

INSPECTION REPORT

WILLEN COMBINED SCHOOL

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110388

Headteacher: Mr. T. Collett

Reporting inspector: David G Collard
OFSTED Inspector Number: 11122

Dates of inspection: 7th - 10th July 2003

Inspection number: 246991

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Combined
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 - 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Beaufort Drive Willen Milton Keynes
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Lori Ferguson
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

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11122	David Collard	Registered Inspector	Information and communication technology Geography	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
11414	Ann Bennett	Lay Inspector	None	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18935	Christopher Bolton	Team Inspector	Mathematics History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
26232	Christopher Grove	Team Inspector	Design and technology Modern Foreign languages Physical education English as an additional language Educational inclusion	
19916	Debbie Kerr	Team Inspector	Music Religious education Foundation Stage	
11976	Heather Toynbee	Team Inspector	Science Art and design	How well is the school led and managed?
29995	Maureen Walker	Team Inspector	English Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Willen Combined School is situated in a private area of housing in Willen near Milton Keynes. There are 427 pupils on roll aged from four to twelve. A quarter of the children come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Sixty-nine pupils have English as an additional language although only a small number are at an early stage of language acquisition. This number fluctuates through the year. Thirty-five pupils are identified with special educational needs and three have statements. This is similar to that nationally. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Test results have been high for pupils at the end of Year 2 for the last three years and were improved substantially in 2002 for pupils in Year 6. For those presently at the school, standards are above those nationally and pupils achieve well by the end of Year 7. Teaching is good through all years and there are well developed leadership and management structures. The governors have a firm grasp on priorities and the school has identified those areas that need improvement. As a result the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Ensures pupils achieve well in a wide variety of subjects, particularly English, mathematics and science
- Ensures pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- Provides good leadership, management and a clear direction forward
- Provides good teaching overall in the infants, juniors and in Year 7
- Provides a well balanced and enriched curriculum and uses assessment to ensure higher standards are reached
- Ensures a high standard of care and welfare
- Develops good partnerships within the local community

What could be improved

- The support given to teachers to help them plan appropriately for pupils with English as an additional language
- The standards of writing in the Foundation Stage
- The atmosphere of spirituality within collective worship and assemblies

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998. At that time there were a number of issues that needed addressing. These included raising the quality of teaching, the assessment of pupils, deficiencies in the curriculum and the low standards in information and communication technology. All of these have been improved. Areas considered strong have been maintained such as behaviour, and the quality of extra activities provided by the school. One issue has not been given a sufficiently high profile. The school still does not provide a daily act of worship that is in line with national requirements and in this respect the school does not fulfil its statutory obligations.

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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	D	A	C
mathematics	C	D	C	D
science	C	E	B	C

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

On entry to the school, children generally have abilities at the level expected for their age. Good standards are achieved in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding and in physical development. All make satisfactory progress so that by the time they enter Year 1 they have achieved the objectives of the Early Learning Goals and are ready to start work on the National Curriculum. By the end of Year 2, standards are above average in English and mathematics and at average levels in science. In all other subjects pupils meet the expected level for their age except in history and design and technology where they are above. A consistently positive picture is shown in National Curriculum test results where pupils have achieved either above or well above average standards over a period of time. When measured against schools of a similar type, however, these fall to below average in English because more pupils could achieve above the expected level in their reading and writing. Overall, progress through Years 1 and 2 is good and continues through Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average in all subjects except information and communication technology, art and design and design and technology where they are at the nationally expected levels. National test results have been variable, due to the natural fluctuations in year groups, but have shown an upward trend since 1998 despite being lower in 2001. Early indications from this year suggest that progress in tests is continuing. When measured against their prior performance pupils have done particularly well in English and science. Pupils continue to make good progress so that overall by the end of Year 7 they are achieving standards above that expected for their age. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress against their own capability and a number achieve well particularly in national tests. Pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress and this improves when support for language acquisition is consistently given in all lessons. The school's targets are realistic and challenging. In general they have been met or exceeded each year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and are highly enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils are well behaved but there are a small number who influence others and challenge the authority of the teacher.
Personal development and relationships	Sound. Generally there are good relationships and pupils respect each other. However, some are not always happy to follow the school conventions.
Attendance	Above the national average. Procedures for monitoring and follow-up are very good.

Pupils enjoy school and actively participate in activities in the calm and orderly school environment. Many have good social skills and acknowledge the contributions of others. There are a few pupils who push the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and are distracted easily. This is particularly noticeable in large group activities such as assemblies. There are no issues concerning attendance, which has kept pace with the national trend.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6	Year 7
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good	Good

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

Overall, teaching is good, particularly in English and mathematics. It is strongest in the upper years of the infants and similarly in the juniors. Here, there is a higher proportion of very good or excellent teaching and, consequently, better progress in learning. Children in the reception classes make a sound start to their education. The new systems of entry have meant that teachers have had to adapt their planning to take account of larger numbers and this has not been as smooth a transition as had been hoped. It has impacted upon the effectiveness of work, particularly in literacy, because not enough challenge is given. Children do not have enough regular opportunities to write independently and this impedes their progress. Throughout the school, teachers use a wide range of methods to interest and excite pupils. They plan thoroughly and organise lessons well. There is an urgency to complete what is asked and pupils clearly understand what is expected of them. Although generally satisfactory, it is not so good when temporary teachers take lessons and then some minor behavioural difficulties arise and this slows down the pace of learning. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. Basic skills are used in other subjects and are now much better incorporated within information and communication technology. The needs of all pupils are met. Those with special educational needs are targeted and supported well and make good progress. Those with English as an additional language progress at least soundly but teachers have not been given enough direction about how the needs can be constantly developed through the day. This means that those with higher ability do not make even better progress. Pupils who show a talent are encouraged to pursue this and teachers plan for this area well. Overall, pupils progress well in their academic learning. They are encouraged to think, question, hypothesise and debate.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is a very good range of activities that enrich and support learning in many ways.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Procedures are effective and thorough monitoring and records are kept to support the work being undertaken.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Sound. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress although this area needs a higher profile to enable teachers to reinforce the work of outside agencies, particularly for those with higher attainment.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Social and cultural development is good and this is reflected in the value placed on the school community as a whole. Spiritual development lacks reinforcement through collective worship although it is catered for well in lessons.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good overall. Well-established procedures and thorough monitoring have helped ensure areas of weakness are addressed quickly. The monitoring of assessment has a high profile and helps inform planning for individual need.

The curriculum is broad, interesting and relevant. It is enhanced through an unusually comprehensive range of extra-curricular activities, visits, themes and visitors. The procedures for collective worship do not meet

statutory requirements. Pupils are cared for well. There are secure, well-formulated plans and policies that ensure clear guidelines are in place. The school values the contributions of the parents and has formed strong links. Despite this, more still needs to be done to communicate to parents the aims and values that are being promoted. This will ensure there are no misunderstandings about how or why the school operates as it does.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Strategic leadership has strengthened. There is a clear educational direction and this is followed through by the tight management systems now in place.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. A full understanding about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and how these should be addressed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Action has been taken to address the areas of development and to ensure that these are linked to raising the standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial management at all levels is secure and monitored well. Good account is taken of achieving best value for money.

The governors try to ensure good account is taken of achieving the best value for money. It is clearly effective as evidence from the balanced budgets suggests. There is a suitable range of experience amongst the staff and some innovative use of teaching time allowing managers to fulfil other duties. Resources are adequate overall, although there is a lack of the full range of computer software for use with Year 7. The accommodation allows all subjects to be taught effectively although there is a lack of space to allow older pupils especially to make the best use of practical activities. The welcoming library has been refurbished recently and is providing a further useful resource. The grounds are very attractive and provide a very good learning environment.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Behaviour is good • The school is well led and managed • Teaching is good • They feel the school is approachable • Children are expected to work hard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quantity of homework • The quality of information provided • The range of extra-curricular activities

The inspection team generally agrees with the positive comments of the parents. However, they also feel that some parents are being unreasonable in expecting more extra-curricular activities when there is already a very good range and also that more homework should be given. The quality of annual reports is improving but the range of newsletters and other communications are good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the school with average attainment although there are some whose attainment is higher. The good teaching ensures that all achieve well so that by the time they enter Year 1 the majority of pupils are ready and capable of starting work on the National Curriculum. Some are ready before this, particularly in literacy and numeracy. Their reading skills have developed well but it is not so high in writing because there are not enough opportunities to write independently during each day. On occasions teaching is too directed so, for instance, children who are able to write their names are not given the chance to fill in labels on a map they were drawing. Knowledge and understanding of the world is good as are the creative and physical abilities. Socially, most are well adjusted, speak well and generally listen to others. Again, there are some examples of children who demand the attention of the class and dominate discussions. Teaching in this area is very well focused on ensuring that Reception children are fully prepared to work in small and large group situations.
2. By the end of Year 2 standards overall are at average levels. By the end of Year 6 and 7 standards have risen to above average. There are no subjects where standards are below the nationally expected level in any age group. In English, standards are above average. Speaking skills are generally stronger than listening skills and sometimes teachers have to work hard to ensure that pupils listen to the contribution of others. This is particularly so in Years 1 and 2 and in Year 5. Standards of reading are good. There are regular opportunities to read both in school and as homework. Pupils enjoy books. A number can talk at length about personal preferences and about the reasons for their choices. Younger pupils develop their basic reading skills quickly and this contributes to their work in other subjects such as geography and history. There are similarly good standards in writing although the fastest improvement is in Year 1 where the underdeveloped skills from the Reception are quickly caught up. There are examples of pupils who have progressed the equivalent of two years in this academic year. Some of the writing, especially in Years 5 and 6, is very expressive, such as that in poetry. In Year 7 pupils are beginning to use higher levels of thought and there is an increasing maturity in written arguments.
3. In mathematics, standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The progress continues into Year 7. Basic number skills are learnt well in Years 1 and 2. They understand the basics of fractions, decimals and negative numbers. Through Years 3 to 7 the use of good planning guides ensures that all areas are covered and the success of the teaching can be seen in the improved test results. Pupils do very well, particularly against their prior performance, in tests. Numeracy and literacy are used well across the curriculum. There are examples of thorough research in history and geography, evaluation in science and description in religious education and design and technology. The use of spreadsheets, tallying and accurate map drawing aids understanding and links well to information and communication technology.
4. Standards in science are at average levels by the end of Year 2 but above average by the end of Year 6. This is caused by a higher number of younger pupils who have not benefited from as long studying the subject. Progress improves as pupils move through the school and the results of tests show an improving trend. Despite the lower results in Year 2 almost all pupils are achieving at the national average level even though there are not as many achieving at the higher level 3. By the end of Year 6 nearly half are achieving higher levels. Progress is

maintained through Year 7 even though teachers find difficulty in completing many of the practical activities that would be expected of this age group.

5. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with those nationally. They have greatly improved since the last inspection but still more needs to be done to achieve even higher levels. Pupils learn the basic skills they need during Years 1 and 2 and then through Years 3 to 6 are able to build on these and use the skills they have acquired. The strongest understanding is in the use of word-processing and research where pupils are able to work quite independently. It is not so strong in areas of control technology where pupils are not yet given sufficient opportunity to develop their skills.
6. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils are well aware of the different traditions and faiths and can talk about how these affect everyday lives. They understand their own Christian traditions and how these relate to others. By the end of Year 2, standards in all other subjects are at least in line with those expected nationally, although they are above this in design and technology and history. In these two subjects learning is well planned and builds upon what has gone before. Teachers are more confident teaching these subjects and, as a result, pupils progress well. By the end of Year 6 progress becomes more rapid. Standards are above those expected in French, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education. In art and design are they at average levels. As clearly stated in the school aims there is a good balance of work across all subjects. The targets set each year are suitably challenging. By the end of Year 7 pupils are continuing to progress well and are achieving at levels at least in line with, but often above that expected for their age.
7. Pupils with special educational needs also achieve well in their learning. The well organised good quality support they receive, either individually or when working within smaller groups both in lessons and for specifically focussed teaching, makes a significant contribution to the generally good progress that many make towards their individual learning targets and in lessons.
8. The school has 69 pupils who are learning English as an additional language. This represents about 16 per cent of the school population, and is about the average for the Milton Keynes area. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language has increased considerably since the last inspection, when the percentage was a little less than 10 per cent. The most common first languages spoken are Gujarati, Punjabi, Cantonese and Urdu, but several other languages are also spoken by pupils who are learning English as an additional language. A majority of these pupils can speak English effectively, but may still experience occasional difficulties in understanding idiomatic uses of English. At the time of the inspection five pupils were identified as being at an early stage of learning English. These children are in the process of developing basic oral communicative skills. However, the number fluctuates through the year and has been as high as 27, which is nearly 6 per cent of the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils of all ages come to school happily, and organise themselves ready for the day. Large numbers are actively involved in the clubs and activities taking place at lunchtime and after school. They enjoy their breaks, making full use of the playground and field, with many games taking place and small groups of friends talking or playing together.
10. The attitudes of children in the Foundation Stage are good. They are equally enthusiastic about school and settle quickly. They behave well in lessons and are always willing to help should it be required. Throughout the rest of the school, pupils want to learn, and show a positive attitude

in most of their lessons. Generally they behave well, and co-operate with classroom activities. They work particularly well when they have an easy and secure relationship with their teacher, and understand their high expectations for behaviour and attention. Many are articulate young people who cope well when given a challenge and asked to give reasons or to discuss rather than to contribute single-word answers. Pupils usually work well together, for example, designing and carrying out an interesting science experiment, and they will clap to show they value their friends' history presentations. Pupils' social skills need constant reinforcing, for example, not to fuss when a group is changed, or maintaining eye contact when their teacher is talking – this improves their attitude towards their lesson.

11. Sometimes a few pupils will push the barriers of acceptable behaviour in a lesson, often because they have a temporary teacher, and this affects the whole class. Pupils chat amongst themselves, the pace of the lesson slows, the noise level rises, and interest in learning drops dramatically. Teachers' comments on their end-of-year reports confirm inspection evidence that pupils are frequently distracted by others. This lack of respect shows a gap in their personal development that is not yet being addressed, a situation which existed at the time of the last inspection.
12. In their small focussed literacy groups, pupils with special educational needs respond very well to their learning, are well motivated and eager to take part in the activities and celebrate their success. During the inspection this was particularly evident in Year 1 where both the very carefully structured daily '*Phonographix*' and '*Progression in Phonics*' groups not only successfully achieve their learning aims but the activities are also absolutely enjoyed by the children. Working with their teachers or supported in their tasks by very able learning support assistants in lessons pupils concentrate well on the very appropriate tasks they are set. The attitudes of those whose behaviour is the concern of their educational plans can sometimes be more challenging in lessons but their progress towards their individual targets is carefully tracked and frequently discussed with parents or carers. Those with English as an additional language quickly become integrated and make friends who support them when they have little or no spoken language.
13. No bullying or any sort of antisocial behaviour was observed during the inspection. There have been two fixed-term exclusions in the last year. Pupils behave reasonably well in assembly but although the successes of some are celebrated, these contribute little to their understanding of how individuals are unique and valued. Pupils and their parents report that when unkind or hurtful words are spoken, although pupils are given coping strategies, some of the causes are not tackled head-on. This is because there are insufficient structured opportunities throughout the school for pupils to understand how their words or actions affect others. On rare occasions a few pupils may be able to express their differences, or their emotions, but this is not enough. In a number of classes pupils are given opportunities to reflect and to think, but this feature is not built in to the life of the school.
14. Pupils are very willing to take on responsibilities, and the school council is active. Year 7 pupils, mostly boys, volunteer to help younger pupils at lunchtime. The school day runs smoothly and pupils find it easy to approach any adult in the school if they need help.
15. Attendance in 2002/3 was good, although unauthorised absences were higher than other schools nationally. This is because of a decision to take a firm line on term-time holidays - because of the way they affect pupils' learning. Pupils arrive punctually in the mornings.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is good overall. Particular strengths include the quality of planning and the use of learning assistants for pupils with special educational needs. There has been an improvement since the last inspection as there is now more consistency across all years. Teaching is strongest in Year 6 where it is very good.
17. In the Foundation Stage the quality of teaching is sound. Due to a changed system for admission the teachers have had to adapt their work significantly and this has taken some time to establish. As a result, the teaching of writing and more imaginative teaching of creative subjects still needs development. Children are not given enough daily opportunity to practice writing in all its forms. However, more formal work, such as letter shapes, is taught well. It is when children are asked to work independently that too much direct support is given and this restricts their progression. The teaching of social skills and the personal development of children are well established and highly successful. Classroom routines are understood by all and there is an orderly and organised feel about what takes place. Mathematical development is also taught well. Children respond to the challenges and show enthusiasm and interest in their work. They set about practical activities and are able to discuss their ideas sensibly with each other. Children enter the school with well-developed understanding and knowledge of their environment and these are harnessed by the teachers. With the help of visits and other resources the teachers plan activities that enable all levels of ability to progress well. Similarly, the teaching of physical education enables all children to make a good start. By the time children enter Year 1 they are suitably prepared to set about work on the National Curriculum.
18. Teaching through Years 1 to 7 is good. Lessons are planned carefully and link well between classes. The clear curriculum plan provides a good basis for weekly planning. Teachers are expected to provide flair by planning their own interpretation. This ensures that there are a number of imaginative and exciting lessons where teachers have been able to bring their own interest. These include practical visits to learn first-hand about a new topic or a walk around the attractive grounds to see why some plants are healthy and why others are not.
19. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are now well developed through the use of the national strategies. Teachers are confident in their approach and have been able to tailor these and adapt them for the particular circumstances of the class. Pupils acquire new skills quickly and can use these in new situations, thereby improving their understanding. Information and communication technology teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is now far more effective across a range of subjects. A number of the teachers have taken part in a national training programme and this has built up their confidence in using computers. The school has workstations set up between class areas and these are now used more extensively.
20. In general, teachers' expectations are high. They understand the need to provide continuous challenge and know that there are a number of capable learners. Work is often divided out so that there are extension activities for those who finish or a different type of activity for those who have difficulty. Expectations are not so high in classes where there are temporary teachers such as in Year 5. Here, more time has been spent in trying to establish routines, especially where there have been a number of changes of staff. Despite these lapses the overall behaviour is managed well. Teachers and learning support assistants are quick to react to any potential confrontation and, at most times, lessons run smoothly. However, during the inspection there were a number of small instances where teachers had to take too long to settle the class and this meant that less was accomplished than was expected.

21. A good range of methods and organisation are used to interest, motivate and excite the learning of pupils. Parents' comments suggest that their children enjoy the curriculum that is offered and in discussion with pupils they were clearly keen to undertake the work they were given. There is very little boredom as each day provides new and exciting topics or themes. Residential visits, practical activities, visits and visitors are used well. Experimentation and investigation is a key method to develop better understanding and high level reporting and evaluations often follow this up. The success can be seen in the good quality writing, research and knowledge that pupils undertake.
22. Marking is undertaken conscientiously and thoroughly. It is used to provide a basis for further work and to ensure that work is both covered and understood. Homework is also regarded highly. Some parents do not agree but the school has worked hard to provide a balanced programme aimed at the age of the child. Pupils say that it is valued when it is completed and teachers refer to it during subsequent lessons. The quality of some of this homework is very good.
23. Pupils learn well. They have a good range of knowledge and basic skills and can use these to improve their understanding. They are inquisitive about the world around them and want to know more. Teachers encourage this enquiry and provide good opportunities for all opinions and questions. The pace of lessons is good. There is a suitable balance between teacher-led and teacher-directed activities. Only when the introductions go on too long do children begin to be distracted. In one Year 6 lesson the teacher appreciated that the class had just returned from a weeklong residential visit and that the work needed to be geared and changed accordingly. This was achieved by providing more visual and practical work that enabled pupils to settle back into their routines. As pupils get older they become more independent in their approach so that by Year 7 they are able to work well in small groups or individually. The teachers encourage this approach and there is a mature reflection about learning. All pupils are given targets, although the systems are not consistent between classes. However, reference is made as to whether enough has been done to move on to the next stage.
24. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught. The strong sense of teamwork and involvement between all those working together to support their learning has a very significant impact on pupils' achievements and individual success towards their own goals. In literacy lessons, planned tasks are normally well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. Individual education plans have a new common format with clear, detailed and measurable targets. Regularly reviewed each term the education plans provide a focus for each pupil's support and programme of learning. In some cases, although well summarised, pupils' specific progress towards each target is not always sufficiently well quantified during the review process. The well-informed learning support assistants work very closely with the class teachers, thoroughly monitoring the pupils' learning in their literacy tasks, contributing fully to decisions and when setting new goals for learning.
25. The pupils in the school who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language are making satisfactory progress overall while they are taught alongside the other pupils in the class. In some cases, the teaching assistants associated with classes provide them with focused support. But in other cases, neither the classteacher nor teaching assistants give particular support to pupils with English as an additional language.

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

26. The school is committed to providing rich and varied learning experiences for all its pupils. It does this well. Children in the Foundation Stage experience a relevant, practical curriculum with sound opportunities for learning through play, which addresses all the recommended Early Learning Goals.
27. From Year 1 onwards, all pupils have full access to the National Curriculum and religious education, including personal, health and sex education as well as the misuse of drugs and medicines. As well as giving due priority to the teaching of English and mathematics, curricular breadth is achieved by a good balance of other subjects, including French for older pupils. At the time of the last report, the curriculum was broadly based, but not entirely balanced because insufficient time was devoted to science and the time for English varied between year groups. This has now improved and an appropriate amount of time is given to all subjects. The school's strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are well established in all classes. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was found to be unsatisfactory, because planning did not ensure that skills built up as pupils moved through the school.
28. Curriculum planning is now good. All subjects have plans that clearly identify what is to be learnt and how this is to be done. There are opportunities for pupils to learn from different subjects in a single lesson, for example, using information and communication technology and literacy skills in a history lesson. Time is used in well-structured ways to ensure pupils derive the maximum benefit from teaching. For instance, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson on understanding timetables, a range of activities that included a brisk mental and oral activity, discussion, problem solving, planning in pairs and recording all occurred within the lesson.
29. The curriculum is inclusive and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, have full access to it. The school seeks to offer the same opportunities to take part and succeed, irrespective of academic ability. 'Springboard' support classes also help realise this aim. Pupils at an early stage of learning English are given help at specific times. However, the teachers require more guidance about how the best opportunities can be offered when this support is not available. These pupils quickly acquire spoken and written language but not enough is done to help them with the nuances of interpretation.
30. A significant feature of the school is the very good use it makes of visitors to the school and visits of interest to supplement the curriculum. These include residential visits for pupils in Years 4, 5, 6 and 7. In Year 6, for example, pupils attend an Outward Bound and information and communication technology course at Winmarleigh. This is used well to develop their confidence and social skills. There is a wide range of day visits available for pupils including the local theatre, museums, the local area and Warwick Castle. Visitors to the school include storytellers, drama groups, scientists and artists. Police personnel give health and safety talks to support personal and social education.
31. The school's provision of extra-curricular activities is excellent. These include a very good range of sports, music and art. Younger pupils participate in a wildlife club, an art club and have access to football activities. The school takes part in a variety of sporting programmes available locally and pupils have opportunities to represent their school against others.
32. The school's links with the community are very good. The school uses the rich and diverse opportunities available in the local area to the best advantage of the pupils - for example, the

Milton Keynes Sculpture trail. Pupils enjoy participating in local arts and music festivals. Local businesses contribute to school fundraising activities. Pupils successfully organise charity events throughout the year. These experiences contribute well to their moral and social awareness. There is supervised access to the Internet to enrich pupils' links with the wider world.

