

INSPECTION REPORT

ABBEYS COMBINED SCHOOL

Bletchley, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110401

Headteacher: Mrs Christine Burnett

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Halford
12908

Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 October 2002.

Inspection number: 246997

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Combined School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 12 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Melrose Avenue
Bletchley
Milton Keynes

Postcode: MK3 6PS

Telephone number: 01908 375230

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Michelle Moore

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12908	Mr D J Halford	Registered Inspector	English as an Additional Language English Modern Foreign Languages Music Religious Education Equal Opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed?
9649	Mrs J M Smith	Lay Inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27677	Mrs D Davenport	Team Inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Special Educational Needs Geography History	
32233	Mr A Dent	Team Inspector	Mathematics Art and Design Physical Education	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
16761	Mr M P Hemmings	Team Inspector	Science Information and Communication Technology Design and Technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Abbeys Combined School is smaller than average with 287 pupils on roll between the ages of 4 to 12 years. It is maintained by the Milton Keynes Local Education Authority. It is situated on an extensive site serving the Denbigh and Granby areas of Milton Keynes. The pupils come from a wide social background, but many struggle with the challenges of growing up in an area of substantial material hardship. Many children enter the school with skills that are well below average in important areas of learning. Seventeen per cent of the pupils are entitled to meals without charge, which is above the national average, and almost twenty five per cent of the pupils are on the register of special educational need. This is above the national average. One percent have statements of special educational needs and this is below the national average. Approximately ten per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority families. The school accommodates a small percentage of refugees and asylum seekers. A small but significant percentage of pupils have English as an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving school with strengths that outweigh its weaknesses. The school is well led by an experienced headteacher and an active senior management team. The school's strengths and weaknesses are well known by its senior managers and its highly experienced governing body. Pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science are well below the national average and have seen a decline in recent years. Pupils' standards in writing are particularly weak. The fall in standards coincides with a period of significant instability and change in school in recent years. The school is now stable and considerable effort has been exerted in attempting to raise these standards. The pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and the majority behave well. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but shows good qualities in a number of classes. The curriculum is good. It is broad balanced and well planned to meet the learning needs of the pupils. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school provides a good atmosphere for learning in which pupils are encouraged to work hard and behave well. Most pupils show good attitudes to their work.
- The quality of teaching in some classes is consistently good or better, throughout the school.
- The curriculum range is good and is supported by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils generally enjoy good relationships. Their personal development is promoted well, especially in the very good provision for social and moral development.
- The school receives very strong support from its parents
- The headteacher, senior managers and governing body provide good leadership and management. They oversee the school's development well.

What could be improved

- Standards in aspects of English, mathematics and science, because they are well below the national averages.
- Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are not consistently high enough
- The quality of pupils' written work, because it has a negative effect on work in other subjects.

- The quality of pupils' presentation of their work and the consistency of teachers' marking
The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress with the development issues raised when it was last inspected in November 1997. Much of that progress has been made within the last two years. Changes in the school's catchment area, substantial movement of staff and pupils, and coping with the possibility of closure have all had a negative effect on the school's ability to improve. However, many of these difficulties are now past and the school has worked hard at creating a positive environment that promotes the pupils' self-esteem and encourages them to work hard. Strong support has been offered by the Local Education Authority to assist the school in raising the pupils' standards of work, but these efforts have not yet been reflected in improved test results. Standards in some aspects of English and mathematics have improved. For example, pupils' speaking and listening skills are generally good and their mental mathematics is also improving. However standards in other aspects of these important subjects, particularly in writing, are still too low and more needs to be done for pupils to progress towards the national expectation in these subjects.

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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	D	E	E*
mathematics	E	D	E	E*
science	E	D	E	E

Key

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

The school's results for pupils aged eleven have fluctuated over the last three years and show a declining trend since the time of the last inspection, with the comparison of pupils' performance against similar schools in 2001 being amongst the lowest percentages nationally. This has coincided with a period of significant change in the catchment area the school serves, substantial movement of staff, higher percentages of pupils on the register of special educational needs and increasing pupil mobility. However, results in 2002 show improvement in the percentage of pupils gaining the expected levels in mathematics and science, although a disappointing result in English. Pupils' reading skills are below those expected for their age and their writing skills are well below average. This has a negative affect on other subjects.

Standards of attainment for pupils aged seven in 2001 show a similar position, declining to well below average results in 2001, with the comparison against similar schools being amongst the lowest percentage nationally. However, early indications of the 2002 results for seven year old pupils show encouraging improvement, with the percentage of pupils gaining the expected level being close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics.

The inspection confirms a picture of improving attainment through the school. Most pupils are able to show satisfactory levels of achievement but this improvement is yet to be reflected in test results for older pupils. Children enter the Reception with attainment which is generally well below average in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Some achieve the expected levels by the time they are six and continue to make good gains in their learning, but many do not. The school sets very challenging targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy and sometimes fails to achieve them. Pupils' attainment in other subjects of the national curriculum is generally average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils respond well to their school. They are enthusiastic and keen to take part in the wide range of activities that the school offers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well in and around the school. A significant minority display challenging behaviour that is sometimes disruptive. The school has good strategies to deal with this
Personal development and relationships	Good. This is an area of strength in the school. It contributes well to the caring ethos of this school community.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most pupils are punctual, enjoy coming to school, attend regularly and lessons start on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. There is evidence of good quality teaching in each department of the school and very little teaching that is unsatisfactory. Appropriate attention is given to the teaching of the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. In almost all classes teachers manage pupils appropriately and use resources effectively. In some classes the teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve is not always high enough and pupils are not challenged sufficiently well in what they are asked to do.

In the best lessons teachers and pupils are clear about what it is the pupils are to learn and pupils' interest is maintained throughout. In the very small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory what pupils are expected to learn is not focussed precisely enough, interest is lost and poor behaviour results in disruption to the lesson.

There is inconsistency in the marking of pupils' work and in the quality of the work pupils present in their book. Some teachers mark work very precisely, offering pupils helpful comments about what to do to improve. Others accept untidy presentation and occasionally praise work that contains basic errors. A consistent approach to marking and presentation, to encourage pupils to take a pride in their work is required.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad curriculum that is supported well by a very wide range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' individual needs are identified well and the provision of good support enables them to make good progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The small number of pupils for whom English is an additional language are provided for well. They make satisfactory progress in their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The school has successfully created an ethos where each pupil is valued and their self-esteem is promoted effectively. Provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good. Provision for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. The school has good procedures for monitoring the pupils' personal development and effective procedures to check on their academic achievement. Aspects of target setting procedures, however, need further refinement.

The school has a very good partnership with parents. They are kept well informed about the events undertaken in school and about the curriculum.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Despite a period of substantial changes in personnel, the headteacher and senior managers provide clear educational direction for the school
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is knowledgeable and highly experienced. They carry out their responsibilities thoroughly and well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and governors know the school's strengths and weaknesses and are working purposefully to improve the quality of education provided by the school. Closer attention needs to be given to monitoring pupils' work effectively if standards are to rise.
The strategic use of	Good. Careful financial planning ensures that funding is allocated to

resources	agreed priorities, and governors check that resources are being used effectively.
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There has been a significant turn-over of staff in recent years, but this has now stabilised. Staffing levels are good and teachers are generally well deployed. Teaching assistants offer good levels of support to teachers in many classrooms. The accommodation and school grounds are extensive. The buildings are maintained to a high order of cleanliness and provide a positive learning environment. Learning resources are good overall. The governing body are well aware of the principles of best value and ensures that the school applies them well when prioritising spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and are expected to work hard • Teaching is good • The school is well led and managed • Children make good progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work pupils do at home.

