond the current educational year needs to be more rigorous in order to guide the longer-term direction of the school.
57. The governing body has become more active in its support for the school since the last inspection. At that time, the governors were not well enough informed about its work. Committees now meet more regularly and appropriate minutes are kept. The governors have a sound understanding of the results of statutory tests and debate these carefully. Those with particular responsibility for literacy and special educational needs have well established routines for meeting with co-ordinators, and the literacy

governor has observed English teaching. The numeracy governor is new to her role but has already met the co-ordinator and provided the full governing body with a very thorough written report from the meeting. Other governors also visit the school to observe it in operation. The curriculum committee has reviewed relevant policies but would benefit from more information about the school's work from subject co-ordinators. The finance committee meets regularly, and the budget is discussed carefully. Initiatives in the school development plan are properly costed, and the principles of best value are satisfactorily applied. Overall, the governors are providing sound support for the school but sometimes need to ask more challenging questions to hold it to account. For example, a more rigorous check needed to be made about the school's effectiveness in rectifying weaknesses identified in the last inspection report.

58. Statutory requirements are met in relation to the content of governors' reports to parents, in contrast to the situation when the school was last inspected. However, the curriculum provided for geography and history no longer meets requirements, and pupils are withdrawn for tuition during collective acts of worship, which is also unsatisfactory.
59. The school's special needs policy is clear and accessible to parents, and all procedures follow the Code of Practice. The co-ordinator is very experienced and shows strong leadership. The co-ordinator and the support assistants work closely together to ensure they have a good overview of the specific needs of pupils on the special needs register. They liaise frequently with parents, the class teachers and each other. The register is kept up to date, and all paperwork is well ordered. The co-ordinator meets with the special needs governor regularly, and reports to the governing body on the success of the special needs provision within the school. The support assistants are all experienced and well trained, and this has a positive impact on the progress pupils make. Resources for special educational needs are good and well used to support learning.
60. There are sufficient teachers and, collectively, they have the experience and expertise to cover the age and ability range of the pupils. Their knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum is generally secure although some teachers are insufficiently aware of the statutory requirements for geography and history. In addition, there is particular scope to develop teachers' understanding of the key importance of play as a vehicle for children's learning in reception, and about strategies to promote pupils' writing skills across the school. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress, especially pupils who have special educational needs. They also provide valuable guidance for pupils when they use the ICT suite, and pupils who work on art and design and design and technology activities in the art and technology room benefit from particularly well- informed support.
61. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall, and are good in ICT, art and design and in design and technology. However, resources to promote children's learning through play need to be increased in reception, and the number and range of books in the library and resources for geography are barely adequate. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, although the reception classrooms are rather cramped. The outside environment provides sufficient space. However, there is no secure outside play space to support the learning of reception children, and this is unsatisfactory – as it was when the school was last inspected.
62. Overall, this is a satisfactory school. However, there is considerable scope for improvement, particularly to ensure that leadership and management provide the

school with a clear sense of direction, based on more rigorous self-evaluation procedures. This is appropriately recognised by the school, and means it is well placed to move forward under the leadership of the new headteacher who was appointed just after the inspection. There are important strengths in the school's provision for pupils' personal development, and these result in good attitudes, relationships and behaviour. In addition, the school caters well for pupils with special educational needs, and is a caring community. Pupils' progress in learning is satisfactory in most subjects and they achieve well in art and design and design and technology. However, elements of children's progress in reception need to improve, there are obvious weaknesses in pupils' learning in Year 1 and pupils do not achieve as well as they should in a minority of subjects of the National Curriculum. On balance, the school's strengths and sound features outweigh its weaknesses, and it provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

63. In order to improve standards, leadership and management and provision for equal opportunities, the headteacher and governors should include the following activities in the post-OFSTED action plan.
- (1) Develop more rigorous procedures to identify, monitor and evaluate key priorities for school improvement so that a clear sense of direction and shared understanding are established. This will require the monitoring roles of subject co-ordinators to be developed further, for the monitoring evidence gathered by senior management to be evaluated and acted upon more effectively, and for the school improvement plan to target areas for improvement with more precision (see paragraphs 55, 56, 86, 96, 103, 108, 113, 118, 125, 133, 137, 141, 145).
 - (2) Raise standards in Year 1 by monitoring the teaching and learning carefully to ensure tasks are appropriately matched to pupils' learning needs and that their progress improves (see paragraphs 3, 20, 85, 90, 98, 101).
 - (3)
 - (a) Raise standards in writing by ensuring that pupils are taught the skills to structure their work and to use suitably complex sentences, adjectives and adverbs to make their work more interesting. In addition, teachers need to provide more opportunities for pupils to write at reasonable length (see paragraphs 4, 5, 21, 84, 85).
 - (b) Raise standards in ICT by ensuring that pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop and use their skills in the subject (see paragraphs 9, 23, 29, 126, 132).
 - (c) Raise standards in geography by ensuring that the statutory curriculum for the subject is covered, and that pupils are able to develop both their geographical knowledge and enquiry skills through relevant activities (see paragraphs 9, 23, 29, 114, 116, 117).
 - (4) Improve children's progress in the reception classes by providing more opportunities for them to learn through well-focused, structured play activities (see paragraphs 1, 19, 27, 66).
 - (5) Ensure that more effective use is made of assessment information in order to improve teaching and learning and raise standards (see paragraphs 47-49).

- (6) Improve provision for equal opportunities by:
 - (a) ensuring that pupils with English as an additional language are given the support they need (see paragraphs 10, 25, 32, 67, 80, 89, 138);
 - (b) enabling the higher attaining pupils to do better by providing them with sufficiently challenging tasks (see paragraphs 10, 25, 81, 89, 97);
 - (c) making sure that pupils do not miss important elements of their learning when they are withdrawn from class lessons for group work or individual support (see paragraphs 24 and 58).
 - (7) Provide more opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and to develop decision making skills in lessons, including by promoting their problem solving and investigation skills more strongly in mathematics and science (see paragraphs 10, 29, 30, 91, 97).
64. In addition to the key issues above, the governors should also consider the following, less important, issues for inclusion in their action plan.
- (i) Improve the provision for outside play for reception children (see paragraphs 61 and 76).
 - (ii) Ensure that the history curriculum meets the requirements of Curriculum 2000 (see paragraphs 23, 29 and 125).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	92
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	34	41	4	0	0
Percentage	0	6	40	49	5	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)	N/A	369
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	68

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	34	26	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	27	27
	Girls	20	23	20
	Total	43	50	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (83)	83 (85)	78 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	28	27
	Girls	20	23	22
	Total	43	51	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (85)	85 (93)	82 (95)
	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	28	27	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	20	21
	Girls	22	23	25
	Total	41	43	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75 (70)	78 (74)	84 (88)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	20	21
	Girls	19	17	20
	Total	34	37	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (67)	67 (71)	75 (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	231	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	5	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	56	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	9	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	5	0	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)	14.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	28

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	325

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	759,314
Total expenditure	733,841
Expenditure per pupil	2,044
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,829
Balance carried forward to next year	25,473

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	360
Number of questionnaires returned	241

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	2	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	36	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	45	13	2	1
The teaching is good.	61	37	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	45	13	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	33	1	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	51	6	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	55	40	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	46	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	42	4	1	7