33. The school has very good links with other schools. Teachers liaise closely with staff at the Stantonbury Campus to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils, and to guarantee that there is no repetition of work. The Stantonbury School also supports the school with music, dance and sports activities as well as with an artist in residence. There are similar close links for those about to join the school; for example, children from playgroups are invited for visits.
34. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very strong and, as members of the school community, they are fully included in all aspects of its work. The programme of support provided by the learning support assistants is very well organised and carefully allocated to provide the best level of help where it is most needed. The work of the very experienced and extremely knowledgeable special needs co-ordinator is pivotal to the management and quality of the school's provision. Working very hard, with practically a full teaching commitment, she ensures that the requirements of the Code of Practice are fully implemented, pupils' progress is regularly tracked and judgements made. Teachers are fully conversant with their responsibilities and she is able to provide first-rate advice and help wherever it is needed. She is very ably supported in her responsibilities by the co-ordinator of the learning support assistants. Having developed a very good working relationship with the many outside professional agencies that are associated with pupils within the school she is very proactive in seeking their guidance and involvement. Following media interest in exercises to improve the co-ordination of movement and so aid skills such as sequencing, she recognised the opportunity to help pupils in school. Working closely with the physical education teacher she established a lunchtime Skills Club. This is now regularly well supported and includes a continuing exercise programme of activities at home. Also extending the school's work is the Toe-by-Toe Club concentrating specifically on improving pupils' reading skills. Those pupils for whom English is an additional language are involved in the full range of school activities.
35. The provision for pupils' personal development is good. Social and cultural development are promoted well. The school runs as a well-ordered community with shared values of which pupils are proud to be part. Many positive corporate experiences are provided such as assemblies, team activities, residential visits and school productions, which help pupils learn how to work and play together. Older pupils take responsibility around the school and often help out with younger pupils. They organise and run sports days, for example, and support a wide range of charities through fundraising activities. A strong feature of the provision for cultural education is the very good use of visits and visitors including artists, musicians and theatre groups to widen pupils' understanding of a variety of cultures including their own. There is a school co-ordinator for multicultural education who ensures that school resources reflect the ethnic diversity of the local community, and parents and visitors from a variety of ethnic groups regularly visit to share their customs and practices with pupils. As a result pupils recognise their rich cultural heritage and appreciate and value cultural diversity.
36. The school makes sound provision for spiritual and moral development. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well in some lessons. Pupils explore their thoughts and feelings during religious education lessons and circle time. Teachers value pupils' views and ideas and this promotes very effectively their sense of self-worth. Some teachers are good at sharing with pupils the wonder of learning. This was particularly noticeable in Year 2 where teachers had used seashells and natural objects as a focus for observational drawings in art. In science, they

provided a butterfly box so that pupils could monitor the development of the butterfly through its different stages of growth, and wonder at the beauty and symmetry of the butterflies that emerged. In general however, not enough is done to promote this sense of wonder, creativity and reflection. Teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to express their feelings and emotions through reflective writing and poetry. School assemblies are soulless occasions that do little to develop pupils' spirituality through singing, reflection or celebration and the spiritual value of these occasions is not fully utilised.

37. The school has good systems in place for promoting moral development. Pupils are taught right from wrong as soon as they enter the school and have regular opportunities to discuss moral issues in circle time and in personal development lessons. There is a clear code of behaviour in place and a system of rewards and sanctions, which is promoted well in most classrooms. As a result, the majority of pupils behave well and the school runs as a well-ordered and harmonious community. On the occasions where behaviour is not as good as it should be it is because teachers are not clear about school policy, and do not use the systems well to manage inappropriate behaviour. Teachers do not always make the most of occasions like school assemblies to reinforce their expectations of how pupils should behave.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school takes very good care of its pupils' welfare and, by its inclusive nature, does its best to integrate all, especially those with physical difficulties, into every aspect of school life. Those who are injured at school or feel unwell receive very good care from sensitive and experienced support staff, in a well-equipped medical room. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place and all staff receive regular training. Teachers know their pupils very well, as is shown by the comments they make on pupils' reports. They have their own ways of recording pupils' personal development and many of the pupils' recent reports are perceptive.
39. Office staff monitor attendance thoroughly, making very good use of the computerised system, so that they can seek quality support from the education welfare officer at an early stage of an unexplained absence. The school has a good policy for health and safety, and no issues were identified during the inspection. The issue mentioned in the last inspection report has been resolved. On a day-to-day basis the site manager performs a valuable role in preventative maintenance, and teachers are well aware of issues. Management of health and safety matters is over-reliant for formal reviews of the building on a teacher acting for her colleagues, and no formal risk assessments are taking place. Governors are not actively enough involved, and their walkabouts take place after the school day.
40. There are good systems in place to deal with discipline and promote good behaviour appropriate to the age of the pupil. Better monitoring would show that these are not being used consistently throughout the school. For example, some teachers are not using the more positive methods of praise to control their class, and are resorting to a raised voice.
41. This academic year saw a change so that all Foundation Stage pupils started school together in September. The induction process was satisfactorily managed, and in most areas of learning teaching has been consistently applied. In light of what has been learnt concerning the teaching of writing the procedures will be adapted for the next academic year.
42. Pupils' progress in their learning is now very well checked and tracked, particularly in English and mathematics, and this area of the school's work is much improved since the last inspection.

The range of information available, including all test results, is now carefully analysed. It is effectively used not only to set targets for achievement, inform decisions about the provision of additional learning support as well as classroom tasks but also to identify aspects of the subject on which to focus teaching in order to further raise standards. Recently introduced individual pupils' progress books are beginning to prove beneficial in recording samples of work and showing gains in learning in these subjects together with science.

43. Less effectively developed are both the regular checks on pupils' achievements in other subjects, and also how well these, if recorded, are considered when lessons are planned. Good information is gathered about children's learning during the many activities experienced in the Foundation Stage, but this is not always used as effectively as it could be when planning the next appropriate stages of their work, especially in writing. In lessons, the intended learning is clearly shared with pupils, whilst often during the final part of each session time is spent reviewing how well this has been achieved. When the marking of pupils' recorded work is at its very best, it supports pupils' understanding of how well they are achieving the learning highlighted in their lessons and clearly shows what they can do to improve their work. However, this good marking practice has still to be consistently implemented throughout all classes and within all subjects. By identifying their own academic and personal targets, older pupils in particular, are becoming confident of the smaller steps they must take to achieve their aims.
44. Pupils with learning difficulties are very well cared for through the provision made for them and by the work of the whole team of adults who support them. This includes the very specific expertise provided by several outside professional agencies and services such as in the support of a hearing impaired pupil. The high level of care has a very positive impact on the progress each makes towards their individual goals. All procedures of the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice are thoroughly applied, particularly when deciding what further help is needed. In addition, teachers record their early awareness of difficulties, consulting both the co-ordinator and parents about their concerns. Procedures to provide early diagnosis of specific difficulties in learning are currently being introduced. Provision for the small number of pupils who are awarded a statement of special educational need is fully implemented.
45. The needs of pupils who have English as an additional language are assessed after a brief settling-in period in the school. Records are kept of the stage of learning that pupils have reached. During the inspection, a discussion was held with a small sample of pupils with English as an additional language, and they were heard reading. The needs of some of these pupils should be more clearly assessed. For instance, two younger infant pupils had been classified as being at the same early stage of acquiring English as an additional language. Yet, in speaking to them and hearing them read, it was clear that their understanding and use of English were at quite different levels. Older pupils interviewed, however, had been accurately assessed and were confident and flexible speakers of English who were reading fluently at their more advanced levels.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. Parents value education and think highly of the school, and of the standards it encourages their children to achieve. They say their child likes school, that behaviour is good, the school is well led and managed and that they would feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem.

47. There was a very good response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and 28 per cent do not feel that their child gets the right amount of work to do at home. Inspection evidence is that homework is in line with what is expected in similar schools. Almost a quarter of parents do not feel that they are kept well informed about how their child is getting on. This was also an issue at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' annual reports are now better, but they still do not clearly indicate how the pupil is getting on in relation to their own capabilities or national standards. Reports have good detail about what the pupil knows, understands, can and cannot do, and some evaluation of the quality of work produced. They contain targets for improvement, but do not give clear guidance on how these can be achieved, or consider ways in which parents can support their child. The school is not harnessing all the parental willingness to be involved.
48. The school provides a very good range of meetings and written information so that parents are helped to understand the way their child's education is progressing, and are informed of events. This is an improvement from the last inspection.
49. The school works very closely with the parents/carers of the pupils with learning difficulties; they are fully involved in the school's work with their children. Each term pupils' progress is discussed with all parents as the individual education plans are reviewed and new learning targets decided, but more frequent meetings are held if improving behaviour is the child's specific need. Parents are made aware of the school's very earliest concerns about their child's progress in learning. Opportunities for parental support of their children's work are clearly identified on the education plans.
50. The Willen School Association continues to play a valuable role in the life of the school, and its fundraising events are well supported. All the pupils enjoy the grounds improvements initiated some years ago. Parents also willingly help out in school: during the inspection week through cooking and accompanying a visit to a Hindu temple. Parents provide very good support for their children's work at home.
51. The school is clear about its educational role, but there are areas where some parents have differing priorities and, for some, this hinders the partnership between school and home. The governing body have not laid out their aspirations clearly enough, which would enable parents to make choices.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. Both leadership and management by key staff are good overall. The headteacher is a very effective manager. He ensures that well-documented routines and systems underpin the smooth running of the school, enthuses staff and keeps parents and governors well informed. The school is a welcoming place and pupils and adults enjoy being there. Since his appointment he has greatly raised the standing of the school in the locality, so much so that pupils now come from a much wider area than was originally planned. Over the last few years the headteacher has very effectively adapted the school in order to take on many national and local initiatives, including the recent establishment of Reception classes with a 'once a year' entry point. Through all this, his leadership has ensured a very clear direction for the school and a strong commitment to the local comprehensive system. Additionally, he has had the vision to think ahead and speculate what will be best for the school when, as part of a local authority initiative, numbers might fluctuate. The headteacher has very clear views about education in general and, in particular, that which the school should provide. Within these boundaries, teachers are encouraged to show initiative and take responsibility for their subject or aspect areas. The co-

ordinators for English and mathematics play a particularly strong and effective role in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects. In some other subjects this co-ordinator role is still under-developed.

53. The deputy headteacher is class-based and has many managerial responsibilities allocated to her. Many of these she has carried out well over the last few years, including the construction of a very useful curriculum 'map' which shows which year group is taught what at different times of the year. During her two long absences, the headteacher and other members of staff shouldered some of her responsibilities and did this well. Key managers work closely with the headteacher and deputy to create a team approach to the work of the school. Because of this, and the staff's strong commitment to offering pupils the best they can, the school has made good improvements since the last inspection. Standards are better than they were and the school has the capacity to raise these higher. This is because teaching has been improved through more effective monitoring and evaluation of what does, and does not, work in lessons and because schemes of work now underpin planning in all subjects.
54. Apart from a lack of compliance with statutory requirements with regard to acts of worship, the governing body carries out its statutory duties and responsibilities well through an effective committee structure. It receives good support and guidance from the local education authority and its committee clerk. Governors are kept closely informed by the headteacher about what is happening and this ensures that all have a very good understanding about how the school works, what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. Consequently, the governing body makes a highly effective contribution to the leadership and direction of the school. A group of governors took the initiative in handling the recent appointment of the new headteacher who will take up post next January. They were highly involved in the process right through from the initial advertisement to the selection and, later, the interview and appointment stages. This exercise has brought the governors together as a cohesive force with a shared and strong commitment to move the school forward.
55. Targets for school development are well chosen because they are based on a very clear analysis of what is, and what is not, working in the school. They are set out well in a clear school improvement plan which indicates how success will be measured in terms of impact on teaching and learning. In addition, all key managers have action plans indicating how improvements can be made in the subjects and aspects for which they have responsibility. Their success in achieving their targets is closely monitored and evaluated.
56. Financial management is good. The governing body set clear priorities and check their spending decisions. The headteacher provides a good overview and day-to-day administration is competently managed. The effects of absence, resources and running costs are modelled to see if improvements can be made and the financial sub-committee meets regularly to assess the budget. This has meant that the school has been able to run a well-balanced budget for a number of years and has taken good account of obtaining best value. The links to the school improvement plan have been thought through well.
57. The school's aims and values are largely reflected in all its work. However, the unacceptable behaviour exhibited by a small minority of pupils is a management issue, which, to some extent, affects the ethos of the school and, in some classes, teaching and learning. In assemblies insufficient tone is set about how to behave on more formal occasions. The school's provision for spiritual and moral development is not sufficiently strong to ensure that all pupils want to behave well, with due regard to the feelings of others and the good name of the school.