The inspection team agree that most children appear to enjoy coming to school and most work hard. The school is led and managed well, and there is evidence of some good teaching throughout the school. The inspectors find that whilst pupils are encouraged to do their best, they do not all make as much progress as they might. The amount of work undertaken at home is very similar to many other schools and the inspectors feel it is appropriate for the age of the pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The 2001 National Curriculum test results for pupils aged 11 show that in terms of average points scores standards of attainment are well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, the results are amongst the lowest in English and mathematics, and well below average in science. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points scores for all three subjects has been below the national trend. Results in the 2002 tests for 11-year-old pupils have shown improvement in mathematics, but a further decline in English. Results in science in 2002 are similar to those achieved in 2001. The overall results are adversely affected by a larger than average number of pupils on the register of special educational needs and a high rate of pupil mobility in the immediate area of the school. A high level of teacher mobility over the past three years aggravates the position. The pupils' achievements, in relation to their prior learning are generally satisfactory as many pupils enter the school with attainment well below the national average in literacy and numeracy skills. Inspection evidence confirms that pupils who remain at the school throughout their primary education make appropriate progress and achieve satisfactorily. Twelve-year-old pupils in school make satisfactory progress towards the national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3.
2. The 2001 National Curriculum test results for pupils aged 7 shows that standards of attainment are well below the national average in reading and writing. In comparison with similar schools, standards in reading and writing are amongst the lowest nationally. The 2002 results indicate some improvement on the position to that reported in 2001. In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds, attainment in mathematics was well below the national average. In 2002 pupils' attainment at the age of seven was in line with national expectations and this has halted a decline in performance since the previous inspection.
3. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are satisfactory throughout the school. They are attentive and listen well in almost all lessons and other occasions. They listen effectively to their teachers and their peers in a wide range of situations, including assemblies and when singing. Most pupils speak clearly and audibly and are able to express themselves well. This can be seen to good effect in the meeting of the School Council, where pupils give each other ample opportunity to make their points. In reading, standards of attainment, by the age of eleven are reasonably satisfactory, and rather better than the 2001 results would initially indicate. Some pupils are able to say why they have selected the book they are reading and say why they have chosen it. Some have favourite authors and know why they like them. Standards of writing are well below average and remain so throughout the school. This is an important weakness and has a negative effect on the pupils' work in other subjects. The school is aware of the position and has been working to improve pupils' writing. It remains a high priority in the school's development planning, but further improvement is still required. The pupils' written work is not helped by too much untidy presentation.
4. For pupils aged eleven in 2001, attainment in mathematics was well below the national average. Some improvement in the attainment of pupils at the age of eleven was achieved in 2002. However improvements made in the teaching of mathematics has yet to impact fully on the attainment of eleven-year-old pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment for these pupils

is still well below national expectations. Pupils in Year 7 are making progress towards the levels expected for them by the end of Key Stage 3.

5. In science, the standards of attainment of the majority pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 are below the national expectation. As most pupils start school with low skill levels, this represents satisfactory progress and pupils of all abilities achieve in an appropriate manner in relation to prior attainment.
6. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected for the age of the pupils by the time they are eleven. The position has improved from that reported when the school was last inspected. The pupils have limited access to more opportunities to develop their skills in the use of ICT, particularly in the areas of modelling and control technology. Again the school recognises this weakness in its current provision and has good plans for improvement. Nonetheless, further improvement is still needed.
7. In modern foreign languages, the pupils' standards of attainment are in line with those expected for pupils aged eleven. Pupils in Year 7 work well and with great enthusiasm. Here, they are making good progress. In other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, where there was sufficient inspection evidence to reach a secure conclusion, the pupils' standards of attainment are generally in line with those expected for their age, although in some subjects standards are hampered by unsatisfactory writing skills and some inconsistent quality of presentation.
8. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Their needs are identified early and appropriate action is taken. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs, including those pupils with behavioural difficulties, and enable them to make good gains in their learning. The work presented is appropriately planned to meet pupils' specific needs with particular attention being given to developing their basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils with English as an additional language are provided for well and make satisfactory progress in their learning.
9. Pupils use their developing literacy and numeracy skills well in most subjects. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in many lessons, but particularly so in music, French, German and Spanish. Numeracy skills are used effectively in work in history.
10. There are encouraging signs of improvement in the pupils' attainment seen in the results in 2002, particularly in mathematics. The school has clear plans identifying areas of weakness and is receiving good support for improvement. The school does set over-ambitious targets and has difficulty in achieving them. The reason for this lies in the high levels of pupil mobility. Targets are initially set at a high level, often with the LEA targets in mind, and are reviewed on a regular basis, taking into account the varying numbers of pupils in the year groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The promotion of attitudes, values and personal development is one of the strengths of the school. It impacts positively on other areas of school improvement. The school has worked hard to successfully promote an ethos of mutual respect, high self-esteem and good discipline.

12. Pupils have a good attitude to school and most respond well to teaching and learning. During the introduction to lessons they listen with attention, generally show high levels of interest and are usually keen to contribute. Less successful, but still of a satisfactory standard, is the capacity for independent work when not closely supervised by a member of staff. In some lessons seen, particularly for 6, 7 and 8 year olds, pupils were not always sure about the task they were expected to carry out independently.
13. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, show good attitudes to school and to their work. Relationships are good and pupils respond well to the extra support given by teachers and teaching assistants.
14. Standards of behaviour throughout the school are good. Pupils behave well both in lessons and around the school. They are courteous, trustworthy, show respect for property and are willing to work together and to share ideas. The pupils are respectful of the viewpoints and appreciative of the talents of others. Incidents of challenging behaviour from a small minority of pupils are appropriately dealt with by the staff, who demonstrate good strategies for dealing with such incidents. This is a consistent feature across the whole school and teachers are careful to make clear to pupils how they should behave around school. There have been no fixed period or permanent exclusions in the previous twelve months.
15. The older pupils, in particular, have begun to take greater responsibility around school. At a meeting of the School Council there was a mature discussion which included a wide range of topics including toilet locks, the 'buddy system', drinks machines, ball games, wet playtime activities and behaviour. The 'buddy system' has recently begun to operate in which pupils who need support can sit on a 'buddy bench' on the yard. Older pupils acting as buddies will listen to them and talk through their problems. Year 7 pupils speak with pride at being buddies, team captains, vice captains and assembly monitors and they carry out these duties both conscientiously and efficiently. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activity enabling participants to take pride in representing the school, whilst widening their horizons and developing good social skills and positive relationships.
16. Pupils work and play well together, including those from different minority ethnic backgrounds and those with special educational needs. The pupils at this school learn to respect differences and understand the feelings, values, talents and beliefs of others. They respond well to the good provision made by the school.
17. Levels of attendance at the school are satisfactory and were in line with the national average in the years 2000-2001. No unauthorised absences were recorded at the school in the last academic year. Pupils usually arrive punctually at school and lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are examples of good teaching throughout the school. It is very good in 7 per cent of the lessons, good in 44 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 47 per cent of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only 2 per cent of lessons. This represents an improvement on the position reported when the school was last inspected and the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching was considerably higher.
19. Teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory. The National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented and are delivered appropriately. This is having

a positive effect on the pupils' learning but has yet to have a marked improvement on standards, particularly in writing.