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

65. Children are admitted to the school in either the September or January of the year in which they become five. They attend full-time straight away if their fifth birthday falls in the autumn term. Other pupils attend on a part-time basis until the beginning of the term in which they become five, when they are integrated into full-time attendance. Induction arrangements include appropriate opportunities for parents and children to visit the school in the term before starting, and there are useful links with the local pre-school. Most children have attended some form of pre-school provision. There is a wide spread of attainment on entry to the reception class but, overall, it is a little below average.
66. Children make mainly sound progress in the reception classes, where the teaching is generally satisfactory. There is a particular emphasis on the direct teaching of the formal skills of reading and number in the reception classes and this prepares children appropriately for literacy and numeracy in Year 1. As was the case in the last inspection, direct teaching predominates and it is variable in quality. When it is good, the children are involved practically and the teacher skilfully draws on their ideas to develop learning. However, the teaching often gives little scope for children to develop their own ideas. Follow up activities too frequently repeat what children already know and there is an over-use of simplistic worksheets which constrains learning. Provision for play is variable and is unsatisfactory, overall. When it is used well, for example, during a 'social afternoon', well-prepared activities, together with the focused interaction of the teacher and teaching assistant, support the development of the children's imaginative ideas and social and practical skills. However, too many 'play' activities are unplanned, poorly resourced and often take place at the periphery of the teacher's attention. These activities occupy the children but make insufficient contribution to the children's learning because they lack purpose and structure.
67. In reception, there are three children who speak English as an additional language. They do not make enough progress because there are insufficient opportunities for supported speaking and listening, and a lack of high quality, culturally relevant visual aids to help them access learning. The school does not have any bilingual support assistants and there is insufficient use of the children's own language to support the learning of English. There is no record of any child having been identified as having special educational needs. However, teaching assistants give satisfactory support to lower attaining pupils.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. The personal, social and emotional development of most children is below the level expected for their age when they enter the school and remains a little below the level expected by the end of the reception year. As a result of the caring ethos in the reception classes, children gain in confidence and settle quickly into well-established routines. They demonstrate a willingness to learn, and carry out the tasks that are given to them sensibly. Clear expectations of behaviour are established at an early stage and are then consistently reinforced. As a result, children have a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and the consequences of their actions on others. Whole class sessions, in which each child is given a chance to speak, are effective in helping them to understand turn-taking and the basic rules which make for harmonious groups. Most children develop satisfactory relationships

with their classmates and positive relationships with adults as a result of taking part in activities that require them to work alongside others. An effective session was observed where the teacher focused on 'friendship' as part of a whole class session and then provided a series of activities which required the children to work and play collaboratively. She intervened in the play at frequent intervals to encourage the children to share, take turns and remind them to be kind to each other. Where there are weaknesses in provision for pupils' personal and social education, they are due to an over-use of teacher directed tasks and insufficient provision for learning through well-planned and resourced play activities. As a result, children do not develop the skills of informed choice and decision-making to a sufficient extent, nor do they learn to take responsibility for their own learning. There are too few tasks which encourage children to work with each other and for adults to act as supportive models for spoken language. As a result, pupils do not make the progress that they should in developing the language of social interaction, such as using talk for negotiation and to resolve disagreements.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Assessments of children's early literacy skills, made during their first term in the reception classes, show that their performance is generally below the level expected for their age. Children make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points as a result of the strong emphasis that is put on phonics, letter formation, and regular opportunities to read to the teacher or to parents at home. However, standards remain below the level expected for their age by the end of the reception year.
70. Children develop the confidence to pass comments and answer questions as a result of whole class sessions which are directed by the teacher. In the best lessons, children are encouraged to listen to each other, and ask their own questions. For example, a puppet, 'Walter the Whale', was effectively used for this in the course of a literacy lesson. However, more needs to be done to help children extend their vocabulary and expand on what they have to say, and to encourage the children to experiment with words. Opportunities are missed to foster children's use and enjoyment of spoken and written language in the course of their play by the provision of interesting and stimulating activities. As a consequence, pupils do not make sufficient progress in the use of language to imagine and recreate roles and experiences and to organise, sequence and clarify their thinking.
71. Children enjoy sharing stories and poems with their teacher. They show a satisfactory understanding of the elements of a story, follow the events as the plot unfolds when they listen to stories being read aloud, and most can remember the sequence of actions. The higher attaining children are aware of how books work and turn readily to them, and a minority are beginning to read simple stories independently. The majority can link sounds with letters at the beginning and in the middle of words, and this helps them to read simple texts by the end of the reception year. Children gain an understanding that print carries meaning, form most letters correctly and many write their name neatly. Some higher attaining pupils begin to write their own simple sentences. However, most children do not develop a secure understanding that writing can be used to record their personal ideas and to communicate with others because there is an over-reliance on published worksheets. There are insufficient opportunities for children to initiate the use of writing in their play, and for independent and group writing.

Mathematical development

72. Children's mathematical development is a little below the level expected for their age when they enter the school and standards remain a little below average at the end of the reception year. They make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of basic number facts. They say and use the number names in order and count reliably up to ten, and some children are beginning to make good progress towards counting to 20 as a result of regular opportunities to count using a number line, recite number rhymes and sing counting songs. They begin to develop an understanding of number patterns and relationships such as 'more' and 'less' through activities such as threading sequences of beads on a lace and making patterns on pegboards. However, opportunities are missed for children to extend their understanding of number through purposeful and practical problem solving situations. This limits their ability to achieve at higher levels.
73. Many children can identify two-dimensional shapes such as squares, circles, rectangles and triangles, and some can describe the properties of these shapes, using simple terms. They also recognise the language of position as a result of following directions in physical education lessons, such as when dancing 'The Hokey Cokey'. They learn something of the language of comparative size as a result of their work about 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears'. There is some use of sand and water play to help pupils to develop their early understanding of capacity and the associated vocabulary. However, these opportunities are limited and there are few chances for pupils to explore other mathematical concepts or to practise their skills through well-planned play. There are insufficient resources, such as wooden blocks and outdoor play equipment, to help children develop their understanding of shape and space on a larger scale, and this is also limited by the lack of an outdoor play space.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world are a little below the levels expected for their age by the end of the reception year. Children begin to gain an early understanding of place as a result of walks around the school; for example, to observe the main rooms in the building and to notice the features which they like or dislike outdoors. They build and construct with a range of objects. For example, they have made paper models of 'Incy Wincy Spider', using paper fasteners to attach their legs and make them move. They have used 'Lego' to assemble and disassemble their own models, modifying their constructions as they progress. Although there is a satisfactory range of construction equipment, there are insufficient quantities of each kind of equipment and this prevents children from attempting the more complex constructions. This limits their understanding of balance, forces and structures. It also prevents them from learning from each other by playing side-by-side and from working together on large constructions. Some construction equipment is in poor condition and this gives the children negative messages about its use and care.
75. Children are developing a satisfactory knowledge of the natural world. For example, they have looked carefully at flowering and non-flowering plants and made pictures to represent them. In one class, they have developed an early understanding of magnetism through making small puppets out of corks and felt, and putting paper clips on their bases. They have then moved the puppets about on a model stage using magnets. In the other class, soapy water was put into the water tray and the children were fascinated with blowing different sized bubbles. There is scope to develop this good practice further in order to foster children's curiosity and to develop their skills in finding out about objects and materials using all their senses. Children

control the mouse well when using the classroom computers and operate images on the screen with appropriate accuracy.

Physical development

76. Teaching for physical development is broadly satisfactory. This results in children making sound progress and developing an appropriate degree of dexterity for their age. Children benefit from appropriate opportunities to develop their manipulative skills when using construction toys, and when painting, drawing and cutting. They are taught how to hold tools, such as pencils and scissors, and this supports their work in other areas of learning. Appropriate use is made of the hall for physical education and, as a result, children learn to move safely with control and co-ordination, and develop a sound awareness of their own space and that of others. They develop their independence when changing into appropriate clothing and are soundly prepared for more formal lessons in Year 1. Provision for physical development through outdoor play is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient resources and, although the secure allocated space for reception-aged children is being developed, it is not yet ready. This limits opportunities for children to develop the control and co-ordination of their movements on a larger scale. This was identified as a weakness in provision at the time of the last inspection and insufficient progress has been made in rectifying the deficiency.