58. There are enough qualified teachers in the school, and a well-qualified group of classroom assistants who support pupils with special educational needs. The senior classroom assistant co-ordinates the team and has a very useful role providing administrative support to the special educational needs co-ordinator. Similarly, the senior midday supervisor is empowered to make decisions both over the allocation of her team, and the timing of lunch. The administrative staff perform their roles very efficiently. Using specialist teachers for some curriculum areas (such as physical education, music or art) allows teachers allocated time away from their classes each week for their other duties. Permanent staff benefit from a supportive induction and mentoring programme. Performance management (its replacement) is in place for all staff, although just the headteacher and deputy manage it. Training courses are planned appropriately both to provide career development and to be in line with the school's priorities.
59. The staffing for the support of pupils who have English as an additional language consists of a co-ordinator and a part-time teacher from the local education authority. The part-time teacher works in the school for the equivalent of one day per week, and is supported through the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant (EMAG). At the time of the inspection the EMAG teacher was ill and absent from the school, as was the documentation which she holds. The co-ordinator for English as an additional language also acts as the multi-cultural co-ordinator for the school. She does not have any release time from her role as a full-time classteacher, and hence does not herself teach pupils who have English as an additional language other than those in her own class. She liaises with the EMAG teacher outside teaching time. There is restricted management and teaching time for pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. These pupils are presently receiving only limited support through the school and need more extensive support if the school is to be seen as fully inclusive. The school co-ordinator is committed to her work but needs more opportunities to fulfil the expectations of her role in view of the impending withdrawal of the support for pupils with English as an additional language through the local education authority service. Appraisal was not in place at the time of the last inspection.
60. The accommodation allows the national curriculum to be taught effectively; little has changed from the last inspection, when it was described as 'barely adequate', and teachers consider the design to be a hindrance to modern teaching methods. Improvements include a good-sized new library and music room located so that noise does not interrupt other lessons. New curtains have improved sound insulation in the class bases, although this remains an area of concern. The site manager and his team of cleaners keep the building in a good condition. The grounds are a real asset to the school, and are well used for sporting and recreational purposes. A thoughtful addition is a picnic table especially adapted for a wheelchair user. Trees are still growing, and at present there are not enough shaded seating areas.
61. There are enough resources for teaching in all areas of the curriculum, and the school makes good use of visits, visitors and its own grounds. Computers are positioned sensibly, making the best use of space, but software is not adequate for the oldest pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. To improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governors should
- a) **Raise the standards of pupils with English as an additional language, and particularly those at an early stage by:**
 - ensuring that such pupils are carefully assessed soon after entry to the school;
 - strengthening the provision to support pupils with English as an additional language;
 - ensuring that all classteachers and teaching assistants understand how to support these pupils so that they make good or better progress.
 - b) **Improve standards in writing in the Foundation Stage by planning more regular opportunities to write independently during the day.**
 - c) **Improve the provision for spiritual development and fulfil the statutory requirements by:**
 - setting a tone in assemblies and school gatherings which values the importance of reflection, respect and reverence as well as consideration for others

In addition to the issues mentioned above the school may wish to consider the following minor issues when formulating their action plan:

- Supporting temporary teachers so that they are aware of the various behaviour management strategies that are in place.
- Continue developing assessment procedures for all foundation subjects

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	18	27	18	1	0	0
Percentage	1.5	28	41	28	1.5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	427
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	69

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	33
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.5	School data	0.1
National comparative data	5.4	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	30	28	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	28
	Girls	27	27	27
	Total	53	54	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (88)	93 (92)	95 (92)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	28
	Girls	25	27	27
	Total	51	54	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (90)	93 (92)	95 (98)
	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	25	28	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	20	23
	Girls	23	22	27
	Total	45	42	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (64)	79 (63)	94 (79)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	22	22
	Girls	25	25	24
	Total	47	47	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (58)	89 (60)	92 (76)
	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	304	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	29	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	14	00	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	32	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	13	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	3	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	12	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	13	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	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– Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	26.6

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	266

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/2003
	£
Total income	1000211
Total expenditure	1014838
Expenditure per pupil	2399
Balance brought forward from previous year	12616
Balance carried forward to next year	(2011)

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6.4

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	427
Number of questionnaires returned	216

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	5	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	49	6	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	54	2	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	44	22	6	5
The teaching is good.	46	44	4	2	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	47	18	5	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	33	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	45	6	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	29	52	14	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	44	50	4	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	41	52	3	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	40	12	0	8

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

63. Last September the local education authority changed the policy for admitting children into school and staff had to cope with considerable changes to Reception class routines. All children were admitted at the start of the year rather than term-by-term to ensure that they all had the same amount of time in the reception class. Staff have worked very hard and very successfully this year to provide a well-ordered environment in which the youngest children can thrive. A significant strength of the provision is the way in which the two teachers and the nursery nurses work as a team to ensure that the classes run smoothly and children feel secure and confident in the daily routines. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is sound overall and there are notable strengths in some areas. Teachers are pleased with the success of the venture and can already see the fruits of their success in improved rates of learning. They recognise the areas where there is scope for improvement now that the groundwork has been done.
64. Children enter school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly average for their age. By the time they leave the Reception class most are achieving the early learning goals in all areas. Achievement is good in mathematical and physical development, and in knowledge and understanding of the world, because teaching is consistently good in these areas. It is sound in communication, language and literacy, personal and social development and creative development. Children with special educational needs are well supported and achieve as well as their classmates. Children in the early stages of learning English are not always able to take full part in lessons because there is not enough extra support for them and staff have a limited understanding of their particular needs.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Teaching in this area is sound. In both classes school routines are very well established and expectations of behaviour are clear. For example, children know that they must sit quietly and sensibly for registration and put up their hands and take turns to speak in class discussions. They carry out jobs responsibly, for example, when clearing up at the end of the outdoor play session, which they do with a minimum of fuss. Children respect one another, and play sensibly together for a considerable amount of time without close supervision when adults are working with other groups. They learn to share toys and equipment, and treat each other's property with respect. This was particularly evident in the way they looked after each other's teddies at playtime, and handled the more delicate ones with extra care. There are some inconsistencies in the way children's independence is promoted. On the one hand children take a lot of responsibility for their learning by making choices about what they will do when teachers are not working directly with them. On the other hand there are occasions when not enough is expected of them, for example, when parents come in on the morning of the physical education session to change them into their clothes.

Communication, language and literacy.

66. Teaching in this area is sound overall and there are particular strengths in the teaching of reading where children achieve well. Children are taught letter sounds in class and group sessions and have many opportunities to practise these. They enjoy sharing class stories and develop a love of books because teachers value books. Children often choose to select books independently from the reading corner, and particularly enjoy the homemade books with

photographs of activities they have taken part in. They pretend to read aloud and make up stories from the pictures. Higher attaining pupils can read simple sentences and talk about the 'blurb' on the back cover. Children are encouraged to take reading books home and parents support them by hearing them regularly.

67. Speaking and listening skills are developed appropriately. A wide range of formal and informal activities are provided in which children have opportunities to talk to one another, both out loud to the class and in play situations. A formal class session is planned weekly, in which children take it in turns to show or share something special to them and have opportunities to ask each other questions. In the session seen children enjoyed talking about their favourite teddy bear, and some asked thoughtful questions of each other, for example, whether their teddy played games. This is valuable in giving children opportunities to speak aloud in a formal situation and to pose questions but can be rather long and lower ability children sometimes lose concentration.
68. There are weaknesses in the teaching of writing which limit what children can achieve by the end of the year. In general, teachers do not do enough to prepare children for the more formal writing tasks they will encounter in Year 1. Children practise letter shapes and writing patterns weekly to develop pencil control, and paper and whiteboards are provided in both classrooms, in role-play areas and shared areas so that children can practice independently if they choose. By the end of the year some higher attaining children can write simple sentences independently and lower attaining children have a go at writing familiar letters, but fewer than expected reach the early learning goals for writing and very few achieve beyond that. They do not achieve as well as they could because they are not required often enough to write independently and have a go at recording what they are learning.

Mathematical development

69. This area of learning is particularly well taught and by the end of the year most children have reached the early learning goals for mathematics and many have exceeded them. Teachers make the most of focused teaching sessions to teach children in ability groups, and use opportunities such as morning registration to reinforce counting, addition and subtraction and mathematical language. Children know how many in the class and can work out how many are present if there are three away, for example. Teachers make very good use of number lines to help children learn and order numbers up to and beyond 20 and the majority of the class are confident to take their turn at placing a numbered teddy in the correct place on the number line. Children learn the language of mathematics through relevant, practical activity such as comparing teddy bears and carry this on into their play, discussing confidently which teddy is the longer or the shorter.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Good teaching enables children to achieve well in this area. Teachers build well on the experiences children enter with and have high expectations of what they can learn. They make good use of visitors, parents and the immediate locality to help children learn about the world around them and discover their place within it. Children are developing a very good understanding of place through their work on maps of the local shops. They know that features are represented by symbols and that you can use a map to find your way around. Higher attaining children could identify rivers, roads and parks on a map of London and point out the symbols for boats on the river Thames. They draw recognisable maps of their own that show where each of the local shops are and label some of the shops correctly. Lower attaining children attempt lines and marks to represent the different shops on paper. Children have

regular opportunities to use the computer and can use the mouse to drag and drop icons across the screen. Teachers celebrate the cultural diversity of the area by inviting parents in to explain about different customs and practices, and help the children understand celebrations and festivals such as the Chinese New Year and Hanukkah.

Physical Development

71. This is another area where successful teaching enables all children to achieve well and reach the early learning goals. Children have regular opportunities to use the outdoor play area for extended sessions. The school is well resourced with playground toys and soft construction equipment and children become skilled at moving around the space, steering around obstacles and throwing and catching with increasing accuracy. Where adults extend the play, for example, by encouraging children to aim at specific numbers on a target, children try hard to improve their skills. The weekly physical education lesson is very well organised, with all four adults providing well-planned activities that help develop children's physical abilities. There is clear direct teaching – how to hold and throw a quoit, for example, and adults demonstrate basic skills like skipping and ball control so that children know exactly what they are aiming for. Almost all children can skip and control a small ball with a bat because they have been taught how. Expectations of behaviour are high and the lesson moves on at a brisk pace so that no time is wasted.

Creative development

72. Teachers make sound provision for this area of learning but there is scope for presenting some of the activities in a more imaginative way. Children have regular opportunities to work with paints, chalks, crayons and materials to make pictures, collages and three-dimensional models, usually linked to work in other areas of learning. Collage portraits on display in the classrooms demonstrated that children have choices over materials and designs, and their teachers value their efforts, which are of the standards expected for their age. Teachers plan suitable role-play opportunities to link with each topic and children enjoy playing together in the home corner, whether it's the Three Bears' house or a post office. Their creativity in these activities is not very often supported and extended by adults, however. Similarly, children have daily opportunities to play with construction equipment but adults do not intervene often enough to help them get more out of the activity. Teachers' planning lacks a clear learning intention for some of the free play activities that recognises what children have already achieved in their play and takes them a step further in their learning.

ENGLISH

73. Standards in English are above average for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, with particular strengths in reading. In Year 7, pupils maintain the good standards achieved and many improve their learning well during the year. Achievements in speaking and listening are as expected for these ages. Standards have risen, despite some fluctuations between cohorts, since the last inspection, especially in writing in the infants, and overall subject standards by the end of Year 6. Progress is generally good overall in all stages. Again this is an improvement particularly by the end of Year 6 in reading where progress was judged in the last report to be unsatisfactory. The results of the most recent national tests indicate that at Year 2, which this year has a sizable number of pupils with learning difficulties, more pupils achieve the higher levels in writing than before whilst at the end of Year 6, the indication is that almost half the year group achieve

better than expected for their age in English, with a much larger proportion achieving the higher levels in reading.

74. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory - speaking skills are, in general, stronger than those for listening. Teachers often have to work hard to establish good listening. Ensuring the same careful planning and clear progression throughout this aspect of English as in reading and writing is a focus already identified for improvement. Where activities are specifically planned and teachers' expectations are high, such as a Year 5 lesson that fires pupils' imagination, the progress in both areas of learning is very good. Here, through 'hot seating', pupils become Lila in Philip Pullman's *The Firework Maker's Daughter*. They show empathy with her character confidently answering the very searching questions about her actions and feelings thoughtfully posed by their peers. All listen intently to the replies, to the teachers very expressive reading of the next chapter and to each other as they share their predictions and visualise the scene inside the mountain suggesting ideas for her gifts – determination, bravery and positive self belief – reflecting also the high level of interest the text has engendered. A number of occasions in other subjects, including various themed days, do contribute to speaking and listening. Working in science with their talking partners Year 2s examine their seeds very carefully extending their literacy paired working routine. In music they question with interest older pupils about the instruments they bring to the lesson, and listen well as they are played. Pupils in Year 7 demonstrate good listening skills as they review the risks and effects of substance abuse.
75. Standards in reading are good. Regular home reading, individual and group reading times and shared texts in literacy lessons in the infants all contribute to the progress they make in their reading. They are eager to read and share their enjoyment of books. Progress is regularly tracked. The systematic teaching of sounds and spelling through the Progression in Phonics programme in both Years 1 and 2 is proving very beneficial in equipping these youngsters with the skills to meet unfamiliar words in both reading and writing. Well-targeted support for those with learning difficulties ensures their learning is securely built on the small steps of achievement. As they progress through the juniors, pupils experience a wide range of literature, non-fiction texts and writing styles. By Year 6 they confidently explain their own preferences in their personal reading developing their abilities to recognise 'hidden meanings' and similarities in authors' styles and thoughtfully respond with deepening and mature understanding to their choice of reading. By Year 7, they are self-assured as they read expressively to the class from their current Pullman novel *I Was a Rat*.
76. Good standards are achieved in writing and these are improving as a result of the school's continuing focus. As children enter the infants from the reception year they do not have the same level of writing skills as those for reading. The higher attaining pupils press on rapidly so that by the end of the year a well sequenced and punctuated factual report records a visit to the parish church. By Year 2 pupils write for many purposes using increasingly accurate appropriate punctuation and spelling, with detail to hold the reader's attention and their choice of words shows growing imagination, such as when describing the Great Fire of London as the "*biggest glow in the sky*". From the samples of their work older pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, write with increasing creativity and confidence for a range of audiences and purposes and develop their use and understanding of the features of different forms of writing well. Spelling of more complex words and punctuation are generally accurate. In Year 7, writing builds well on previous work, for example, as pupils identify different styles of paragraphs or work with contradictory sentences, analyse quotations and experience a widening range of literature such as Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Standards in handwriting and presentation throughout the school are very variable. In Year 2, a joined script develops well and by Years 6

and 7 most pupils can write in a well-formed style to present their work but through the intervening stages standards are inconsistent.

77. Teaching overall is good - an improvement from that reported during the last inspection. In the infant stage, lessons are always good or very good contributing well to children's progress. In the juniors, the quality of teaching is more variable, but all lessons are satisfactory and half are very good and pupils achieve highly in their learning. In Year 7, pupils do well, reflecting the good teaching in the only lesson seen. Lessons in all stages are well planned, learning precisely and clearly identified and work builds well on secure previous learning, making strong links in many lessons between reading and writing. Working together on their book review of Dick King Smith's *Little Red Riding Pig* a Year 2 class enjoy sharing their thoughts about the characters and learn how to make decisions about their own writing before independently reviewing another of the author's books to encourage younger children to want to read his work. In Year 7, the sensational journalistic language recognised within their class novel inspires the reports they draft.
78. Where teachers have very good relationships and high expectations of all pupils, such as in the two very good Year 6 lessons, they really rise to the challenge and focus hard on the agreed criteria for persuasive writing as they write their letters and leaflets. Those pupils with learning difficulties achieve well, reflecting the high quality support they receive in their learning. However, in some lower junior lessons, the most able learners are not sufficiently stretched in their work, in lessons or in their previous work, and could achieve more. Where pupils are attentive and listen well learning moves forward at a good pace and lessons are most successful. But in lessons where teaching time is lost as, for example, when waiting for pupils to concentrate on the teachers explanations, then pace, motivation and progress slow although strong teaching retrieves the momentum as in the Year 7 lesson and good work is produced. Learning intentions are usually precisely shared with the class as the lessons begin and their achievement is often discussed as the session ends. Where this is less successful the insecure management of the last part of a lesson misses the opportunity for pupils in Year 4 to share their Haiku poems and extend their understanding of this form of Japanese poetry. Pupils' work is regularly marked and praises pupils' efforts but is not yet of a consistent quality to guide pupils' understanding of their own learning. Marking is at its very best and makes pupils very aware of how well they achieve the learning highlighted in the lessons and gives clear guidance for improving their work.
79. The English curriculum has been greatly strengthened and widened since the last inspection following the introduction of the national literacy strategies. Thoroughly planned to ensure continuity and progression in teaching both of reading and writing skills throughout the school, the curriculum is now more imaginative and expansive. This is particularly evident in the very effective use of class texts to enhance learning. For example, when exploring story settings in Year 1 through the class's favourite story, Michael Rosen's *I'm Going on a Bear Hunt*, or as an interesting way of teaching aspects of the punctuation of dialogue in Year 3 through a Roald Dahl text. Very successfully moving away from the dominance of mundane exercises in the juniors seen in the last inspection, the curriculum changes contribute significantly to improving standards, especially in writing. The literacy support programmes are now effectively used to develop pupils' confidence in reading and spelling. Working in a Year 3 session with a very skilled teaching assistant, a small group of pupils enthusiastically offer different ways to spell words with the same sounds. Carefully matched to the literacy targets in their individual education plans, the generally good progress of pupils with learning difficulties reflects the high quality planned support they receive. For children whose home language is not English and are in the early stages of language acquisition, progress is slower as a similar structured programme

of teaching is not in place. Pupils' progress in learning is regularly tracked and recorded and used to set individual's and year groups' targets. Pupils' evaluating their own learning is being explored.

80. Some good opportunities to develop a range of literacy skills through other subjects are developing, and is an area the school is to expand. During a two-week period in Year 6, the excellent use of *The Flour Babies Experience* – based on the work of the novelist Anne Fine – very successfully links all aspects of English with science, and personal and sex education. Pupils learn of the highs and lows of parenthood initially through the eyes of a journalist leaving behind his newborn son. So realistic is the whole experience even a crèche is set up by a pupil for the babies at playtime! Understanding is delightfully captured in the final verse of a pupil's poem -

*“I hope
You’ll be proud
Of how you’ll bring up your children
With love!”*

81. In science, older pupils make good use of specific vocabulary to report their investigations. Year 2s consider questions to ask in their “Eat Your Heart Out” questionnaire. In history, writing reflects empathy with the lives of evacuees in World War 2. Year 7 explore social issues, such as the Peasants’ Revolt, in their work. Using computer skills in literacy is in its infancy – in Year 7 pupils competently word-process the initial draft of a newspaper report.
82. English is very well led by the two co-ordinators, each bringing experience, expertise and knowledge of teaching within the contrasting age groups of Year 1 and Year 5 to their joint responsibilities. Together, through their regular observations of teaching throughout the school, tracking of pupils’ written work, and monitoring of the whole subject, they have a very well considered awareness of the areas for development, clearly identifying the way forward through the actions they plan. Valuing the support and advice of the literacy consultant, they too work hard to support teachers in their own work through planning, guidance and training, and by constantly reviewing and improving the reading resources. Since the last inspection the school library has been relocated and refurbished and although it is regularly used for the exchange of personal reading books its full potential has still to be realised.

MATHEMATICS

83. Standards are above average by the age of seven and eleven. Year 7 pupils also achieve above average standards. This is an improvement since the last inspection when they were found to be average. Pupils make good progress during their time at school. This is a direct result of good teaching and leadership. Underlying all provision is the good analysis the school makes of all pupils and groups of pupils as part of its assessment arrangements. Teachers know, therefore, where they need to direct their efforts in each class to provide extra support for pupils needing help with basic number skills. This also enables more able pupils to be challenged well.
84. By Year 2 pupils can count on and back in twos, fives, tens and twenties up to one hundred. Most can add and subtract two-digit numbers in a variety of ways, although some less able pupils struggle to do this with numbers above ten. Pupils apply their knowledge well to solving problems and can explain how they arrived at an answer. Most pupils have a good mathematical vocabulary and use words like *halving* and *doubling* accurately and without a

second thought. Pupils can assemble data and represent it on a bar chart and extract information from it. They can choose appropriate units of measurement and many can measure accurately. They know the properties of common shapes and more able pupils can identify and name cylinders and spheres.

85. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made good progress in extending their understanding and use of numbers and other mathematical ideas. Most pupils, for example, have a good grasp of the eight times table and use this to solve problems quickly. Pupils have a good understanding of fractions, decimals, square numbers and negative numbers. Their knowledge of the properties of shapes and angles has developed to the point when they can calculate the exterior and interior angles of triangles. They explain how they arrived at the answers well. Some less able pupils find it hard to solve more difficult mental problems, such as changing grams into kilograms, because of the limited reasoning skills. Pupils use their mathematics and numeracy skills well in other subjects, such as science and geography and teaching of these, as well as for linking it to the use of computers, has improved and is now good.
86. Year 7 pupils have a good understanding of fractions and decimals. They know how to solve algebraic equations. They are able to construct and interpret complex coordinates. They have good skills of checking the reasonableness of their results. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through the school because of the good support they receive. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, and there were some examples of pupils receiving good support. For instance, in a Year 3 class the support assistant presented information visually for the pupil.
87. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was almost always satisfactory. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of mathematics, which means they make clear teaching points and answer pupils' questions accurately. There is a sharp focus on what is to be learnt. In all lessons this is shared with the pupils, so they know what is expected of them. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well and use a variety of approaches to keep pupils interested, such as mathematical games and puzzles. Careful questioning consolidates and extends learning, for example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher led pupils to find an economical way of subtracting by 'adding on'. Teachers' skills of encouraging pupils to explain their thinking are particularly strong and, as a result, pupils build up a good range of strategies for solving problems as they move through the school. Teachers are well organised and, as a result, pupils settle quickly to tasks.
88. Teachers manage pupils well. They expect pupils to concentrate in lessons and this has a positive effect on the quality and quantity of work produced. Occasionally, when expectations of behaviour are not made clear or the classroom space is not well used so that pupils cannot see the whiteboard, a small number of pupils become restless and progress slows. Within 'set' classes, further groupings are often made enabling teachers and assistants to work with pupils at a common level of understanding.
89. The subject is very well managed by the co-ordinators and they have a clear idea of what needs to be done to further raise attainment. The quality of assessment that teachers make is good overall and provides for the planning and setting of targets for groups of pupils. Work is regularly marked, but the extent to which it explains how pupils can improve their work varies from class to class. There are some good examples of pupils using information and communication technology, for example, for work on data handling. Each class has sufficient resources to back up the teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy.