20. The teachers' planning is sound. Where pupils of the same age are accommodated in different classes, the teachers plan together and there is a good level of consistency in what is planned. Pupils are managed appropriately in most classes and pace of working is satisfactory. In many classes, teaching assistants are effective and lessons are well resourced.
21. Where teaching is at its best, teachers' expectations are high and pupils are clear about what it is they expected to learn. Their interest is maintained and, given the fact that many of the pupils regularly show good attitudes to their work, teaching is effective and good progress is made in these lessons. However, overall, expectations of what pupils can achieve is not always high enough. In the small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory, a small number of pupils lose interest in the lesson and poor behaviour results. A disproportionate amount of time is taken with these pupils, the pace of the lesson is lost, pupils' interest wanes and learning opportunities for the majority are missed.
22. There are some areas where teaching across the school could be improved. Currently, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teachers' marking. Positive comments are frequently written upon pupils' work and some teachers follow these up by highlighting particular aspects of improvement for individual pupils. This is good practice but it is not consistently applied. Sometimes work of a very mediocre standard is highly praised. Also, in some classes, pupils are not encouraged to take pride in the presentation of their work. As a result it is untidy and badly written. This is disappointing since the school invests much effort in promoting effectively the pupils view that they can succeed in many other areas of school life.
23. The developing literacy and numeracy skills of the pupils can be seen in work in other subjects, although the quality of pupils' writing remains unsatisfactory, and this has a negative effect on the pupils' finished work.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. Individual education plans, for pupils with special educational needs, are drawn up by the class teacher and incorporated into teachers' weekly planning. Targets are closely linked to the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and work is appropriately planned to match pupils' specific needs. All members of staff work hard to ensure that pupils are well supported and make good progress. However, there are occasions, for example, when extra support is not available, when planning does not fully take account of the pupils' individual needs. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in their learning, due largely to their limited understanding of English.
25. The school has an appropriate policy for homework, which is set to consolidate pupils' learning. The majority of parents are satisfied with the amount and range of work undertaken at home, and the inspection findings are that the provision is satisfactory.

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

26. The curriculum provided for the children in the Foundation Stage of Learning is satisfactory. It has been improved since the last inspection so that there is now a better balance with mathematics and language and literacy being given greater prominence. There is a strong

emphasis on promoting personal, social and emotional development. This is important, as many children enter the Reception Class with poor personal and social skills along with low self-esteem. The quality and range of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 7 is good, with pupils having access to a variety of interesting learning experiences. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented, but the school is aware of the need to further develop strategies to improve standards in writing. There has been a significant improvement in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection and standards are now rising. However, the aspects of modelling and control are not yet covered in enough depth and the school recognises that it needs to provide more opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills to support their work in other subjects. There are swimming lessons for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and, by the time that they leave Year 6, nearly all pupils can swim the nationally expected 25 metres. All statutory requirements are met, as are the requirements of the Milton Keynes Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There is also a commitment to developing the pupils' creative talents and they are able to take part in a variety of interesting experiences in music and art. There are musical and dramatic performances for parents and members of the community and pupils can join the school choir. There is an emphasis on making the curriculum come alive with a focus on first hand experiences, such as visits to the Discovery Centre in Milton Keynes to take part in a Medieval Day, and Holdenby House to find out about Victorian schooldays. The pupils in Years 7 are taught French, Spanish and German, which makes a positive contribution to their cultural development. The curriculum is also enriched by involvement in national and local initiatives, as is exemplified by the school's involvement in training for ICT that has led to improved teacher confidence and expertise in the subject.

27. There is appropriate provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education and they have opportunities to relate to others, in a variety of situations. Social development is effectively supported by an extensive range of extra curricular activities and visits to places of educational interest, including residential stays for older pupils. During these experiences they learn a variety of social skills, such as working together and caring for others. There are opportunities, in and out of classrooms, for them to take responsibility, which supports their personal development. Pupils are also encouraged to work collaboratively, in pairs and small groups, as well as taking turns to share equipment fairly. Pupils have opportunity to be elected onto the school council, which meets termly with members of the Governing Body to put forward pupils' views on how school life can be improved. There are 'circletime' activities, which enable pupils to discuss a variety of issues and any concerns they might have about school. The pupils are helped to develop good attitudes towards healthy eating and learn about how medicines are drugs that can be helpful, but are dangerous when misused. The school provides for sex education in the context of a caring, loving family relationship.
28. The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum. There are good systems in place to support pupils with special educational needs, which enables them to make effective progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Teachers plan carefully for the needs of these pupils and classroom assistants are used well to support their learning. Pupils with English as an additional language are provided for well. They make satisfactory progress with their learning. The school's planning procedures are comprehensive and are based on a two-year rolling programme to meet the needs of mixed age classes. They incorporate national guidelines and provide teachers with clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught.
29. The provision for extra curricular activities is very good and includes chess, choir, computer and book club as well as sporting activities such as netball, gymnastics, football and cross-

country. There has been recent involvement in a project involving various sportsmen and women, such as Northampton Saints Rugby Club players, running out of school activities. The school also gives all pupils opportunity to take part in an extensive range of visits, including residential stays in Normandy, France for pupils in Years 6 and 7, that enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. There have also been a variety of visitors, such as a nationally acclaimed author, who have worked with pupils to develop their skills across a range of techniques.

30. The links with the community make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. There are links with the local church that help deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Pupils visit the church to take part in a variety of celebratory services. Two local church groups come and work with pupils, such as when helping pupils in Year 7 prepare to move to their next school. There are regular visits from representatives of the police and fire services, to further support pupils. There are opportunities for pupils to raise money for a range of national and local charities, including 'Milton Keynes Special Care Baby Unit', 'Jeans for Genes' and 'Children in Need', in which they develop an understanding of the needs of others. The strong links with the local High School prepare the pupils effectively for transfer at the start of Year 8. Teachers from this school visit on a weekly basis to assist with the teaching of Spanish and German to pupils in Year 7. The links with De Montfort University and Milton Keynes College enable students to come and work in school, to give pupils further learning experiences.
31. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is now good overall. Its greatest strengths lie in provision for moral and social development which are both very good. The school's provision for spiritual and cultural development which was considered to be satisfactory at the time of the last inspection is now good. At the pre-inspection meeting parents commented on how much they value the way in which the school helps their children to make progress in personal development.
32. A particular strength of the school's good provision for spiritual development is the ethos of mutual respect in which all pupils are valued and learn to value each other. The "Golden Wall" celebrating pupils' achievement is a good example of the way the school fosters pupils' self-esteem. In the week of the inspection the theme of the daily assembly was achievement. The emphasis on how everyone can be good at something if they try hard made a good contribution to raising pupils' self-esteem. Assemblies are used well to promote values which are Christian in character and these values are presented in such a way that pupils from different faiths and Christian denominations can feel included. However the inspection did not see, either in assemblies or in lessons, evidence of sufficient time being given for quiet reflection to allow pupils to think about their experience and to develop self-knowledge and personal insights.
33. The school encourages pupils to appreciate the beauty and wonder of nature and to respect the environment. For example pupils take great pride in the flower garden that they help to look after through the garden club. At the request of the school council a bird box and a ladybird box have been bought and these have encouraged pupils to observe nature at first hand. However at present the school makes insufficient use of art and music to provide pupils with experiences that move and uplift them spiritually.
34. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. The school's "Golden Rules" ethos is promoted well throughout the school. Guidance in assemblies and class discussion encourage pupils to think about the consequences of their actions and to develop a clear sense of right and wrong. For example in a personal social health education (PSHE)

Year 5 pupils were encouraged to think about how negative and positive feelings can influence relationships. The headteacher and other staff act as very good role models in the consideration and respect they show for pupils. When the headteacher serves the specially chosen pupils “tea and cake” each Friday she sets an example both of good manners and of the importance of mutual respect. The school has worked hard and successfully to promote a culture where respect and consideration for others is paramount.