Creative development

77. Children's creative development is unsatisfactory and their standards are below average at the end of the reception period. Their ability to make up their own imaginative stories is limited when using the role-play area as a result of a paucity of well-planned resources and insufficient adult interaction to help the children to develop their ideas. There is also insufficient use of small representations of the real world for this purpose. The children enjoy painting and drawing. However, there are too few opportunities for them to explore different media and make choices of tools and equipment to compose their own pictures and patterns. For example, the painting easel is set up with one brush for each pot of coloured paint and so the children do not learn the correct skills to mix paint or to make informed choices about the size of brushes they need for specific purposes.
78. The children readily join in with nursery rhymes and action songs and enjoy whole class opportunities to respond to songs and rhymes. In assemblies, many of the children try to join in with repeating phrases in school hymns. In structured group-music-making sessions, the children learn about rhythms but have insufficient opportunities to develop their own ideas and explore the range of sounds made by untuned percussion instruments.

ENGLISH

79. Most pupils enter Year 1 with standards that are below average in both reading and writing. Their progress in Year 1 is unsatisfactory because of weaknesses in teaching in this year group. However, the quality of teaching is good in Year 2 and so pupils make good progress in this year group. However, standards are still below average at the end of Year 2 because of the lost ground from Year 1. Pupils make sound or better progress in reading in Years 3 to 6 and, by Year 6, attainment is average. Standards in writing remain below average at the end of Year 6 and many pupils do not achieve as much as they should because of an over-dependence on published schemes and worksheets, a lack of a systematic approach to planning and

assessment and insufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in other subjects of the curriculum.

80. The progress made by pupils who speak English as an additional language is unsatisfactory because the school makes insufficient provision for their needs. There are limited opportunities for supported speaking and listening, insufficient difference between the way that pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are taught, a lack of recognition of how the pupils' first language can be used to help their learning of English, and few culturally relevant resources to support learning. Until recently, the school employed two bilingual support assistants. They have now left and have not yet been replaced. This has contributed to the deterioration in provision since the last inspection.
81. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They are supported well in lessons and this ensures that they achieve the targets that are set for them in their individual education plans. However, they are often withdrawn from assemblies and lessons for additional work in English and this limits their access to some aspects of school life. The progress of the highest attaining pupils needs to improve, and teachers' expectations for their potential achievement are often too low, especially in writing.
82. Speaking and listening skills are average. There is little systematic planning for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills as they move through the school. However, some teachers incorporate opportunities as an integral part of literacy sessions and others plan for specific lessons to include drama and debate. As a result, pupils in Year 2 begin to use speech in imaginative ways and express their ideas clearly during discussions. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils have a sound vocabulary and are interested in finding out about new words. Higher attaining pupils are very articulate. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other, show a keen interest in what is being said, and ask and answer questions fluently. They present their ideas clearly; for example, in a Year 6 lesson when they presented their arguments for and against the war in Iraq, pupils were very effective in engaging the interest of their classmates because of their lively explanations and good expression in their voices.
83. Standards in reading are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 read simple texts accurately and are beginning to use their knowledge of phonics to decode new words. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Higher attaining pupils respond well to punctuation marks and can use contextual clues to decode new words. However, too many pupils achieve at the lower levels because they do not have a sufficiently wide range of strategies for reading new and more complex words, and they do not always fully understand the meaning of what they are reading. Where older pupils do not attain at the higher levels it is because they do not develop the skills of using inference and deduction to find hidden meaning. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils can analyse and appreciate a wider range of fiction and information texts, and can justify their choice of reading matter. Pupils, throughout the school, enjoy making independent choices of books from the collections in the library for reading at home and at school. However, library and research skills are not systematically taught, and pupils' skills in these areas, as well as in using computers for research purposes, are underdeveloped.
84. Standards in writing are below average in Years 2 and 6. Many pupils do not achieve the standards that they should because: their knowledge of how to organise different forms of writing is not developed to a sufficient depth; they do not make sufficient use

of the devices that authors use to create different effects; and their skills in using complex sentences, adjectives and adverbs to make their writing more interesting are not sufficiently developed. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length and to develop their writing skills in the course of other subjects of the curriculum. They also make insufficient use of ICT to support their work in writing. Standards of handwriting were a weakness at the time of the last inspection but are now satisfactory. Standards of grammar, spelling and punctuation are also broadly satisfactory.

85. Whilst the teaching of English is satisfactory overall, it varies in quality throughout the school. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in Year 1, which has an adverse effect on pupils' progress, although some very good teaching was seen in one Year 1 class which was temporarily taught by a supply teacher. Good teaching was seen in Year 4 and Year 6. Where teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy they are effective in introducing pupils to relevant and interesting texts and in asking questions which develop pupils' understanding to some depth. However, in some classes there is an over-dependence on the commercial scheme and insufficient use of skilled questioning to help pupils analyse, synthesize and evaluate the text. Where the teaching of writing is best, there is an appropriate emphasis on the structure and organisation of different forms of writing which is in line with the national guidance. Where weaknesses occur, it is because pupils do not have the support they need to retain a clear view of how to structure their work, after the initial input, either through the more systematic use of formats to guide their work or through the development of written prompts. Effective links are made between good quality texts and pupils' own writing in some classes and then pupils apply this knowledge to their own work. However, these skills are not systematically developed throughout the school because of an over-reliance on worksheets and commercial schemes of work to guide teaching. An auditory style of teaching predominates in most classes. As a result, those pupils who learn best in visual or practical ways, or who do not have a secure understanding of the English language, do not have sufficient access to learning. The quality of marking varies between classes. Where it is best, it makes judicious use of praise and gives helpful and constructive comments which help pupils to improve their work.
86. Assessment procedures are in place but there is insufficient guidance to help teachers plan precisely for the steps that pupils will need to take in order to reach their long-term targets. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to review and evaluate their own work so that they know how well they are progressing towards their targets. The co-ordinator has monitored standards and observed lessons. As a result, she has a broad overview of what is happening in the subject. However, she has not been sufficiently effective in developing a consistent approach to the teaching of literacy throughout the school and in using the monitoring information precisely to improve standards. Resources for English are satisfactory overall, although the number of books in the library is barely adequate.

MATHEMATICS

87. On entry to Year 1, attainment is a little below average. Inspection findings show that pupils make unsatisfactory progress during Year 1 and do not achieve as well as they should by the time they move to Year 2. Progress in mathematics accelerates in Year 2 and this enables the majority of pupils to achieve the expected level at the end of Year 2. However, a relatively high percentage do not manage to make up the lost ground which results in below average standards overall. This broadly reflects the school's results in the 2002 national tests for seven year olds, when standards were

well below the national average and were very low when compared to the average results of similar schools. Overall, pupils' progress is just adequate, taken over the two year period. When the school was last inspected, standards were also below average in Year 2.

88. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make mainly sound, and sometimes good, progress, and this enables them to attain average standards at the end of Year 6. The 2002 national test results for Year 6 show that standards were in line with the national average, as was found at the time of the last inspection.
89. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs make mainly good progress, but higher attaining pupils are often insufficiently challenged and should do better. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) make variable progress in mathematics and, overall, it is unsatisfactory due to weaknesses in some parts of the school. In Years 3 and 4, no particular issues arose regarding the progress of EAL pupils in mathematics; indeed evidence suggests that some receive specific support in their development of mathematical vocabulary prior to each week's numeracy focus. However, elsewhere in the school, pupils with EAL do not always receive sufficient supported speaking and listening opportunities or have access to relevant visual aids; for example, in an unsatisfactory Year 1 lesson on time, and in a Year 5 lesson where girls with EAL showed no interest in the whole class session on fractions and were not drawn into the discussion by the teacher. A lesson in Year 2 also showed how a pupil with EAL may be able to demonstrate understanding when using concrete objects but is inhibited when a similar task is communicated through written words at the end of the lesson.
90. In one Year 1 class, evidence from pupils' books shows that there is limited challenge and that pupils' work is mainly focused on the completion of worksheets of addition and subtraction sums, and on counting forward and back from 20. However, when taught by the supply teacher, higher attaining pupils enjoy the challenge of sorting and classifying two-dimensional shapes using their own categorisation, and the majority can work independently to create lists of shopping items in three categories. Elsewhere in Year 1, pupils make sound progress when creating pictograms of their favourite fruits; but unsatisfactory progress when colouring and assembling a clockface in a lesson on time. In Year 2, pupils attain average standards when solving simple division problems, and make good progress when sorting shapes to create Venn diagrams. Evidence in the Year 2 books shows they understand numbers to 100, solve simple money problems, measure with non-standard units of measure and understand the four operations. Higher attaining pupils can measure everyday objects in centimetres and show an early understanding of simple fractions. Overall, however, there are many pages and worksheets of formal written sums.
91. In Years 3/4 and 5, pupils learn alongside others of a similar ability. Progress is at least satisfactory and is good in some classes. Pupils in Years 3/4 confidently work with larger numbers to 1000, convert simple fractions to their decimal equivalents, for example, $\frac{4}{10}$ to 0.4, recognise decimals on a number-line, and can double the three times table to recall the six times table. The lower attaining pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and are developing their confidence at an appropriate level. In the lessons seen, pupils made sound progress in multiplying two digit numbers, and creating simple graphs and tables of information, and better progress in developing their understanding of fractions. In Year 5, work is mainly well presented and pupils employ an efficient range of written methods to solve number problems. They can convert decimals to mixed numbers, understand decimals to two decimal places, rotate shapes, use co-ordinates and use compasses accurately to

create triangles. In the lessons seen, lower attaining pupils made sound progress in their work on fractions, and higher attaining pupils made good progress when finding the area of irregular shapes. In this class, progress is particularly good and standards are already close to that expected for Year 6 pupils. This creates a problem in Year 6, where many pupils consolidate work that has previously been covered in Year 5. This is evident both in pupils' books and in one of the lessons seen, where pupils repeated previous work on finding factor pairs. Progress is better in the other Year 6 class, where pupils learn to read and plot co-ordinates in all four quadrants with adult support. Work in Year 6 shows that they develop their knowledge and understanding of decimals and fractions, can find perimeters of irregular shapes, and learn about probability. Overall, the majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve average standards. However, pupils' main method of acquiring mathematical knowledge and skills is by completing teacher directed tasks and exercises from commercial schemes. There is little evidence of pupils developing their own strategies for problem solving, or generating and trying out their own ideas and arriving at their own conclusions.

92. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory although there are strengths and key weaknesses across the school. In Year 1, effective teaching was observed in the class taught by a temporary teacher. However, other lesson observations and an analysis of pupils' work in Year 1 show that there are important weaknesses in the quality of provision and practice. There is evidence of the over-use of worksheets, poor marking and a lack of appropriate challenge for pupils. In Year 2, teaching was at least satisfactory and sometimes good, with both teachers actively involving pupils in solving problems. In Years 3/4 and 5, pupils are taught in class groups that have been selected on the basis of pupils' abilities. In each year group, there was an example of good teaching and this enabled pupils to be well challenged and to make good progress. Teaching in their partner classes was satisfactory. In Year 6, classes are parallel and of mixed ability, but the quality of teaching varies from just satisfactory to good. This is partly due to inconsistencies in mathematical provision brought about by the lack of co-operative planning. As a result, teachers demonstrate inconsistent expectations and pupils receive different learning experiences and a different level of challenge in each class.
93. Across the school, with rare exceptions, teachers have secure classroom management techniques and high expectations of pupils' behaviour and work habits. As a result, pupils are attentive, settle to their work well and try hard to please, even when the tasks are not always well matched to their learning needs. In the best lessons, teachers target questions well to check pupils' understanding, work at a brisk pace and provide good support to correct emerging errors and misconceptions. They demonstrate secure subject knowledge, reinforce key vocabulary and provide a good level of challenge. In the remaining classes, most teachers use sound questioning techniques and provide satisfactory support as pupils work. However, pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and this particularly affects the standards achieved by the higher attaining pupils. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, time is not well used for mathematics but is wasted on low-level colouring, cutting and sticking activities.
94. Overall, the National Numeracy Strategy is not implemented as well as it might be. Across the school, for example, there is an over-reliance on commercial schemes and worksheets. This leads to overly teacher directed activities and little opportunity for pupils to generate and solve problems of their own. These resources would be better used to supplement exemplar plans from the numeracy strategy rather than to replace them. There are also weaknesses in the use of ICT and, during the inspection, it was only used in one class, in Year 6, to support work in numeracy.

While there was evidence in displays that some older pupils had drawn room layouts and graphs using computer software, there was no evidence that pupils have regular opportunities to use and apply their technology skills in mathematics. Pupils who receive tuition in music regularly miss parts of their mathematics lessons, and this needs to be thought through more carefully by the school.

95. The assessment of mathematics is mainly satisfactory at classroom level but needs improvement. Pupils are given individual targets in their books, and completion dates are identified. However, targets do not always provide sufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. Evidence shows that work is marked regularly, but the quality of marking is variable and does not always give guidance on what pupils need to do next to improve. The weakness in assessment is at school level, where assessment information is not well used to guide developments in mathematics. For example, an analysis of the year 2000 test papers for Year 6 pupils has revealed key areas of difficulty for the majority of pupils, but this information has not been used systematically to adjust subsequent provision. In addition, without the more detailed analysis of test papers and work from across the school, specific targets for improvement cannot be identified.
96. There is an experienced co-ordinator for numeracy who keeps herself up-to-date through annual conferences and communications from the local authority numeracy team. She has a sound understanding of some of the important areas for development in mathematics, but has not had the opportunity or support to address these successfully. Without clear targets for improvement, based on a thorough analysis of attainment, teaching and learning, she has also been unable to plan effectively to move the subject forward. This means that, although she has a numeracy action plan, activities are not securely focused on what the school needs to do next to improve. She is also hampered by the timing of her non-contact time. It is currently in the afternoon when numeracy is not being taught and gives her little scope to observe or work alongside her colleagues. Alternating her non-contact time with that of the literacy co-ordinator might easily rectify this. She does, however, sample work in the spring term, check that key objectives have been covered and observe her colleagues when she can. This monitoring evidence, together with a more detailed analysis of data, now needs to be used to establish a clear sense of direction for mathematics development.

SCIENCE

97. Pupils' progress in science is mainly unsatisfactory in Year 1 but increases in Year 2 where it is sound. In Year 2, most pupils achieve the expected standard for their age but few do better. As a consequence, overall standards are below average in Year 2. The results of the statutory teacher assessments, in 2002, broadly reflect current findings, and were well below the national average and the average results of similar schools. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' progress is mainly satisfactory and is sometimes good. This means that standards steadily increase, and are broadly average in Year 6. This is reflected, accurately, in the SATs results in Year 6, in 2002, which were in line with the national average and the results of similar schools. In most classes, pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their starting points. The progress made by the higher attaining pupils is much more spasmodic and is barely adequate, overall. In some lessons, these pupils mark time because their work is too easy. While pupils are given opportunities to conduct investigations, these are strongly prescribed by their teachers, and provide few opportunities for pupils to devise simple enquiries to test their own hypothesis or to decide how to present their

findings. This restricts pupils' achievement. When the school was last inspected, standards were below average in Year 2 but were above average in Year 6.