SCIENCE

90. As at the last inspection, Year 2 pupils are achieving standards that are average. Teacher assessment at the end of 2002 indicates results in line with the national expectations, but higher in comparison with similar schools. Teacher assessment at the end of 2003 indicates a slightly downward trend, mainly due to the fact that there are many young 'summer born' pupils in the current year group and, in one class, a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Additionally, this group has not had the benefit of a Reception class year. When pupils' knowledge and understanding of living things are assessed, they achieve very high results due to the emphasis Year 2 teachers place upon this aspect of the subject. Pupils find it more difficult to tackle the investigative side of the subject and to make careful written recordings of their results.
91. By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve standards above national expectations. In the 2002 tests, results were above the national average and above in comparison with similar schools. There are as yet no comparative figures for 2003, but test results for the current year show that almost 100 per cent of the pupils have attained standards that are at least average, with half of these reaching above the national expectation. This indicates a good improvement since the last inspection, when standards at the end of Year 6 were judged to be average. The above average standards pupils achieved in Year 6 have been maintained in Year 7.
92. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in gaining scientific knowledge and understanding. This shows improvement since the last inspection and reflects the good planning and teaching currently in place. Pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are fully included in all science lessons. They also make good progress due to the effective support of teachers and through collaboration with other children in the class. However, recording methods are not matched consistently to these pupils' different abilities. This results in some unfinished and poorly labelled work which does not do sufficient justice to pupils' good practical participation and thinking.
93. Overall, the teaching in science is good. Throughout the school thorough planning based on national guidelines is now in place. This is an improvement since the last report when there was no scheme of work used across the school. Current planning ensures that pupils in all year groups are introduced to an appropriately broad and balanced programme which builds on, and extends, their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills as they move through the school. The subject covers aspects of sex and health education and makes a strong contribution to the pupils' personal development. For example, in design and technology Year 2 pupils make attractive sandwiches and this work includes a strong emphasis on 'healthy living'. Throughout the school there is evidence of pupils collecting data and displaying their results in table and graphic form. In Year 6, pupils use this skill particularly well to record the effects of exercise upon their heartbeats. However, the use made of computers to display data or for research purposes is limited. Teachers use a wide range of scientific words in their lessons and this helps pupils build up a good vocabulary to use when talking and writing about their work. In Years 1 and 2, art is closely linked to pupils' scientific work. In Year 1, pupils very competently create attractive collages to support their understanding of the differences between natural and artificial flowers. In Year 2, pupils' work inspires many drawings and paintings of mini-beasts they have found in the school and local environments.
94. Most teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and this is reflected in their confident classroom practice. In Year 2 the teachers' expertise in environmental work is

particularly evident and this inspires pupils' own interest in living things. Most teachers introduce a wide range of resources and these are well prepared and organised beforehand so that no time is lost in science lessons. In one good Year 5 lesson a demonstration on the phases of the moon, based on a current advertisement involving eating a brand of chocolate biscuits, brought great mirth but also supported understanding. In a subsequent lesson on the same theme, good use was made of the playground and the pupils themselves to demonstrate how the earth moon and sun move in relation to each other. In Year 6, pupils sensibly use stopwatches in support of their work on the relationship of energy expended to pulse rates. The use of all such resources greatly interests the pupils and enhances their learning. In most classes, good management ensures that the great majority of pupils concentrate on their work and learning takes place at an uninterrupted pace. However, in classes being taught by other than permanent staff members, the behaviour of a minority of pupils can spoil the experience of others. In Year 3 too many worksheets are used. This limits the full development of pupils' investigative skills and their ability to use an individual approach in their recording.

95. Marking both within and across year groups is inconsistent. At its best it is helpful, asking questions or making comments which lead pupils on to further thought. At other times marking does little more than give words of praise, or remarks about presentation or unfinished work, which in themselves do not help pupils to improve the scientific content of their work.
96. Pupils throughout the school enjoy their work in science, especially if it includes practical activities and tasks. Year 2 pupils are keen to talk about their experiences in science, especially growing and hatching out butterflies in the classroom situation. Wonder is expressed at their eventual release into the environment. Most pupils use equipment very sensibly and work together well, helping each other when necessary. In one Year 4 class all the pupils managed to construct a satisfactory 'hanging' food chain with the minimum of fuss, sharing equipment and materials very equably. There is an inconsistency in the way that pupils present their work, which in some classes shows a lack of pride. Poor spelling, even of key words, was particularly noticeable, and left uncorrected, in the work of a more able Year 2 pupil. By Years 6 and 7, there are some very clear, well-written explanations and diagrams describing how investigations are set up and carried out.
97. Subject management is presently somewhat hampered by the lack of a science co-ordinator with particular responsibility for Key Stage 2/3. The Key Stage 1 co-ordinator carefully monitors teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 and is closely involved in making sure teacher assessments are accurate at the end of Year 2. A great deal of time and energy has been spent on auditing and repositioning resources so that these are used to the best effect and unnecessary financial outlay avoided. The national scheme of work for this subject has been introduced and is now used to underpin planning. Careful assessments are made of individual pupil's knowledge and understanding at the end of each unit of work and a note is made of their progress in using investigative skills.
98. A good range of visits to environmental study centres, and the use of first-rate nature areas in the school grounds and locality, much enrich this area of the curriculum. An enthusiastic Year 2 teacher runs a popular Nature Club attended by pupils from across the school. The present accommodation and facilities for teaching and learning in Year 7 are inadequate for this age group.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Only a few lessons were observed, but the scrutiny of sketchbooks, teachers' planning and displays of work indicate that pupils reach national expectations for the subject at the ages of seven, eleven and by the time they leave school at the end of Year 7. As most activities are of a practical nature, pupils of all abilities and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory, if variable, progress.
100. The national guidelines have been adopted and these are supporting better continuity in the pupils' learning, because the teachers are now clearer about what skills need to be taught to each year group. However, the impact of the introduction of this scheme of work has not yet had a significant effect on raising standards further. Sketchbooks are in evidence across the school and are often used well to practise skills or refine detail. The after-school art club is effective in extending opportunities for pupils to learn and practise different art skills.
101. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is sound. Most of the art lessons are taught by a part-time teacher so that non-contact time can be provided for classteachers to carry out other duties. This presents some difficulties, as the pupils do not always respond as well to another adult as they would to their own teacher. Evidence in planning and in displays indicates that many aspects of the national guidelines are covered. Year 1 pupils go on a Sculpture Walk in the nearby town and make careful pencil sketches of what they see. They visit an environmental centre and create collages of the natural materials they bring back to school. In Year 2, pupils are introduced to the work of other artists and craftspeople, such as William Morris. Claywork, produced by students at the Arts College, inspires interesting pictures of 'Gaudi's Towers'. Artwork enhances work in other subjects. For example, the Fire of London is portrayed effectively in pastels and black paper and there are many close-observational drawing of natural objects and insects. However, opportunities for the exploration of skills are sometimes limited by the need to produce an end product rather than allowing pupils to investigate and use materials in an original way.
102. Overall, the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory but very variable. Pupils in Year 3 paint pictures of ancient Greek pots. This activity is linked to their work in history and consolidates pupils' knowledge of craftspeople of that time. Commercial pictures on display show examples of double portraits and the work of Van Gogh. However, the results of opportunities for pupils to build on and improve basic skills and techniques are not so evident.
103. Teaching and learning are very good in Year 4 because of the subject expertise of one of the teachers in that year group. The printing seen during the inspection demonstrates standards above the national average. Using variations on the theme of local road patterns, the pupils produce colourful pictures and printing of a high quality. The two teachers plan together carefully and over several art sessions allow plenty of time for pupils to explore and investigate possibilities. Through this shared planning, all pupils make very good progress in acquiring new skills and techniques.
104. In Year 5, there are careful close-observational drawings, including some of the local church. Whilst the rest of the class were at Ironbridge on a residential visit, a learning support assistant worked with a small group who, for different reasons, remained behind. The work produced, which involved extending a small section of a magazine picture, is of high quality. An information and communication technology project based on a picture of *The Snail* by Matisse, provide good links with the work of another artist.
105. The recent emphasis in Year 6 has been on close observational drawing, particularly of people. Sketchbooks have been used well and, in some instances, the drawings of pupils taking part in

different activities show good movement. The involvement of a tutor from the Arts College results in some interesting work on War Artists. These include Henry Moore and his 'shelter drawings' and Picasso and his painting *Guernica*. There are good links with literacy through pupils' written expression of their feelings about war. Pupils in Year 6 have great fun in producing brightly coloured and decorated masks modelled on their own faces. Good use is made of the design element in this activity. Through this work pupils build on their knowledge of other cultures, including that of the Aztecs, and the use of masks for different purposes.

106. In Year 7 the teaching is sound. Skills that should have been introduced at an earlier stage are now being carefully taught. Teacher-directed lessons are carried out with this purpose in mind. As a result, all pupils produce work identical to that modelled by the teacher and do not have sufficient opportunities to show originality. With the introduction of the national guidelines, this is a situation which is likely to improve over the next few years. Interesting activities which occur in this year group include the opportunity to carry out rubbings of brasses brought in by a visitor and involvement in a local initiative on the work of Robert Hooke, a contemporary of Christopher Wren.
107. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in planning, which is now based firmly on national guidelines. However, systematic assessment strategies are not yet in place. Information and communication technology, while still in the early stages of development, is now better used in a number of lessons. The management of the subject is now stronger and the very enthusiastic co-ordinator has identified areas in which less-confident teachers need more support. The good Year 4 work is partly the result of the co-ordinator's training input on printing techniques. A substantial sum has been spent on improving classroom equipment such as paint pots and brushes. However, the poor quality of paper available for watercolour work and printing limits higher standards in pupils' work. Whilst much work enhances pupils' understanding and knowledge of their own western heritage, the co-ordinator recognises the need to raise the profile of multi-cultural art within the school. Very productive links have been made with the local Arts College.
108. Various art competitions are held, including those resulting in beautiful 'blue' pictures. It is difficult to judge from these how much is the work of pupils and how much the input of parents. Colourful and interesting displays of pupils' work considerably enhance the building and items from these are sometimes borrowed so that they can form part of local and national exhibitions.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. Because of the timing of the inspection during the school year, it was only possible to inspect lessons in design and technology in Year 1 and Year 2. A scrutiny of samples of older pupils' products from design and technology lessons, and of their associated written work, was undertaken, including their design folders or exercise books and their self-evaluations. Photographic records of some of the products of Year 7 pupils were also examined. The standards of Year 2 pupils in design and technology are above those expected nationally, which is an improvement since the last inspection. In Year 6, pupils' standards are in line with those expected nationally, and this was also the case when the school was last inspected. Pupils in Year 7 are reaching standards which are above those expected nationally, and this represents an improvement since the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good or satisfactory progress across the school, and participate fully in design and technology lessons.

110. Pupils in Year 2 reach good standards in their food technology work. After designing various sorts of rolls, sandwiches and baguettes, they use a range of spreads and fillings to complete their products, and consider issues of design, taste and presentation as ways of evaluating their work. They have a secure understanding of each of the stages of designing and making. Younger infant pupils attain satisfactory standards in making models of playground swings and slides through the use of building blocks, construction materials, cotton reels, straws and corks, and using pipe-cleaners, plasticene, split pins and masking tape to join materials together.
111. In their work on containers, Year 6 pupils design and make boxes for pizzas in a satisfactory way. They understand how to design the net on which the box is based and produce the illustrations on the box. A prototype is made to show the complete two-dimensional layout, before the actual box is constructed. Pupils also design and make a fairground. The quality of the pupils' products is variable, but one structure involving suspended swing-boats is better constructed than many others. Pupils' work should more evidently involve the use of electrical and mechanical components which is part of the intended learning. Their knowledge and understanding of the stages of the design process are secure, but they need to ensure their final evaluations are related to the original criteria for the designs, and not simply to what they like and dislike about the products.
112. In Year 7, pupils reach good standards of work in design and technology. They build a variety of types of siege engines, including balusters and catapults, some of which involve the use of gearing mechanisms. The quality of both the designing and the construction are good, though more could be made of pulley mechanisms, which is a specified design feature of the project. In another project, concerned with the design and manufacture of footwear, pupils undertake a museum visit and other initial research, including some Internet research, before undertaking a variety of well-drawn and well-labelled designs. They produce step-by-step guides and make their products, which span a great range of types of shoes, slippers and trainers, using a considerable variety of materials. Projects are completed by some good self-evaluation work which focuses separately on the quality of the final product and on pupils' overall experience of the project. These self-evaluations show that many pupils are becoming perceptive and self-aware about important aspects of their own work.
113. The quality of teaching and learning in design and technology is good overall, which represents an improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers plan their work in sufficient detail to provide effective support for pupils' learning and the organisation of lessons. They show that they have a good overall knowledge and understanding of the nature of the subject, including the related stages of designing, making and evaluating products. Care is taken to introduce pupils to the essential vocabulary of design and technology, so that they appreciate, for instance, that important features of structures are their strength and stability. Computers are used more to help with presentation, evaluation and as part of design. In the best teaching, very good personal use of language by teachers serves as a model to the pupils.
114. A common feature of very good teaching was the effective structuring of work for pupils. In a Year 7 project on footwear, for instance, teachers had clearly thought through the overall purposes and sequence of work in great detail. In a very good lesson on food technology in Year 2, the teacher had prepared materials for pupils' use, briefed the helping adults, and provided a very strong introduction to the activity by discussing with the children each stage of the making process. In addition, she linked the work to the pupils' existing knowledge about a healthy diet, and ensured that issues of health and safety were understood before pupils set about making their food.