35. The very good provision for pupils’ social development is reflected in the strong sense of the school as an inclusive community. The school encourages social responsibility by providing opportunities for pupils to participate in the running of the school. For example pupils have jobs as monitors and help to arrange the halls for assembly and collect and deliver registers. Since the beginning of term some of the older pupils have started to act as “buddies” in the playground to help look after younger children who might be feeling lonely. The school council consists of elected representatives from each form and meets weekly. It gives pupils a voice and a channel of communication for requests or concerns and encourages them to exercise initiative. It meets termly with the governing body and the school has followed up many of its suggestions, for example by providing a giant chess board and other play equipment. The school’s very good extra-curricular provision also makes a significant contribution to pupils’ social development. A good example is the school drama club in which pupils learn about different kinds of social interaction through role-play and improvisation. Visits, including residential visits, provide further opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and relationships.
36. There is good provision for cultural development. Pupils participate in cultural events such as the school’s regular performances and they celebrate festivals from their own cultural heritage as well as those from other cultures such as the Chinese New Year and Diwali. Visits, such as the one made by Year 7 pupils to Bradwell Abbey where they learnt about medieval customs, help to enrich pupils’ cultural experience. The school drama club and choir are further examples of the school’s good cultural provision. Within the curriculum there is a good emphasis on poetry, and pupils’ appreciation of books is stimulated by visits from authors. Pupils have good opportunities to consider cultures other than their own. Older pupils learn French and have the opportunity to visit France. Pupils are taught to respect and appreciate different religious traditions and school displays about different countries such as the ones created for the Queen’s Jubilee help pupils to learn something of other cultures. However opportunities for pupils to enlarge and enrich their cultural experience through the art and music of their own and other cultures are limited compared with those provided by many other schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school continues to provide good care for its pupils. A particular strength is the very good way in which the school promotes good behaviour and fosters pupils’ self-esteem. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils feel cared for and valued. As a consequence the school provides a very secure and orderly learning environment.
38. Parents value the good care provided for their children. The home visits made by the reception class teacher help children to settle in to school. There are good procedures for ensuring pupils’ health and safety. In addition to an annual risk assessment of the premises performed by the local authority, the school’s health and safety representative makes a termly check of the premises in order to identify any health and safety concerns. There are good procedures to deal with any accidents that occur; teaching assistants have all received some first aid training

and a member of staff is fully qualified in first aid. The extensive playgrounds are well supervised during break times by caring supervisors. The school has effective procedures for child protection which follow the guidelines of the local area child protection committee. The school ensures that all staff understand the procedures to follow if they have concerns.

39. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. The school's clear behaviour policy is implemented consistently and pupils respond well to teachers' high expectations of good behaviour and to the school's good reward system. Pupils agree that sanctions are fair. Pupils show great pride when they are chosen to have their name and their particular achievement on "The Golden Wall" and to receive "tea and cakes" with the headteacher. This is evidence of the very positive way in which the school not only motivates pupils to work hard and to behave well but also encourages pupils to feel good about themselves.
40. The school has effective procedures to deal with bullying and harassment although these are rare occurrences. The very good moral education which pupils receive and the emphasis throughout the school community on showing care and consideration for each other help to prevent the occurrence of bullying. Attendance is monitored and promoted well. The headteacher keeps a regular check on attendance patterns, discourages parents from taking holidays in term time and receives good support from the education welfare officer in the few cases where there are attendance concerns.
41. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported. Those with special educational needs are identified early and the relevant extra help is planned to ensure they make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. Their work is regularly monitored and assessed and their individual education plans are updated to take account of their rates of progress. External help is sought where necessary and the statements of pupils with special educational needs are reviewed annually in accordance with statutory requirements. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in their learning.
42. There are secure systems for assessing and recording individual pupils' attainment and the progress that they make in English and mathematics. However, in other subjects they are not as extensive, showing mainly coverage of the National Curriculum rather than the progress made by individual pupils as they pass through the school. The school monitors pupils' academic development in a satisfactory way and is beginning to make use of the information gained, to improve curricular planning. It is also beginning to use its analysis of end of key stage tests to set targets for improvement in English and mathematics, but this is at an early stage and not yet having a marked affect on the standards that pupils attain. An identified area for improvement is the further development of assessment, pupil tracking and monitoring to link with target setting, so that teachers are clearer about what the pupils need to do next to improve. Assessment information for pupils with special educational needs is used well to plan future work. Procedures for the assessment of pupils when they start school are in place and the information from these assessments is used appropriately to plan subsequent learning experiences.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. Parents give very strong support to the school for its work in supporting the pupils. A significant proportion of parents live outside the catchment area and have to travel quite a

distance to bring their children to the school. When the school was identified for possible closure it received tremendous support from its parents and the community in its successful campaign against closure. The parents' questionnaire and meeting also reflect parents' very positive attitudes towards the school and the work it does. A large majority of parents agree that their children like school, that they are expected to work hard and that they make good progress. They agree that the school is well led and managed. The inspection team agrees with most of these positive views but finds that whilst pupils make good progress in their personal development they do not make as much academic progress as they might and standards are not high enough. Some parents do not think that their children are given the right amount of homework but inspectors consider this to be similar to that provided in many other schools and feel that it is appropriate for the age of the pupils.

44. The school has a good partnership with its parents and provides parents with a range of good quality information. Parents feel comfortable approaching the school and their children's class teachers. They appreciate the regular newsletters they receive and the good information the school sends them at the beginning of term about the work their children will be doing. There is good attendance at parents' evenings. The school also holds open evenings at the beginning of the school year in order to keep parents informed about homework and other school routines and to suggest ways they can support their children's work.
45. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to termly meetings to review the targets within pupils' individual education plans and are kept informed of their progress throughout the year. Parents of pupils with behavioural difficulties have more frequent contact with the school on a more informal basis. The two special needs co-ordinators have built up good relationships with parents, who, in the main, are very supportive and appreciative of the work being done with their children.
46. Annual written reports to parents are comprehensive and informative and contain a page for pupils to make their own comments. Parents at the parents' meeting agreed that reports show accurate knowledge of their children. Most of the reports seen outline pupils' strengths and weaknesses well in mathematics and English although weaknesses are not generally linked to targets for improvement. Most reports describe pupils as making good progress. This can be misleading because they do not generally give parents a clear idea of how their children's attainment compares with national norms. Some reports are phrased in educational jargon which is not easily understood by all parents.
47. Parents' involvement with the work of the school has some strengths but also some weaknesses. There is an active Parent Teacher Association which organises successful and well supported events and raises a significant amount of money for extra resources for the school. A few parents and grandparents help in the classrooms and in the library. There is a small group of parents and other volunteers who have committed themselves to providing regular weekly support to children who are disaffected with reading. The emphasis is on building a good relationship with individual pupils and helping them to appreciate that books can be enjoyable. This is a positive and useful initiative. Many parents hear their children read on a regular basis and sign the reading record which the school provides. However a significant proportion of parents do not hear their children read and this number increases as children get older even though many of the children still need help. This slows the progress that their children make. The school provides maths games for younger pupils to take home and most parents play these with their children; this usefully supports progress. About sixty parents attended the successful maths workshop held by the school a year ago. The school is aware

that it needs to do more to keep parents informed about how they can support their children's work and plans to hold more workshops in maths and literacy.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

48. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher provides effective leadership and is supported well by the recently appointed deputy head. Together they provide clear direction for the school. The decline in standards since the last inspection, due substantially to elements beyond the school's immediate control, has been substantially halted. Staffing has been stabilised and gradual improvement can be seen, particularly in test results of pupils aged seven and in mathematics and science for pupils aged eleven. The headteacher has the confidence of the governing body and many of the parents. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively.
49. Priorities for school improvement are clear and are accurately identified and the school's development plan is a useful tool for school improvement. It is appropriately costed and contains appropriate criteria against which the school can monitor its improvement.
50. The leadership and management of special educational needs by the coordinator are good. She is ably supported by a coordinator responsible for pupils experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, and they work effectively together. The coordinator keeps detailed records of the provision made by pupils on the special educational needs register. She ensures that copies of appropriate individual education plans and other details of pupils' progress are maintained. The effective partnership between the coordinators, the class teachers and the teaching assistants contribute well to the good progress that pupils make and has a positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of pupils throughout the school. There are appropriate systems in place to ensure continuous progress for pupils with special educational needs as they transfer to the high school. The school has good links with external agencies involved in supporting pupils with special educational needs and it ensures that they are used well to help pupils address specific weaknesses in their learning and behaviour.
51. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are satisfactory, but could be improved in some areas. Teachers' planning is monitored appropriately and much statistical evidence is being gathered about the pupils' performance in national tests. The school uses this to identify, for example, that pupils are not performing as well as they should in their writing. The school has taken some action in this area, supported by their local education authority. However, more use could be made of the statistical information gathered to establish more realistic targets for pupils' performance. The school sometimes sets targets that are over-ambitious. Where subject coordinators are established in their roles, most have a clear picture of the needs of their subject. The monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken but could be improved, as could the checking of pupils' work to ensure it is carefully presented and marked consistently.
52. Governors have a good understanding of their role in school development planning. They are well informed and have an appropriate range of sub-committees, which operate effectively. The governing body is knowledgeable, contains a good balance of experience and expertise and is confident in its actions. The school has clear aims and a good level of commitment to improvement.

53. The school's finances are controlled effectively and allocated well to those areas, which have been identified for improvement. The school finances are managed prudently and whenever opportunities arise the governors make every effort to ensure that they gain the best value for the money they spend.
54. The accommodation is spacious and provides a good quality learning environment for the pupils. The buildings are maintained to a good order of cleanliness. The school grounds are extensive and well maintained. There is an adequate number of teachers, many of whom are relatively new to the school. Appropriate induction procedures are undertaken and the new teachers settle effectively into their roles. There is a good level of teaching assistants. The quality of learning resources is good and they are adequate in most subjects. The school has recently established a small computer suite that is beginning to be used well.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. In order to improve further, the Headteacher, Governors and staff should take steps to improve
- (1) Standards in aspects of English, mathematics and science, because they are well below the national averages.
 - (2) Some teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve.
 - (3) The quality of pupils' written work because it has negative effect on their work in other subjects.
 - (4) The quality of pupils' presentation of their work and the consistency of teachers' marking

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

68

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

10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	30	32	1	0	0
Percentage	0%	7%	44%	47%	2%	0%	0%

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		287
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		48

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		72

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	36
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	33

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	17	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	14	15
	Girls	10	11	11
	Total	21	25	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (71)	81 (68)	84 (78)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	14	16
	Girls	10	12	12
	Total	22	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (71)	84 (78)	90 (80)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
		2001	30	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	12	24
	Girls	9	5	10
	Total	21	17	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (64)	36 (51)	72 (87)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	22
	Girls	9	5	9
	Total	21	19	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (64)	40 (53)	66 (87)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	6
Black – African heritage	5
Black – other	5
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	1
White	249
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.08
Average class size	23.92

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	183

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	311 pupils
	£
Total income	666 984
Total expenditure	636 104
Expenditure per pupil	2 046
Balance brought forward from previous year	2 684
Balance carried forward to next year	33 564

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	9
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate: 15.1%

Number of questionnaires sent out

311

Number of questionnaires returned

47

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	26	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	64	30	4	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	45	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	49	13	2	2
The teaching is good.	60	38	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	30	11	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74	15	9	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	79	17	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	53	43	4	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	51	38	4	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	43	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	40	13	2	9

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

56. There are currently 35 children in the reception year. 12 older reception children work alongside the younger pupils in Year 1 whilst the rest of the reception year are accommodated in a class of their own. Until this academic year children entered the reception class at the beginning of the term after their fourth birthday. There were, therefore, three admission times during the school year. The Local Education Authority's admissions policy has changed from this September and children are now admitted into school in the September of the school year in which they become five. This means that although some reception children have only been in school for a matter of weeks others are beginning their third term. Provision for children in the reception classes is appropriate to their needs and they make satisfactory progress. However the school needs to address the issue of providing more play activities for the older children in the reception year.
57. The majority of children have had some pre-school experience from a wide range of providers. As a result it is difficult for the school to liaise effectively with these groups before the children start school. There are some good systems in place, such as home visits, school visits in the summer term and comprehensive information packs, which help to ease the transition from pre-school into reception and appropriate induction procedures ensure that children settle quickly into their new routines.
58. A nationally produced assessment scheme, used as children start school in the reception classes, shows that the attainment of the majority is well below that expected for their age in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development and below that expected for their age in personal, social and emotional development. Children make satisfactory progress during the year and this is a good improvement since the previous inspection

Personal, social and emotional development

59. When children start school they display a wide range of personal skills. A significant number show below average skills in this area of learning. Several children are currently attending on a part time basis as they are not able to settle properly into school routines. Staff place good emphasis on providing a range of appropriately planned activities to develop this aspect of children's learning. As a result children make satisfactory progress and the older children leave reception having achieved the early learning goal. Although a number of the younger children do not share equipment readily and tend to call out when requiring attention or answering questions, the majority learn to play amicably with each other, to share resources and to cooperate with adults. The majority of children are able to undress themselves for physical education activities with minimal adult help and they look after their own personal hygiene. The children's attitudes to lessons are positive and the majority follow instructions carefully and cooperate with each other. All staff offer good levels of support. They know the children well, share good planning documents and deal effectively with all the children. This is having a positive impact on the pupils' personal development.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Most children start in the reception year with well below average levels of reading and communication skills for their age. Many lack confidence when speaking to others and have had little experience of books. A scrutiny of last year's work shows children making satisfactory progress in writing skills and knowledge of letter sounds indicating that a significant number of children come close to meeting the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1 and some meet them. Overall, children make satisfactory progress. Children with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress because of the extra support they receive. The teachers and support staff place a great deal of emphasis on teaching the basic skills of reading and writing and in giving the children many planned opportunities to talk about their work and experiences. Teaching is satisfactory, with some good aspects in the areas of speaking and listening. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The majority of children listen to stories well and through careful questioning are able to respond effectively to them. When choosing a book they hold it the right way, understand that words and pictures carry meaning and are aware that print is read from left to right. The majority recognise their own name and are beginning to associate sounds with patterns, letters and words. At the independent writing table children enjoy mark making and basic writing experiences and they use a wide range of marking implements for drawing, scribbling and writing. Role play activities are appropriately structured to encourage children to express themselves.