98. In Year 1, there is limited evidence of completed science work which clearly demonstrates pupils' knowledge and understanding. Many worksheets are too prescribed and of limited value, and pupils derive little benefit from copying texts and pictures provided by their teachers. There is some evidence that pupils in Year 1 have made satisfactory progress when learning to name the main parts of the human body, are aware that we use our senses to experience the world, and develop their awareness of the need for healthy eating. However, all pupils make unsatisfactory progress when completing tasks which are poorly matched to their learning needs, for example, when being guided to label the stigma or stamen of flowering plants on worksheets or to link pictures of the bone structures of the knee and pelvis to diagrams of the human body.
99. In Year 2, pupils make sound progress when learning about forces, and benefit from conducting experiments to discover whether the distance travelled by a toy car is affected by the surface it moves over. However, their skills in predicting results are below average, overall, and some find it difficult to grasp the importance of fair testing. Year 2 pupils can identify common appliances which use electricity, and make sound progress when learning to make simple circuits, using batteries and bulbs. They recognise that different creatures live in the local environment, although their awareness of why some live in particular habitats is generally underdeveloped.
100. In Years 3 and 4, pupils make sound progress when following their teachers' instructions to discover the absorbency of different levels of paper, and the strength of a range of threads. In lessons observed during the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieved standards which were satisfactory for their ages when learning about insulators and conductors as part of their work on electricity. However, the most advanced learners could have progressed more rapidly during these lessons. In Year 5, pupils know that the Earth, Sun and Moon are spherical, and most understand why the length of shadows change during the day. They make sound progress when conducting experiments to decide which factors affect the rate of water evaporation, and have a clear understanding about the dangers of drug misuse. In a lesson observed during the inspection, most pupils made sound progress when learning about the effect of exercise on the pulse rate, and pupils with special educational needs achieved well. However, the lesson was too prescribed to allow pupils to make decisions about their experiments to test pulse rates, and this particularly inhibited the potential achievements of the higher attaining pupils. In Year 6, pupils know that solids which do not dissolve in water can be separated by sieving and filtering, and make sound progress when following their teacher's instructions to obtain clean from dirty water. Year 6 pupils understand that feeding relationships exist between plants and animals in a habitat, and can describe these using terms which include prey and predator. In a lesson observed during the inspection, pupils made good progress when learning that mixing materials can cause them to undertake a chemical change. They learned that, in some cases, the new materials made are gases, and they can identify this from the vigorous bubbling which occurs when they mix some materials. In a similar lesson, taught to the second Year 6 class, pupils' progress was mainly satisfactory, but opportunities were missed to challenge the higher attaining pupils to be sufficiently rigorous when recording the results of their experiments, and to encourage pupils to make decisions about the way to conduct their enquiries. Because the two Year 6 teachers do not plan co-operatively, there is a difference in the level of expectation between the two classes, and this was evident in the lesson observed.

101. The quality of teaching in science ranges from unsatisfactory to good but is satisfactory overall. In the main, therefore, the teaching enables pupils to make sound progress in their scientific learning. However, weaknesses in teachers' planning and in their expectations for pupils' achievements are evident in pupils' completed work in Year 1. During the inspection, the teaching in Year 1 ranged from unsatisfactory to good, and was notably enhanced by the effective teaching of a supply teacher who was temporarily covering teacher absence in one of the two Year 1 classes. She clearly demonstrated pupils' ability to progress well when tasks are well matched to their learning needs. Across the school, teachers' planning is generally sound, and the learning intentions of individual lessons are clearly identified. Early in most lessons, these intentions are shared with the pupils and, in the best practice, teachers help pupils to evaluate whether they have been achieved by the end of sessions. On occasions, the planning takes insufficient account of the needs of the higher attaining pupils, and this inhibits their achievement. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally secure and, with rare exceptions, lessons are organised efficiently and sound use is made of the time available. The most effective teaching is characterised by teachers' skilful use of questions, the introduction and reinforcement of appropriate science vocabulary, and tasks which stimulate and challenge all pupils. Weaker practice is evident when teachers' questions do not probe pupils' knowledge with enough rigour, including the understanding of pupils with English as an additional language.
102. Assessment procedures in science are sound. All teachers complete formal assessments of work from three pupils each term, and these examples provide a useful record of their achievements. In addition, the previous headteacher has analysed pupils' responses to the SATs papers in 2002 in order to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' performance. However, very limited use is made of this assessment information to inform strategic planning for the subject and to target areas for improvement.
103. The science co-ordinator is conscientious and is keen to fulfil her role well. She checks her colleagues' planning, particularly to ensure that there are sufficient resources to support pupils' learning, and has audited science equipment very thoroughly. Although she has been science co-ordinator for about three years, she has had no specific training to help her to develop her role, and she would benefit from well-focused guidance to develop her strategies for monitoring the subject. She has yet to analyse examples of pupils' work, from across the school, to develop a sufficiently informed overview of pupils' standards and achievements, and has not had the opportunity to observe science teaching. While she has conscientiously produced an action plan for the subject, this is insufficiently informed by detailed knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. Science resources are satisfactory, and have been well organised by the co-ordinator for easy access.

ART AND DESIGN

104. Standards in art and design are a little above national expectations in Year 2, and are clearly above average in Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils' progress in the subject is mainly good and is otherwise sound. In the older classes, where pupils' class work is supported by regular small group teaching in the art and technology room, their progress is consistently good. Standards in art and design were also a strength of the school when it was last inspected.

105. In Year 1, pupils achieve well when using a range of materials to create interesting collage pictures. They have rolled, folded, knotted and scrunched fabric and paper to create unusual effects, and have embellished their collage pictures with bold use of pastels and paint. Their abstract pictures of spring, which show the careful use of a range of greens and yellows in pastel and paint, represent good standards for their ages. In addition, Year 1 pupils make good progress when painting carefully observed pictures of flowers, and when making pictures using torn paper which reflect their discussions about the work of Matisse. In Year 2, pupils' self-portraits and drawings of houses represent satisfactory achievement, and they make sound progress when learning to mix their own paint colours. They also make satisfactory use of ICT to produce abstract pictures. Year 2 pupils achieve well when converting their sketches of the school environment into simple prints, using polystyrene, and their paintings of spring scenes are a little above average for their ages.
106. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have studied David Hockney's use of photographs to create fragmented images, and have cut and juxtaposed parts of photographs of their own faces to make interesting pictures. This work is of a good standard. In addition, pupils in Years 3 and 4 have achieved well when creating complex line drawings with abstracts shapes, stimulated from their discussions about the work of Kandinsky and Klee. In Year 5, pupils have made their own clay plaques and pots to commemorate 2003, and have also looked carefully at examples of Delftware. Again, this work is of a good standard. Their containers made from papier-mâché are finely made and well finished. In Year 6, pupils have designed and created a range of carnival masks from card, paint, feathers and a wide range of fabrics. These are imaginatively designed and made with considerable precision, demonstrating above average achievement. Year 6 pupils also make good progress when creating sculptures made from wire and plaster which reflect elements of the work of Giacometti.
107. Due to timetabling arrangements, it was possible to observe little art and design teaching during the inspection. As a consequence, a judgement cannot be made about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, a careful analysis of pupils' completed work, together with the learning which was seen, provides secure evidence that the teaching enables pupils to make good overall progress in art and design. Pupils have ample opportunities to explore a wide range of art mediums, and benefit from learning about the work of famous artists. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, and supplement the scheme of work provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) with interesting additional tasks. In Years 3 to 6, pupils regularly work in small groups with a well-informed learning support assistant, in the art and technology room. This support assistant provides good advice and guidance for the pupils, has high expectations and helps them to achieve well.
108. The art and design co-ordinator is conscientious and checks teachers' planning. She willingly provides advice for her colleagues, when it is requested, and ensures the subject is well resourced. However, her procedures for monitoring pupils' standards and progress, across the school, require further development, and she would welcome well-focused in-service training on the role of the co-ordinator.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Across the school, pupils generally achieve well in design and technology, and standards are above average in Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were average.