115. There were instances, as in Year 1 lessons, where the teaching assistant provided strong support for the work of teachers through an enthusiastic approach, effective reinforcement of the purpose of activities, and relevant subject terminology. Teachers' capacity to manage pupils' attention was more variable. There were examples of very good techniques to focus pupils' attention on important issues. However, one teacher did not manage to ensure that pupils paid good enough attention to instructions addressed to the whole class. One effect was that the momentum of the lesson was lost, resulting in a final whole-class session which was too brief and superficial. The quality of marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. Whereas some pupils receive both praise and detailed comments, there were other instances where there was no evidence that the work of pupils had been marked at all.
116. The leadership and management of design and technology are now satisfactory. At the time of the last inspection there was no design and technology co-ordinator and thus the subject was seen as weak. This is no longer the case. Significant improvements are the introduction of schemes of work, and a well designed and well balanced curriculum map of the subject from Year 1 to Year 7. A useful portfolio containing photographic records of design and technology work across the school, and in particular pupils' constructions and products, is in the process of being built up. Although the co-ordinator does not have an explicit job description, the role includes the monitoring and assessment of pupils' achievements through considering their design and technology products. There are weaknesses in that the checking of teaching is not yet taking place, and procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress need to be sharpened. The co-ordinator does not have a specific time award for such work. The co-ordinator has kept up to date by attending a locally organised course for design and technology co-ordinators. She is responsible for maintaining the resources for the subject, which are currently satisfactory.

GEOGRAPHY

117. By the end of Year 2 standards are at the nationally expected level and by the end of Year 6 and Year 7 they are above what would normally be expected from pupils of this age. Progress in learning, including those pupils with special educational needs, is sound through Years 1 and 2 and good from Year 3 to Year 7. Pupils with English as an additional language make suitable progress but more help is needed that would enable teachers to increase the ways of developing these pupils' understanding. There has been sound progress since the last report and provision for the subject has continued to improve, particularly in the use of information and communication technology.
118. Through Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about their own local environment and this is linked well to first-hand experience through visits. The good planning by teachers links well to developing the skills of the subject in a sequential way and to gaining a balance between practical work and evaluation and reporting of what has been studied. Pupils have a good level of general knowledge and are able to discuss what they have learnt. They show good levels of enthusiasm for finding out new information. They do not always understand the relevance of the social impact of humans on the local area or about places further afield.
119. In Years 3 to 6 learning is good. In Year 3 and 4 pupils understand about their own town and its development and how this is different from rural areas. In Years 5 and 6 the use of visits and visitors helps pupils understand well. They are beginning to work out their own theories about the reasons for the physical and human geography of different places. They write reports well about contrasting localities and can explain why things are as they are. They are beginning to

use some specific subject vocabulary such as *erosion, meander* and *water cycle*. There are some good connections to other subjects, such as science and history in environmental and local studies and improving links to information and communication technology through the use of spreadsheets. Innovative use has been made in art where pupils have drawn pictures representing field patterns. Little work was seen in Year 7 but in discussion with pupils they have improved their understanding from work in previous years. They have embarked on the programmes of study for Key Stage 3 and are prepared for work that will follow at the next school.

120. Teaching is good through the school although few lessons were seen during the inspection. Planning is thorough. It takes account of what has gone before and the overall curriculum plan for each year. Teachers ensure that there is a balance of both practical activity, learning about new facts and independent activities that will help pupils think. Pupils respond positively. There are some good examples of work prepared at home and brought in to enhance class lessons. This includes computer research, photographs and drawings.
121. The long-standing co-ordinator, who is also responsible for history, has a good overview of what is being undertaken within the school. She has attended some courses and keeps in touch with other subject co-ordinators. There have been no direct observations of teaching although both the planning and work samples have been examined. One of the strengths discovered from this exercise was the high level of 'hands-on' experience such as themed days, role-play and enactment. Resources are adequate and are enhanced as and when needed. The subject has taken a lower profile in recent years because of the drive to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills but the school is now trying to ensure that there is a better balance. This is being achieved.

HISTORY

122. By the end of Years 2, 6 and 7 standards are above the expected levels. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to their previous attainment and are fully included in all activities. Pupils make good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were found to be average with pupils making satisfactory progress.
123. By the age of seven, pupils have gained a good knowledge of famous people they have studied, such as Florence Nightingale. They have a clear understanding of her role and how she improved conditions for soldiers. They can make simple comparisons between hospitals then and the present day. They have a good knowledge of their current topic on the Fire of London. They know why the fire spread so quickly and of attempts to put it out. They understand some of the ways in which the past is recorded and represented, for example, in painting and in letters.
124. In Year 6, pupils develop a good knowledge of different historical periods, for example, during World War II. They produce good quality writing, reflecting considerable empathy with the child evacuees during this period. Research skills develop well and they produce impressive work on the main events leading up to this war. They know the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence. In their studies of famous people in recent history, pupils present very good multi-media information for their classmates. These are rightly applauded. In Year 7, pupils produce work of a high standard, such as that on medieval England. They use evidence well to explain how monarchs kept control of the country. Pupils across the school learn successfully from visits each year to places of historical interest such as Warwick Castle.

This prompted high quality research and resulted in beautifully presented books about castles in Year 7.

125. The quality of teaching is good. Work in pupils' books, and teachers' planning, confirms a well-organised approach based upon a good knowledge of the subject. Questions challenge pupils to think and put forward their own ideas, as happened in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were asked to consider the impact of a famous person in recent history had on society. Pupils came up with a range of interesting ideas. Teachers cover topics being studied in some depth and give due attention to important skills such as the evaluation of evidence. The Internet is used well for research at school and home. Teachers try to ensure that pupils discriminate the information they have found and build their own version of events.
126. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. Resources are sufficient for the topics studied. Planning is based upon national guidelines to ensure pupils' knowledge and skills build up as they move through the school. The subject is monitored through an oversight of teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work. A start has been made on developing assessment procedures. Projects, such as a 'Greek Feast Day', when people dress up, help pupils to understand what life was like in Ancient Greece.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

127. Standards by the end of Year 2, Year 6 and Year 7 are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils make sound progress in their learning which is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were too low. At that time the opportunities to use computers were insufficient and this has improved with better hardware, a more balanced curriculum and teachers' better understanding and confidence.
128. Children leave the Reception class with above average skills in some aspects of the subject such as the use of the mouse. However, in Years 1 and 2, development takes place through the use of specific skill lessons which improve the use of the keyboard, art packages and research. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to open and close programs, switch graphics into word-processing programs and undertake some basic research using CD-Roms and the Internet. There are examples of some simple graphs and charts that have been made linked to other subjects such as science and geography. These opportunities could be further extended in English where the use of word-processing is limited.
129. In Years 3 to 6 pupils continue to build upon what they have learnt in previous years. Pupils have tallied the number and types of videos in Year 3 and have conducted research on the Greeks. They have written reports from what they have found out and undertaken more extended word-processing. In Year 4 there is work linked to science and geography on environmental issues looking at the types of rubbish people have left although pupils are not given enough chance to evaluate their findings. Work in art and design has included well thought out pictures of repeating patterns. In Year 5 a graphics program has been used to help design the classroom and here some good work using word-processing has included a question sheet. Pupils have had to think about the layout and design as well as pertinent questions to ask. This shows good links to a number of different subjects.
130. The learning in Year 7 is somewhat restricted by the need for more advanced software suitable for teaching in this key stage. However, the work completed shows that pupils continue to make progress. The work on safety has again linked work on spreadsheets with that of tallying.

Pupils have made some subtle evaluations from the records they have collected. Pupils are to be given the opportunity to use hardware from other sources next year and this will alleviate the problems of the need for developing higher skills. In addition, the school is to purchase more resources to support the subject.

131. Teaching and learning is at its best when pupils are allowed more independence using the workstations. In one Year 4 lesson, good use was made of a specific skill and then practice of this in a real life situation. The pupils responded well to the challenge working sensibly and collaboratively to complete the task. Unfortunately, a number of pupils finished before the end of the lesson and the follow-up task was less demanding. However, pupils continued to work quietly and a few were able to find their own programs to support other work. Planning is much improved. There are clear guidelines for inclusion of the subject within others. Teachers have undergone a national training programme and this has helped a number develop their own skills to a much higher level.
132. Support assistants are used well. Many have good skills themselves although some are being identified for further training and are keen to improve their own skills. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make at least sound progress and for a number this is better. Pupils with English as an additional language also make suitable progress. Where speaking skills are learnt quickly progress is better. There are no support systems in place for developing pupils' intricacies of language once they have passed this early stage and teachers need more support in this area. Assessment of the subject is at an early stage of development although teachers have a good overview of what has been completed. However, this does not include the evidence from more formal assessment that would allow them to plan work at a higher level. Work linked to literacy and numeracy is good as is that for other subjects.
133. The co-ordinator has set up a suitable development plan for the subject and can see where improvements should be made. Staff turnover has caused some fluctuation in provision but this is now more stabilised. Hardware is suitable for work in Years 1 to 6 but outside help has been needed to fulfil all the requirements of the curriculum for Year 7. Links to other schools are suitable and these are starting to define the work that will be carried on here so that it will form a good basis for further learning from Year 8.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (French)

134. At the last inspection, pupils' attainment in French was seen as very good. The present inspection shows that pupils are attaining well in the subject at the end of Year 6 and Year 7. Pupils are taught French from Year 5 onwards, with some specialist teaching by a part-time teacher in Year 7. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress across the school, and participate fully in French lessons.
135. Pupils in Year 6 are also reaching good standards in their oral work in French. They have a sense of achievement as they learn successfully how to play the roles of a waiter or waitress and a customer in a café. Pupils order food and drinks, and ask the cost of their purchases. They are gaining from their experience of learning French and are making good progress overall.
136. Pupils in Year 7 are reaching good standards in their comprehension of spoken French from listening both to their teacher and to tape-recorded material. They make good progress in learning to understand speakers of French talking about their own type of hair and own eye colour, and to say for themselves, for instance, '*j'ai les cheveux mi-longs*' or '*j'ai les yeux*

bleus to describe their own mid-length hair or blue eyes. Pupils' standards have improved more recently because they have been learning a greater variety of sentence patterns, so that their understanding of, and ability to speak, a greater variety of French sentences appropriate to their age have developed.