Mathematical development

61. As with other areas of learning children start in reception with a wide range of experiences and abilities in dealing with number. Some are familiar with a range of number rhymes whilst others have little knowledge of which number follows which. During their time in the reception year children make satisfactory progress and a significant number come close to achieving the early learning goal as they start in Year 1 whilst some of the older, more able children achieve it. Teaching is satisfactory overall and again this is an improvement since the last inspection. Well planned practical activities such as the counting and sorting of objects and the sequencing of patterns contribute to children's sound mathematical progress. All children count consistently to 5 and the majority are showing a secure knowledge of number sequences up to 10. They consolidate their learning through singing rhymes. In a good lesson, the teacher uses a variety of practical activities to introduce the children to the concept of "more than". Children concentrate well and give accurate answers. They learn about shape as they work with construction kits and develop mathematical language in a physical education lesson when they travel "over, under and through" the large apparatus.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

62. Children start school with a limited general knowledge but make good progress in this area of learning and the majority of pupils reach the early learning goal by the time they begin in Year 1. This is because teaching is good with activities planned to stimulate the children's curiosity, develop their powers of observation and encourage them to ask questions. Good use is made of the local environment to develop the children's historical and geographical knowledge as they visit a steam railway, model village and walk around the locality to find out about the

different shops, houses and streets that are there. These visits make a significant contribution to the development of the children's literacy, personal, social and creative skills as they record the main features through drawings, writing, role play and art activities. The children explore artefacts to compare past and modern day washing techniques, learn about sound as they explore musical instruments and use pulling and pushing actions with their toys to learn about different types of forces. The school environment is used well to enhance children's learning about living things and how to care for their environment as they plant seeds, tend the garden and look for mini beasts. Children are able to use the computer and can manipulate the mouse and click on to icons on the screen. The computer is constantly in use and the programs are usually linked to the focus of the lesson. The practical activities presented to the children result in good concentration for the majority with the children showing interest and enjoyment in their tasks.

Physical Development

63. Children make good progress overall in developing their physical skills and the majority meet the early learning goal by the start of Year 1. Effective planning ensures that children have good opportunities to develop their manipulative skills by using scissors, holding pencils and brushes, threading, rolling, sticking, completing jigsaws and using small construction apparatus. The children use appropriate tools and methods when assembling and joining materials, for example, when making Cinderella's shoes. They use equipment carefully and share resources, for example, when making brooches. They can work sensibly when not under the direct supervision of an adult. In physical education lessons in the hall, the children demonstrated well several different ways of moving (for example, walking, running, jumping, bouncing) and were able to stop and start at a given signal. Large apparatus was used well to encourage the children to travel over, under and through it. The children's awareness of their own and each others' space is developing satisfactorily. Both the indoor and outdoor play area are used well on a daily basis to allow the younger children freedom of movement. The good selection of wheeled toys such as tricycles and bikes and role play activities, such as washing clothes, enable the children to improve their co-ordination skills. The outdoor area is secure and the children well supervised. They play well together and show interest and enjoyment in these practical activities. However this play provision is restricted for the older reception children.

Creative Development

64. The majority of children meet the standards expected by the time they start Year 1 and they make good progress as a result of the varied range of activities presented to them. The quality of teaching and learning in this area of learning is good. The children have many opportunities to develop their creative skills through drawing, painting, construction, music and play. Their work is often related to work in literacy and numeracy, for example, as they make dance shoes for Cinderella, and use the story of 'Handra's Surprise' to observe, taste and paint tropical fruits. Opportunities to help children develop their role play are presented through environments such as the "hospital" and "Mrs Lather's Laundry" and children are well supported in these areas. The children participate appropriately in music lessons which make an effective contribution to their listening skills. They show interest and enjoyment and are making good progress in their understanding of how sounds are made. They enjoy singing songs and rhymes and add actions appropriately.

Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum

65. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good teaching is seen. This is an improvement since the school was last inspected, particularly in the areas of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. The teachers and teaching assistants work effectively together to create a caring and secure environment and they form good relationships with the children. The teachers and teaching assistants have appropriate strategies to deal with those children who are unable to settle to more formalised routines so as to cause minimum distraction to the rest of the class. Children feel secure in developing their learning through the range of appropriately planned practical activities and through the constructive praise and rewards they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are used effectively to support individuals and groups of children, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. They are well briefed by the teachers, have a good knowledge of the children and make a positive contribution to their learning.
66. Planning is detailed and thorough and particular emphasis is placed on language, literacy and communication, mathematical development and personal, social and emotional development. The detailed weekly plans show what work is to be covered in each area of learning and what skills the children are expected to learn. Opportunities are provided for children to take part in a variety of visits out of school. These visits provide significant learning experiences and enrich the curriculum. Initial baseline assessment is carried out appropriately and the information derived is used to plan subsequent learning experiences throughout the year. Teachers assess children systematically in all areas of learning and record their findings to ensure that children's individual needs are being met.
67. The links with parents are good. The reception teacher carries out home visits before children attend school and leaves a comprehensive information pack for parents. Visits to the school are arranged for the summer term and there are appropriate induction procedures in place to ensure that children quickly settle into school routines. Teachers communicate with parents throughout the year by means of the home/school reading book and through parents' meetings. The good half termly newsletter keeps parents well informed about what their children are learning.

ENGLISH

- 68 Results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven showed that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was well below the national average, and the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level was very low in comparison with the national average. In comparison to similar schools, the pupils' performance was also very low. Early indications of the pupils' performance, in 2002, shows that once again a very low percentage of pupils have gained the expected level. In both 2001 and 2002, the school did not reach the targets it had set. The school has had some difficult years, with high percentages of pupils on the special educational needs register and very significant levels of teacher and pupil mobility, which have had a negative effect on the pupils' standards in English. Inspection findings indicate that, taking into account the very low starting point from which the pupils begin, the majority are achieving appropriately and making satisfactory overall progress. The school does set very ambitious targets, which in the past two years have been adversely affected by high levels of pupil mobility. Pupils who start in the Reception Year and remain in school until

they are eleven do achieve the expected level in English, by the time they take the tests. Pupils in Year 7 continue to make progress towards the levels expected of them by the end of Key Stage 3. Inspection evidence from pupils' work indicates that the decline in standards which has taken place since the last inspection has been halted, although the impact of this has yet to be seen in test results. Pupils standards of work are higher than the 2002 test results indicate, but there is still more improvement to be made.