110. In Year 1, pupils make sound progress when using paper fasteners to enable the limbs of simple card puppets to move, and can create sliding mechanisms to facilitate the movement of pictures. In Year 2, pupils have designed and made glove puppets, and these demonstrate good achievement. They have used a range of materials, learned to sew and have embellished the puppets with overlays of materials which they have secured by gluing. In a lesson observed during the inspection, Year 2 pupils made good progress when designing and making model bedrooms. Their designs met their criteria for a good bedroom, and they listed the materials they required for the construction. Pupils are able to use a range of joining methods, including using glue and masking tape, to create models from recycled materials which are above average for their ages.
111. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have evaluated a range of commercially made purses, deciding what they were made from, how they were constructed, and whether they were sufficiently strong and useful. Their designs for their own purses take careful account of the methods for fastening, and the materials to be used. The finished purses are well made and demonstrate good achievement. In Year 5, pupils have created toys which incorporate the use of cams to facilitate movement and, in a lesson observed during the inspection, they made good progress when working in a small group, with a learning support assistant in the art and technology room, to design and make containers for their pencils and rulers. In Year 6, pupils have thought very carefully about the best designs for cushions, considering where the cushions will be used, whether the filling should be removable and whether the product should be machine washable. Their designs show good precision, and they have practised the skills needed to make the cushions very carefully. For example, they have learned about tacking, blanket and slip stitching as well as hemming, and have practised using a sewing machine. Their finished cushions are very well made, and the pupils are justifiably proud of their achievements. Year 6 pupils also demonstrate good standards when working with a visiting teacher, from the nearby grammar school, to create models using a vacuum former.
112. Insufficient design and technology lessons were observed during the inspection to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in the subject. However, the two sessions which were seen, in a Year 2 class and for a group of Year 5 pupils working in the art and technology room, were both well taught. Evidence from these sessions, together with a careful analysis of pupils' work, clearly shows the teaching enables pupils to make good progress in the subject, and to achieve well. In common with the situation in art and design, pupils in Years 3 to 6 benefit from small group teaching by the well-informed learning support assistant who works with them in the art and technology room. Pupils receive close individual support and guidance during the sessions, and progress well. Teachers are making effective use of guidance provided by the (QCA) to support planning for the subject.
113. The design and technology co-ordinator is conscientious and examines teachers' planning from across the school. She provides teachers with questionnaires to provide her with evaluations of new units of work, and this is a useful strategy. The co-ordinator also gives advice to her colleagues and liaises closely with the learning support assistant who works with small groups of pupils. However, her procedures for monitoring pupils' standards and progress require further development. Resources for design and technology are good, and are well organised.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Due to timetabling arrangements, only two lessons were observed during the inspection, one in Year 1 and one in Year 5. It is therefore not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. However, in addition to these two lessons, other evidence was gained from an analysis of pupils' work, long-term planning, displays and discussion. At the present time, overall standards in geography are unsatisfactory. This is a change since the last inspection when standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. Since then, the National Curriculum for geography has changed and there is evidence that the latest curriculum requirements have not been fully implemented across the school.
115. In the one lesson seen in Year 1, pupils made mainly satisfactory progress and achieved average standards when studying their own locality. They can draw their route to school and can suggest sensible ways of improving safety features in the area where they live. For example, they can suggest installing speed bumps, no car signs and traffic lights to slow traffic. In this lesson, pupils also began to discuss the pros and cons of some suggestions, i.e. one pupil disagrees about fencing off green areas as this might prevent others from getting into them. In Year 2, pupils study aspects of the area around the school and look closely at different types of home. Pupils have particularly enjoyed comparing the Isle of Struay with Aylesbury.
116. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' work in geography is of variable quality and is largely identical, regardless of pupils' age and ability. They have studied the seasons, climates around the world and collected weather words, and have written about where they would like to visit and why, and what they would pack in their suitcases. In Year 5, pupils are currently studying volcanoes and, in the one lesson seen, were developing a sound understanding of how natural disasters can affect people's lives. However, previous work shows that while pupils have created simple fact files of major rivers around the world, they have not gained a detailed understanding of how rivers work. In Year 6, pupils learn about mountain ranges and the weather associated with them. Throughout these classes, pupils are clearly gaining knowledge about some key geographical topics. However, there is no evidence of pupils engaging in fieldwork or indepth studies of the local area and other localities, or of pupils using ICT to sort, query, compare and communicate information about different locations. Overall, pupils' geographical enquiry skills are underdeveloped, and their progress in the subject is unsatisfactory.
117. In the two lessons seen, teaching was just satisfactory. However, evidence from planning, pupils' work and monitoring by the co-ordinator shows that the coverage of geography is variable across the school. In Year 1 there are concerns that geography appears not to be taught in one class, and further up the school, some teachers only select certain aspects of geography to teach. Findings also show that geography study units are sometimes misinterpreted, that ICT is underused as a resource, and that, overall, there is an over-reliance on photocopied worksheets which are the same for all pupils. Clear expectations about the teaching of geography now need to be firmly established and monitored to ensure that:
- provision for geography is broad, balanced and relevant; and
 - pupils are able to develop both their geographical knowledge and enquiry skills through meaningful activities.
118. The co-ordinator is conscientious and has undertaken useful monitoring to reveal some of the key weaknesses in geography provision. However, she has not previously had senior management support to implement the changes needed in geography so that it meets statutory requirements. In the year she has been co-

ordinator, she has completed a scheme of work based on guidance from the QCA. However, she now needs further training on her role and responsibilities, and support in carrying out her duties successfully.

119. Resources for geography are barely adequate and need to be reassessed against the suggested requirements in the QCA study units. However, with the limited funds available to her, the co-ordinator has chosen new resources carefully and is aware of some of the gaps in provision, for example, modern atlases and fieldwork equipment. She has also worked hard to improve the school environment by planting the flowerbeds, often in her own time, and preparing vegetable plots, and organises a weekly display of items in the news.

HISTORY

120. Standards are average in Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make steady progress in developing historical knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Standards were also in line with national expectations in Years 2 and 6 when the school was last inspected.
121. Effective use is made of artefacts and sources of evidence to illustrate periods or events being studied and to develop pupils' understanding of historical enquiry and interpretative skills. Work on display in a Year 1 class shows how pupils are able to recognise and record the principle differences between Victorian and modern toys. Year 2 pupils identified artefacts in an evidence box and explained how a snuffer would have been used to extinguish candles. While discussing Florence Nightingale, they highlighted differences between hospitals and hygiene then and now, and how attitudes to women had changed. Comparison of a video, photograph and painting alerted pupils to different interpretations of the past. They are aware that the Victorian period predates their grandparents and some are aware that it was over 100 years ago.
122. In Years 3 and 4, pupils compared the way of life in Ancient Greece with life today. Most could place this period on a timeline but were not yet secure in judging the intervening periods. Year 5 pupils drew information and ideas from paintings, archaeological evidence and documents of the period while researching reasons for the Spanish Armada. They were beginning to appreciate how some sources may be more valid and reliable than others. Year 6 pupils study more modern periods and have a securer view of chronological sequence. In one Year 6 class, newsreel footage provided first-hand detail of events from the 1970s such as industrial unrest and the women's movement. Pupils began to see the impact microchip technology has had on our society. Another Year 6 class shared snippets of what they had learnt about World War II with the rest of the school in their class assembly. Events such as this and the Greek Day for Years 3 and 4 help to raise the profile of the subject and explain why many pupils identify history as one of their favourite subjects. In lessons, pupils are eager to contribute, show sound recall of previous learning and clearly enjoy the practical methods teachers often employ.
123. Effective use is made of trips and visitors to bring the subject alive and enthuse pupils further. Pupils in Year 2 recalled a trip to Milton Keynes Museum to learn about Victorian Life. They were fascinated by the differences between Victorian schools and their own. Pupils in Year 5 remembered their day at the Tower of London and seeing Traitors' Gate. Years 3 and 4 enjoyed the many practical activities provided by the visiting team during their Ancient Greek theme day which took place during the inspection. They wrote in the Greek alphabet on wax tablets, made charms against ailments, and extracted olive oil to fill lamps. Pupils in one Year 6 class had

interviewed visitors who were World War II evacuees, deepening their understanding of what this might have meant for children of their age.