137. The quality of teaching and learning in French at present is good overall. At the last inspection, teaching was judged to be very good. Teachers' personal knowledge of, and skills in French, including their pronunciation and intonation of the language, varies from very good to satisfactory. Lesson planning is good, and ensures that the work develops or advances so that pupils have a sense that they are making progress in their acquisition of language skills or their knowledge of vocabulary. Teachers prepare materials and resources for their lessons very effectively using real objects, flashcards and taped material, so that pupils experience a variety of starting points for their learning. The organisation of lessons is similarly very good, resulting in a brisk pace, which helps to sustain pupils' interest and attention. Despite good teaching and management, a small minority of boys in Year 7 is inattentive or disruptive in French lessons. Although their teacher has a range of effective methods of minimising the extent of any disruption, the results are that less work is completed than might otherwise be the case, and that well behaved children have fewer opportunities to be involved positively in the lesson.
138. Teachers in Year 6 and Year 7 are rightly placing greater emphasis on pupils' understanding and use of sentence patterns, and thus providing pupils with a greater variety of work. In Year 7, some useful practice in learning to use dictionaries effectively was observed. Although this activity was short, it was well focused on the meaning of some important conventions for abbreviations found in dictionaries; pupils then practised their new understanding by looking up and recording some new words. In a Year 6 lesson, significant vocabulary for the later part of the lesson was effectively revised and consolidated through the use of Kim's game. Teachers make good use of praise for pupils' efforts and achievements in developing their oral French.
139. The leadership and management of the co-ordinator are good. The quality of medium-term planning for the subject is good. The approach is rightly focused on the development of oral work and is based on topics. The curriculum for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils has been well planned by the co-ordinator, and in Year 7 the nationally available scheme supplements the co-ordinator's planning. Recently, there has been a greater emphasis on pupils learning a wider range of sentence patterns in French. This is a well-devised approach, and teachers need to continue to focus on and develop this method of working.
140. The approach to the assessment of pupils' attainment in the subject is improving. For example, the quality of marking of the exercise books of Year 7 pupils has improved during the year. Pupils' written work is now being corrected, comment is given on the quality of pupils' presentation and, where appropriate, pupils are receiving written praise. Furthermore, end-of-unit tests are now taking place in speaking and listening work in Year 6 and in speaking and listening, reading and writing in Year 7. However, assessment is not yet sufficiently informing future curriculum planning. Learning resources to support the subject are adequate for teaching purposes, but additional materials, including the use of new technology, would allow for a greater variety of approach. A more focused approach to the checking of teaching and of pupils' learning is needed to improve standards further.

MUSIC

141. Music continues to be a strength of the school. The subject is well led, well resourced and well taught, especially in Year 6 where a specialist musician brings the best out of pupils and

achievement is good. No lessons were seen at Year 7 although the evidence from videos and performance suggests that pupils leave the school with skills that are in line with what is expected for their age.

142. In the very good teaching in Year 6, the teacher's expertise is evident throughout the lesson. The session begins with brisk warm up activities, which engage pupils in rhythmic exercises and ensure they play an active part in the lesson from the beginning. Pupils move quickly and purposefully into group work, for example, when agreeing and composing a sequence of rhythms to illustrate the progress of a group of explorers across a treasure island. Higher attaining groups were able to deliver a well thought out performance that incorporated the required features, and record their rhythms with appropriate marks and symbols so that they could reproduce the composition another time. Lower attaining groups made equally good progress because the teacher moved around to help and suggest ideas, ensuring that all had something to offer at the end of the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to take full part in the activities and make the same good progress as their classmates.
143. The school offers a wide range of music lessons from visiting specialists and pupils attending them bring their expertise into their class work. The range of instruments covered is impressive and includes clarinet, flute, trumpet, baritone, trombone, guitar, cello, double bass, keyboard and violin. In addition, teachers hold recorder clubs at lunchtime and organise a school choir and school band for special occasions in the school year such as end-of-term concerts. Pupils enjoy their music and take part enthusiastically. This was evident in the attitudes of the Year 7 pupils preparing for their production of 'Blast Off', most of whom made a real effort to sustain their parts and keep in time in the businesslike rehearsals. Valuable links with the secondary school's music department enabled these pupils to work with a specialist teacher this year and the good quality of the resulting performance was evident in the school's video recordings.
144. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. The teacher has sound subject knowledge and prepares lessons well. In a lesson with Year 2 pupils the teacher made very good use of some instrumentalists from the older classes to demonstrate how they blew and played their woodwind and brass instruments. The younger pupils were fascinated by this expertise and asked sensible questions about how long it had taken them to learn to play and what they had found most difficult. The behaviour of a small number of pupils in these lessons is unacceptable and this slows the lesson down and spoils it for the vast majority who behave well.
145. The subject makes a very positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Older pupils enjoy the success they achieve from performing in school and community events, and their self-esteem develops as a result. The use of computers and other electronic equipment needs to be better planned for especially as pupils get into the older year groups. Most pupils enjoy singing when they get the chance, and younger pupils sing a wide variety of songs, including action songs, from memory with great enthusiasm. A disappointing feature of the provision in music is the lack of singing in school assemblies, where there are missed opportunities for pupils to appreciate the contribution music makes to times of reflection and worship.
146. The leadership of the subject is good. There is considerable musical expertise in the school and a commitment to improvement. Musical provision is organised well but there is further work to be done in monitoring the quality of teaching and putting in place more formal systems for assessing pupils' progress.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Standards of physical education in Year 2 are as expected nationally, which was also the case in the last inspection. In Year 6, pupils are achieving above the level of national expectations, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. In view of the timing of the inspection, there were no opportunities to observe Year 7 pupils undertaking physical education activities. However, from observations elsewhere in the school, there is reason to expect that the standards of these pupils are at least satisfactory, if not good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making satisfactory progress across the school, and participate fully in physical education activities.
148. Pupils in Year 2 reach expected standards as they develop their capacity to throw in an athletics lesson. Pupils practise the skills of throwing beanbags and quoits, and learn the new skills associated with throwing foam javelins, including learning to adopt the correct stance of the body and legs in order to launch the javelin effectively. In the course of the lesson, pupils improve their levels of success in throwing. Younger infant pupils similarly reach expected standards as they practise and learn about balancing skills. Most pupils have good balance. They can walk, hop and double skip using the grid marked out on the school playground, when moving between team games.
149. Year 6 pupils reach good standards as they practise the skills of bowling, batting and fielding in readiness for a game of rounders. Most boys are well or very well co-ordinated, but girls show a wider range of co-ordination. Many pupils show good development of bowling and batting skills in the course of the lesson. Other older junior pupils make good progress in learning the skills associated with changing the baton in relay races and with performance of triple jumps from a standing position. Year 4 children reach above average standards in practising how to strike balls with a variety of types of bat, and how to field, before using their new skills in a game of rounders. Year 3 pupils make effective progress in developing their catching skills from standing and running positions, and also their stumping skills, and put these to good use when they are given the opportunity to play a game of rounders.
150. The quality of teaching and learning in physical education is good overall, as was the case in the last inspection, and much teaching includes some very good features. Most lessons are well planned and sequenced. Pupils are regularly given good opportunities to warm up through gentle exercise and stretching activities. In the best lessons, pupils are also helped to understand the importance of such work before beginning physical education activities. The quality of planning varies from satisfactory to very good. Teachers display good or very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. They frequently provide demonstrations of how to perform particular skills, or invite pupils to show others how to perform, for example, triple jumps from a standing position, or how to change batons in relay races.
151. In effective physical education lessons, teachers firstly ask pupils to perform simple tasks and then increase the level of complexity so as to raise the level of challenge and to develop pupils' skills. This gives pupils a sense of achievement as they progress towards higher levels of skill. Teachers regularly use language effectively in physical education lessons. In one very good lesson, the Year 4 teacher took especial care in describing how to perform particular movements and actions, and in organising her class. This teacher also used praise judiciously and thus encouraged pupils very effectively. Another teacher effectively introduced specialised subject vocabulary, for instance *follow through* of the arm when bowling a ball.
152. Where expectations are high, as they mostly are, pupils respond well or very well. Teachers often show good management skills in ensuring high levels of concentration before

demonstrations, but where this was not the case, pupils experienced greater difficulty in following instructions given. Pupils mostly show high levels of involvement and interest in physical education lessons, and apply themselves well in practising skills and in playing games. However, the teacher of one younger infant class found some difficulty in raising pupils' enthusiasm. Pupils also mostly showed good levels of co-operation in team activities. In the case of one junior class however, some pupils fell to arguing after playing a team game, but the situation was effectively retrieved by the teacher who used the opportunity to reason with the pupils why such behaviour was not acceptable. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are consistently good or very good. Attitudes to physical education are also good, and pupils show enjoyment in their work.

153. The leadership and management of physical education are good, as was the case at the last inspection. Although the co-ordinator does not have an explicit job description, the role includes the monitoring and assessment of pupils' achievements. Some checking of teaching has also taken place, and more is planned in the coming year, but the co-ordinator does not have a specific time award for this work. The co-ordinator is also responsible for maintaining the resources for the subject, which are currently satisfactory. One good improvement, which has been introduced since the last inspection, has been the appointment of a part-time specialist teacher, who teaches junior children and provides additional extra-curricular activities.
154. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in physical education are good. Longer-term planning indicates that pupils gain a good variety of physical education experiences over time, including, dance, gymnastics, athletics and games. Netball and hockey are introduced from Year 3, and Year 4 pupils have extensive opportunities to learn to swim. In addition, a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities is available, which include cycling, football, gymnastics, netball, hockey, running, lacrosse, basketball, kwik cricket, and various sorts of dance. Some of these activities are supported by local sports clubs. The physical education programme overall is making good contributions to pupils' social and moral development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

155. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection and judgements are based on a small amount of work in pupils' books and discussion with older pupils about their work. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection at Year 2, Year 6 and Year 7 and pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory. Teaching overall is sound. The subject is taught regularly and teachers base their planning on national and local guidance for the subject. The planning ensures that pupils learn about other major world faiths as well as Christianity and in discussion older pupils can recall work done on Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam. By the end of Year 6 pupils understand that there are common features that religions share such as places of worship, sacred texts and rules for behaviour. They recognise the importance of learning about the different religions 'so that you respect people with different beliefs and understand why they do things differently'.
156. A strength of the teaching is the use made of visits to places of religious interest, of religious artefacts and personal expertise to bring the subject alive. Year 2 pupils make a highly successful visit to the Peace Park and the Buddhist Temple each year and they can still talk enthusiastically about it in Year 6. Pupils are well prepared by the teacher who explains the importance of good behaviour as a sign of respect, and prepares them with photographs and clear descriptions of what they will see inside the temple. Pupils are fascinated as the teacher skilfully generates an appreciation of the beauty they will encounter and prepares them for the wonder of the occasion. The result is an experience that has a lasting impact and contributes

very effectively to pupils' personal development. Other classes visit the local Anglican Church and practitioners from other faith communities come into school to share their beliefs and customs with pupils.

157. In a very effective lesson in Year 6 the teacher made good use of Moslem prayer mats to help pupils appreciate the importance of pattern and design in Moslem art, and to teach them more about the importance of ritual in Moslem prayer. Pupils were fascinated, and listened with great interest to one of their Moslem classmates who was able to give a personal demonstration of the daily routines. They asked sensible questions about prayer and listened carefully to the explanations. These class discussions are a regular feature of lessons in religious education and make a positive contribution to pupils' speaking and listening skills.
158. A weakness in teaching lies in the fact that teachers do not take enough time for pupils to record independently what they have learnt. Some recorded work is in the form of unimaginative and undemanding work sheets that do little to extend or reinforce the aim of the lesson. In some year groups there is very little recorded work at all as most of the lessons are based on discussion. This means that teachers do not have the evidence they need to assess how well pupils are doing in the subject. Also, because pupils rarely record what they have learnt, they do not remember their work very well. In general, where work is recorded it tends to be factual writing rather than writing that is personal or reflective and this limits opportunities for pupils to respond to their learning about religion and express their own feelings and emotions.
159. There is sound leadership of the subject. The co-ordinator has good expertise and has worked hard to improve and organise resources so that teachers have the tools they need to teach the different world faiths more confidently. There are sound plans in place to deliver training to staff on the new locally agreed syllabus for the subject. Further work remains to be done on putting in place a manageable system for assessing pupils' work and recording their progress, and on monitoring the quality of teaching and learning to ensure consistency through the school. Nevertheless, the school is well placed to develop the subject further and build on the strengths it has already established.