- 69 Results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven showed that the percentage of pupils gaining the expected level in reading and writing was well below the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining the higher level in reading was very low and no pupils gained the higher level in writing. The results in 2002 show that the percentage of pupils gaining the expected level in both reading and writing was closer to the national average than in the previous two years, but the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level was well below the national average. Inspection evidence confirms the position of some improvement, that pupils' skills in reading are better than in writing, but that the school needs to continue to raise standards further.
- 70 The majority of children enter the Reception Year with literacy skills which are well below average for their age and whilst many make satisfactory progress through the Foundation Stage, their skills, particularly in writing make only moderate progress. In Year 1 and 2 teachers build upon this good start and some pupils develop the skills to begin to read unfamiliar words. They start to print letters clearly and spell simple words correctly. They can write sentences expressing their own ideas. In Year 2, average attaining pupils read with increasing confidence and have a good range of books of appropriate difficulty. They can talk about what they like or dislike in stories. Some begin to write in sentences and are starting to use full stops and capital letters in order to punctuate them. Higher attaining pupils read with greater fluency. By the age of seven, some pupils have developed the skills of literacy to the levels expected nationally, but many have not yet made sufficient progress to achieve these levels of skill.
- 71 The progress that is made owes much to good teaching, especially in Year 2, where a 'Leading Literacy' teacher contributes positively to their learning. The evidence of pupils' progress over longer periods of time, through scrutiny of past work, indicates that teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, some teachers expectations of what pupils can achieve is not always high enough, and although the school has identified writing as an area of continued development, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write.
- 72 Pupils aged six and seven do, however, respond well to their teachers and teaching assistants. They show an eagerness to learn and considerable enthusiasm for their work. They behave well in lessons and generally cooperate well in small groups.
- 73 In Years 3 and 4 pupils continue to make appropriate progress. Many average attaining pupils are punctuating their sentences with greater confidence and in Year 4 there is an increasing accuracy in the use of speech marks. In Years 5 and 6, satisfactory progress continues to be made. A second 'Leading Literacy' teacher is well deployed in Year 6. Handwriting is developing and is sometimes seen to be of a good standard. However, pupils' written work is not always presented neatly and many pupils take insufficient care with how they present their work. As with the younger pupils, more opportunities are required for pupils to write at length. Some story writing is lively and imaginative, but rarely extended. There are examples of good beginnings and endings to stories. Pupils are introduced to interesting characters, like Ebenezer Scrooge and Wackford Squeers. They understand that the names are carefully

chosen to give an impression of the character. Overall, however, writing is limited, relatively basic, and not always corrected when errors occur. For example, capital letters missing in the entries to a pupils' diary writing and the incorrect spelling of 'Dikens', in the title to an otherwise interesting piece of work. Reading skills develop appropriately with pupils able to speak clearly about books they have read for interest and enjoyment and those from which they have gathered information. Most pupils speak well and are able to express themselves fluently. They are not afraid to ask for time to organise their thoughts. This is undertaken consistently throughout Years 3 to 6.

- 74 In Year 7, pupils have a clear understanding of a wide range of types and styles of writing. Some can readily identify a text where the purpose is to give information from one that is seeking to persuade the reader to adopt a particular viewpoint. The majority are able to use books well to seek out information they require, but their finished written work also lacks care and precision in presentation. A minority of pupils show very challenging behaviour and this can and sometimes does disrupt the lessons for those pupils who wish to concentrate.
- 75 The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and sometimes good. This is particularly so where teachers are confident have good levels of subject expertise. The school also has a significant number of relatively inexperienced teachers, many of whom have very strong skills in managing pupils and are particularly clear about what it is they require the pupils to learn. This makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Although the inspection took place in the first half term of the school year, good routines had been established in these classes. Planning is good and teachers work well together where pupils of the same age are accommodated in different classes. The National Literacy Strategy is established and is having a positive impact on the pupils reading and writing skills. Homework is regularly given and extends the work the pupils undertake in school.
- 76 Pupils throughout the school are making positive progress with their literacy work and there is evidence that standards of attainment are rising particularly with the younger pupils. However, there is still much more progress to be made. Throughout the school there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length and there is a need for the school to adopt a more consistent approach to the marking of pupils' work – to help pupils eliminate basic errors – and to the presentation of pupils' work – to assist the pupils to take a greater pride in what they write.
- 77 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. They are well supported by teaching assistants who have a clear knowledge of their needs. They are given work that challenges them appropriately. They are regularly seen undertaking work that is similar to that of their peers. When these pupils are not supported by teaching assistants their needs are not always met as appropriately as they might be.
- 78 The subject is managed well. The coordinator has been in post a relatively short time, and combines her role with that of being a Key Stage Coordinator. She has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. She is aware that that pupils' writing skills are less effective than their reading, and that this has a negative effect on pupils' progress in other subjects. She monitors planning effectively and has some opportunities for monitoring teaching and learning. The school's resources for learning are good. She is providing clear leadership and is making a good contribution to the subject's continued development.

MATHEMATICS

79. For pupils aged eleven in 2001, attainment was also well below the national average. Some improvement in the attainment of pupils at the age of eleven was achieved in 2002. However improvements made in the teaching of Mathematics has yet to impact fully on the attainment of eleven-year-old pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainment for these pupils is still well below national expectations. Pupils in Year 7 are making progress towards the levels expected for them by the end of the Key Stage.
80. In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds, attainment was well below the national average. In 2002 pupils' attainment at the age of seven was in line with national expectations and this has halted a decline in performance since the previous inspection. The school has received two years of intensive support for numeracy and has begun to analyse data more carefully with a view to improving planning to support progression in mathematics. The teaching of mathematics throughout the school has recently been reviewed.
81. The pupils' progress is satisfactory by the age of 7 and 11, given that attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average. However the standard of work seen for all ages is less than satisfactory. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in written and independent work are not consistently high enough. Sometimes the tasks are not challenging enough and on occasions instructions to the pupils are not sufficiently clear.
82. The quality of pupils' presentation in their mathematics books is inconsistent and the subject would benefit from greater consistency across the school. Similarly, teachers' marking of pupils' work is also inconsistent. Too few written comments are made that would help pupils to both reflect on mistakes and know how to make progress. Most marking is in the form of mere ticks, crosses and comments on presentation. In some books there were examples of incorrect work praised with a tick and a star. This is not good practice.
83. Pupils with special education needs and those with English as an additional language receive good support within lessons, often from a teaching assistant. These pupils make good progress throughout the school.
84. The quality of teaching for all pupils is satisfactory overall. Some examples of good teaching in mathematics were observed in lessons for 7 to 12 year old pupils. In the best lessons there is a clear focus on teaching and learning, good quality questioning, effective classroom organisation and the provision of plentiful, relevant resources of good quality. In some less successful lessons pupil achievement is unsatisfactory when either the activity is not sufficiently challenging or the teacher has not allowed time to explain the nature of the task carefully enough.
85. Delivery of oral and mental work and whole class activities at the start of the numeracy lesson, are generally strong features of mathematics lessons for all age groups. The teachers have clearly worked very hard to achieve this consistency. The school now needs to demand a higher standard of work from pupils in independent and group activity.
86. Pupils throughout the school have a good attitude to mathematics. They work hard in lessons and behave well. They listen attentively, follow instructions when they are clear and unambiguous and use appropriately the resources with which they are provided.
87. Leadership provided by the subject co-ordinator is satisfactory and there is a strong commitment from the staff to the improvement of standards in Mathematics. Both the policy

and the scheme of work have been recently reviewed and they help the teachers to plan their lessons well with regard for the diverse needs of the pupils in their care. A good feature of lessons is the range of differentiated activities provided for pupils' independent learning. These now need to be developed so that they are consistently challenging, matching higher teacher expectations of what can be achieved by all pupils.