124. The full range of available evidence shows that teaching is satisfactory overall. Although teaching was good in the lessons seen during the inspection, evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' completed work shows some weaknesses. In Year 1 it is not possible to judge teaching as there is insufficient evidence of pupils' work and no teaching was seen. In the lessons observed in the older classes, teachers planned and prepared well, and made effective use of practical methods to capture pupils' interest. They made good use of questioning in these sessions to explore pupils' understanding and extend their thinking. Pupils were managed well. However, an examination of pupils' completed work over time shows there is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets or copying from textbooks, most notably in Years 3 to 6. This approach does not extend pupils' thinking, increase historical knowledge and understanding, or provide opportunities for independent learning and research. Marking is variable and does not always indicate to pupils how they could improve. Pupils largely complete the same work and this does not provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils or a suitable level of expectation for the older pupils in the mixed Year 3 and 4 classes. The use of ICT to support learning is inconsistent and largely focused on the use of the Internet for research in Year 6.
125. The enthusiasm of the established co-ordinator is evident throughout the school. However, the school has failed to recognise the need to update the history curriculum in the light of the most recent national requirements. Consequently, pupils are not currently experiencing the expected range of historical events and periods prescribed in the Programme of Study. This applies to units for British history, world history and a local study, and is unsatisfactory. The school recognises this and is currently considering adopting subject guidance from the QCA. There has also been little opportunity for the monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject, and the co-ordinator's overview is based largely on work seen around the school and teachers' planning. A more rigorous evaluation of pupils' achievements is required in order to inform priorities for the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

126. Standards in ICT in Years 2 and 6 are below average. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils are often completing work at the level expected for their age although work in control, modelling and monitoring remains an area of weakness. However, overall standards are lower than expected because pupils have too few opportunities to learn, practise, consolidate and develop their ICT skills and to apply them to support learning in other subjects. In discussions, pupils report that they do not often get to use the class or suite computers. During the inspection, classroom computers were often switched on but were very rarely being used. Most sessions in the ICT suite were for small groups of pupils. Talking to pupils revealed that most do not have the benefit of the regular use of ICT. This is not an efficient use of resources and is the main reason that pupils are not making the progress of which they are clearly capable.
127. During the inspection, evidence was also gathered from talking to teachers and pupils, and viewing teachers' planning and pupils' work since there were few opportunities to see ICT being taught or used. Whilst pupils are generally developing word processing skills and, in some classes, using them to support work in other subjects, overall use of ICT, other than for creation of text or as a means of accessing the Internet for research, is limited and inconsistent. There are examples of pupils' work for most

strands of the subject. However, pupils have limited exposure to direct teaching of skills or the opportunity to practise them, which means that progress is slow and erratic. When pupils do have the chance to use the computers they make rapid progress, often extending the task by using techniques that they have learnt on computers at home.

128. Throughout the school, pupils confidently log on, find the program they need and know how to save their completed work for retrieval later. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning basic editing skills. In Year 1, they practised their keyboard skills by typing their name and a few details about themselves. Although several needed help with spellings, all were able to find the letters they needed on the keyboard and knew how to correct errors. Pupils' work in Year 2 showed how they had changed the font, size, style and colour of text, and used a paint program to create and colour freehand pictures of animals. Some pupils recalled using a roamer program to give drawing instructions.
129. By Years 3 and 4, pupils are learning how to import pictures and artwork to their text and to create stylised headlines using Word Art. Pupils in Year 5 made effective use of the skills and knowledge they already had of a paint program to create copies of the plans they had drawn for a playground in design and technology, inserting text and using both freehand and generated shapes to convey the outlines. By Year 6, pupils are competent enough in word processing to produce and present extended texts from their literacy work and for a small group to publish a school newspaper. They know how to use a search engine to look for information on the Internet, for example, about the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, and are beginning to identify likely productive links from the list generated. In one Year 6 class, they quickly grasped how to write the instructions to direct a screen turtle to draw a square, and the higher attaining pupils rapidly extended this to other shapes such as triangles, diamonds and hexagons. The success of this session lay in the direct input by their teacher at the outset.
130. Pupils clearly enjoy their ICT sessions and enthusiastically describe what they already know and can do. They work largely independently, seeking help when needed, maintaining concentration and persevering to achieve a successful outcome. When working in pairs, they take turns, make helpful suggestions and offer encouragement.
131. It is not possible to reach an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in ICT since only one lesson of direct teaching was seen. All other sessions were of small groups working with teaching assistants to practise and develop skills. In the one session of direct teaching, seen in a Year 6 class, a clear introduction and demonstration made good use of the digital projector. This helped pupils to make rapid progress in understanding how to control the screen turtle and to know which command statements to use in their instructions. In the same class, good use was made of the interactive whiteboard to introduce co-ordinates in numeracy, involving pupils quickly and fully in the learning. In other sessions, the knowledgeable and well-briefed teaching assistants explained techniques well, quickly corrected misunderstandings and resolved problems whilst following the outlines they had been given. This good quality instruction ensured that small groups of pupils made rapid progress in developing their ICT skills.
132. All teachers have now completed ICT training as part of a national initiative. However, it is evident that many have limited expectations of what pupils can and should be able to do, and are not maximising opportunities for pupils to use computers particularly in numeracy and literacy sessions. As a result, pupils are not experiencing the full range

of activities in the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and ICT is not used well to support learning. More rigorous control of the subject is required to ensure that best use is made of the good range of resources and that all pupils receive access to the curriculum to which they are entitled. Much of the knowledgeable co-ordinator's time is currently taken with resolving technical problems, and there has not been a tradition in the school of close scrutiny of the quality of teaching and learning.

133. Assessment procedures have been revised and the new class record sheets will provide a good overview of coverage and how well pupils are doing. A portfolio of pupils' work that incorporated the examples already collected could be used to provide teachers with clear exemplification of expectations. In order to ensure that all pupils enjoy similar experiences, the school needs to have a clearer vision of how the ICT suite and classroom computers should be used and how often pupils should have access to them. Overall, the school has made insufficient progress since the last inspection, other than in improving resources.

MUSIC

134. Standards are average, throughout the school, as they were at the time of the last inspection. The last report stated that music played an important part in the life of the school. During this inspection this was not obvious. Some pupils have instrumental tuition, but there is no choir, and a lunchtime recorder club has only started recently. However, pupils do progressively develop their skills, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory.
135. Pupils sing tunefully in assemblies and in lessons although there was little evidence of pupils singing in parts to produce harmony. Pupils have confidence to perform, which they do well in assemblies. For example, Year 6 pupils sang a number of appropriate songs enthusiastically during their class assembly on World War II. Pupils in Year 2 begin to compose their own accompaniment to music by using a range of untuned percussion instruments to create a drone. These skills are successfully developed so that in Year 6 pupils compose their own pieces using keyboards and a pentatonic scale, and record their compositions using notes on a staff. They listen and appraise Mozart's horn concerto, and identify the tune and the echo. They know that a concerto has a special part for a solo instrument.
136. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers plan activities that interest the pupils so that they enjoy their lessons. In the few lessons seen, there was a strong emphasis on singing and opportunities were sometimes missed to extend the range of musical experiences for pupils. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and choose songs that challenge the pupils. For example, in a mixed Year 3 and 4 class one of the songs had a difficult off-beat rhythm, but most of the pupils managed it well. Some teachers are still too reliant on the commercial scheme, as was the case at the time of the last inspection, and this sometimes results in a lack of flexibility which restricts pupils' opportunities to make their own choices.
137. The co-ordinator has been absent for some time, and there have been no recent developments in the subject. The scheme of work is very out of date and some teachers are not using it, so there is not a consistent approach to the subject. The co-ordinator has not observed lessons and not monitored planning or pupils' work to enable her to have a clear overview of the strengths and weaknesses in music. This was the position at the last inspection, and there has been insufficient progress since then. The school is very generous in providing free instrumental tuition, which means that there are a good number of pupils who learn to play the violin, viola, or clarinet.

This greatly enhances the musical skills of those pupils who take up these opportunities. However, pupils regularly miss parts of their mathematics lessons to receive music tuition, and this has a negative effect on their mathematical learning. Good use is made of the links with partner institutions through the local grammar school's Performing Arts status. A visiting teacher worked with the pupils in Year 6 to help them produce a performance for their assembly. In this way, pupils' skills are enhanced, and staff benefit from liaising with teachers who have specialist skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. Only one gymnastics lesson was observed during the inspection, due to timetabling arrangements, but games and dance lessons were observed. Pupils' skills in these areas are developing well, and the satisfactory standards of attainment at the end of Year 2, reported at the time of the last inspection, have been maintained. No physical education lessons were seen in Year 6, so no judgement can be made about attainment of Year 6 pupils, but standards in Year 5 are average. Although pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, in some year groups, where specialist help is used to enhance pupils' skills, achievement is good. The school uses the partnership with local educational establishments well to engage a specialist dance teacher in Year 2, and trainee football coaches to teach football skills in Year 5. These specialists have a positive impact on the skills pupils learn in these lessons as a result of the good subject expertise. Pupils with special educational needs do the same tasks as their peers and make similar progress. However, pupils who speak English as an additional language do not always receive appropriate language help, and rely on watching others, rather than understanding the teachers' instructions. In these situations, their achievement is not as good as it could be.
139. As a result of the specialist help, Year 2 pupils are developing their dance skills well. They combine a range of contrasting movements, linked with their science work on pushing and pulling, to create an imaginative dance where the pupils work collaboratively in small groups. Pupils are aware of the effect exercise has on their bodies, and they are beginning to appraise the work of others. Pupils in one Year 1 class benefited from very good teaching from the supply teacher during the inspection, and are developing their throwing and catching skills well. They are very aware of the skills involved in catching, such as watching the ball, the positioning of the hands, and moving the feet. These skills are further developed in Year 2, where pupils learn to control a ball with a bat. Games skills continue to be developed as the pupils get older. In Year 5, pupils are learning to control a ball effectively with their feet, and learn to play in small group games with due attention to rules. Pupils go swimming in Year 5 and make satisfactory progress, with most pupils learning to swim 25 metres.
140. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some good features. In the best lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge, set high expectations, and continuously develop skills through a progression of challenging activities. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace, with teachers highlighting teaching points well through the use of pupil performance. There are opportunities for pupils to make choices and develop their own ideas in these lessons. For example, in Year 2 dance lessons taken by a specialist teacher, pupils are encouraged to think of their own movements to incorporate into their dance. In these lessons, pupils respond positively, thinking hard and concentrating well, to perfect their skills. As the pace is brisk, pupils make the most of the allotted time practising and enhancing skills. As at the last inspection, teachers who are less confident use taped material soundly in dance lessons. In a less effective lesson, the teacher's subject knowledge was insecure, and too much

time was spent in behaviour management. Pupils were expected to queue, and so were not continuously involved, giving them opportunities to become silly and noisy, which disrupted the lesson. There was insufficient emphasis on the quality of movement or instruction as to how performance could be improved. As a consequence, pupils' learning was unsatisfactory.

141. The subject is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has made a start at monitoring the curriculum through the examination of teachers' planning to ensure all the elements of the subject are taught. However, she has had no opportunities to observe lessons to enable her to have a clear overview of the quality of teaching and learning. Good use is made of specialist teachers, who support the school in dance, gymnastics and games. Teachers from the local secondary school work alongside the school staff to enhance their expertise and confidence. This has a positive impact on the quality of provision for pupils where the expertise of the current staff requires improvement. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities which enhances the skills of those who participate. The school has received an Active Mark in recognition of the range of physical activities offered to the pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. In some classes, religious education is not taught this term, so there were few examples of pupils' work to examine, particularly in Year 1. However, evidence from lessons, scrutiny of the work available, and talking to pupils indicate that standards in Years 2 and 6 meet the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus, as they did at the time of the last inspection. All pupils make sound progress as they move up through the school. They have a sound knowledge of facts about several world religions, including Christianity. However, the meaning behind the religions is less well developed. Pupils with English as an additional language do not receive any specialist help in religious education lessons, and so do not always make as much progress as they should.
143. In all classes, pupils develop a sound knowledge of Christian religious practices and traditions, which they contrast with similar ceremonies in other religions, such as Islam. Pupils in Year 2 know about the crucifixion and why Christians celebrate Christmas. They learn about Christian baptism and compare this with birth ceremonies used by Muslims. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 discuss Christian marriage and examine a number of marriage artefacts, such as the special clothes worn. They begin to make comparisons between a Christian and a Hindu wedding. Pupils in Year 6 learn about Buddhism, and compare these teachings with Christianity and Judaism. These pupils realise that the 'Ten Commandments' and the 'Noble eightfold path' give people rules on how to conduct their lives. Throughout the school, pupils study Old and New Testament stories. For example, pupils in Year 2 learn about Noah and re-enact the story well during an assembly. However, the meaning behind the story was missed, and no reference was made to the relevance for life today. As pupils get older, they become increasingly aware of the teachings of Jesus. Year 5 pupils also study different religious leaders, identifying the range of qualities needed for a leader. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of signs and symbols well. The youngest pupils know that Christians worship in church and Muslims use a mosque. By the time pupils leave school they understand the significance of the cross, the fish, the crescent moon and star. Good use is made of the local church when the younger pupils visit it to look at the building, the stained glass windows and the furniture. The local mosque has been used in the past for visits.

144. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, and plan interesting lessons to ensure that the demands of the curriculum are met. However, the emphasis is on the teaching of facts rather than developing the ideas that govern different religions. This results in limited opportunities for pupils to address the 'deeper meanings' of life that all religions try to explain. Good opportunities are presented for pupils to enhance their speaking and listening skills through discussion and sharing of different experiences. However, the weaknesses in teaching are that tasks are often undemanding, and there is an over-reliance on the use of duplicated worksheets. These worksheets are often the same for all ages and abilities within the class, which results in a lack of challenge for the higher attaining pupils, and limited opportunities for pupils to extend their writing skills. For example, in mixed Year 3 and 4 class, all pupils were asked to cut up and sequence the same given sentences rather than write in their own words, and when Year 5 pupils were asked to retell the story of The Prodigal Son, there were no opportunities for the pupils to write the story from different points of view to explore the meaning of the story thoroughly. Pupils enjoy their lessons, show interest and generally concentrate well. These positive attitudes ensure that most pupils make sound progress.
145. The subject is managed at present on a temporary basis. There has been no monitoring of teaching and learning, although samples of pupils' work have begun to be assessed to ensure that the appropriate levels are attained. Timetabling of the subject results in long gaps when pupils receive no religious education, and this does not help pupils to develop their skills in steady progression. Resources are satisfactory and any shortcomings are supplemented from the local heritage centre.