SCIENCE

88. In 2001, the national tests results in science for eleven-year-old pupils were well below the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that the standards of attainment of the majority pupils in Year 6 and Year 2 are below the national expectation. As most pupils start school with low skill levels, this represents satisfactory progress and pupils of all abilities achieve in an appropriate manner in relation to their prior attainment.
89. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with teachers preparing their lessons well, so that pupils have appropriate resources to use during their activities. They have secure subject knowledge that allows them to ask relevant questions to develop pupils' thinking. There are precise explanations given at the start of lessons so that pupils are clear about what they are to learn and how to set about their activities. In Years 1 and 2 they are taught how to observe by using all their senses, as is evident in their investigations into different sources of sound. In such investigations, the pupils are given the opportunity to work together, as was seen when they were exploring the idea that older people are always taller than younger ones. In this lesson there was good quality support from the teaching assistant, as she asked challenging questions to develop the pupils' understanding of this idea. The pupils' attitudes to learning were positive and their behaviour good. They enjoyed their work and responded with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils record their findings in a book alongside other subjects and this is not helpful in promoting a clear progression of their knowledge, understanding and skills. The standard of presentation in these books is poor, with some teachers not always having high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Consequently, the pupil's skills in accurately recording in a variety of ways what they have discovered are being hindered. Some investigations are not sufficiently structured and, as a result, their skills in making sensible predictions and in carrying out a simple fair test are not as well developed as they should be. However, as a result of the satisfactory progress that pupils make, by the time that they are at the end of Year 2 most of them know how to make a simple electrical circuit and can identify which foods are healthy and which are not. They understand the life cycle of a frog and know about the different properties of materials and how this affects the use to which they are put.
90. The teachers of older pupils continue to stress the importance of learning through practical experiences and they are given opportunities to develop their skills in using a wider variety of scientific resources. This was evident in the work of pupils in Year 4, who have successfully used a digital microscope to closely observe and record a variety of objects. Teachers also stress the importance of using correct scientific terminology, as was evident in a lesson in which pupils were investigating materials to see if they were opaque, translucent or transparent. As a result of the teacher's effective questioning and the interesting activities, the

pupils gained a good understanding of these terms. In another good quality lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher's skilful classroom management enabled pupils to make good progress in their understanding of the factors that could affect pulse rate. In both lessons the pupils showed a great deal of enjoyment in their work, being curious and keen to ask questions to further their learning. They listened carefully, concentrated well and were appreciative of the contributions of other pupils. Pupils in Year 7 also showed these positive attitudes when carrying out an investigation to find out if a substance was an acid or an alkali. As a result, they were able to develop their own ideas and to work well independently of the teacher. They showed good collaboration skills during the practical activity, and the teacher's effective intervention strategies ensured that they stayed on task and had a high work rate. As for younger pupils, the standard of presentation is not good enough and there is a need for an improvement. By the time they are at the end of Year 6, most pupils do not show an appropriate ability to identify the need for a fair test and to be able to plan and carry one out independently of the teacher. They do show a secure knowledge and understanding of which materials make good thermal insulators, and of the structure and function of the major organs in the human body.

91. The curriculum is good because of the opportunities for pupils to be involved in collaborative group work activities, making a positive contribution to the pupils' personal and social development. Literacy skills are not promoted well because some teachers accept, and sometimes praise, written work that is not of a satisfactory quality. Pupils are able to make satisfactory use of their numeracy skills when taking measurements during investigations, as is seen in the work of pupils in Year 6 who have made a table of time observations and then created a bar chart to show what time the sun rises. There is some use of information communication technology to enhance work but the school recognises that this is an area for further development. The co-ordinator has only recently been appointed but she has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve standards. The planning and assessment procedures are satisfactory and provide teachers with clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught. The school has identified the need to better track pupils' progress and set manageable targets for improvement. The accommodation is good with extensive grounds, including a pond, that are used well to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. There has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

92. By the time pupils reach the ages of 7 and 11 attainment in art and design meets national expectations although there is some variation throughout the school.
93. The school's scheme of work for art clearly sets out the expected progress that pupils should make as they get older. This is a secure framework for the teaching of art and design and provides for good coverage of the National Curriculum. The school aims to develop visual, tactile and sensory experience through drawing and painting, printmaking, textiles, clay work and collage and the policy meets these aims appropriately.
94. A reasonable range of two and three-dimensional pupils' work is on display throughout the school. This is of higher quality in the corridors and in the hall than it is in the classrooms. For example, in the school hall is a very good collage of David Beckham, 'in the style of Andy Warhol.'

95. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 both progress and attainment are variable. In the best lessons observed there are high expectations and clear instructions from the teacher. For example, in a year 5 class lesson, pupils designing containers are able to adapt and improve their work using appropriate techniques because the teacher has planned for whole class evaluation and the sharing of good practice. However, in less successful lessons, overall progress is limited because tasks are insufficiently clear, expectations are not high enough and less guidance is given to achieve a quality product.
96. The standard of work seen in the pupils' sketchbooks is generally unsatisfactory; the quality is variable and work is often unfinished. It is difficult, sometimes, to see a clear progression from the end of Key Stage 1 to the end of Key Stage 2.
97. Not enough evidence was gathered to make a judgement on the teaching in Key Stage 1. However at both Key Stages 2 and 3 teaching ranges from good to satisfactory. It is at its best where the teacher has good subject knowledge, high expectations and the ability to demonstrate skills and techniques to the level that will help the pupils to improve.
98. The subject would benefit from the development of regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in art and design to ensure that higher expectations consistently produce high quality work that clearly shows progress across the whole school.
99. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator maintains the resources and ensures that they are renewed at necessary intervals in order to maintain continuity.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. There was insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on the standards that pupils attain.
101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with appropriate emphasis being given to developing pupils' making and designing skills. This shows improvement since the last inspection, in which pupils had only limited opportunities to create a design before going to the making stage. The teachers plan their lessons well and ensure that pupils have a variety of appropriate technological resources to use. Teachers have secure subject knowledge that allows them to ask relevant questions to move pupils' thinking on. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about the properties of different materials and how best to shape, assemble and join them. They also have opportunity to appropriately develop their skills in making models out of construction kits. They are able to look at how simple mechanisms work and then use them to make moving pictures. They have opportunities to be involved in food technology activities, as is shown in their work on designing and making a fruit salad. In this work and in other activities, they show they can make simple evaluations of the finished product.
102. Pupils in Years 3 to 7 continue to develop their designing and making skills in an appropriate way. The teachers ensure pupils are given the opportunity to develop their skills in using a wider range of materials and tools, along with developing their ability to evaluate their work and make modifications as it progresses. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils are taught how to use a variety of stitches, such as cross-stitch and running stitch, to help them design and make purses from different materials. Pupils in these classes have been investigating packaging and how materials and components have been used to suit the package. They showed they could use this knowledge to help them when designing their own package for a specific purpose of

either a sweet or snack bar. There is appropriate development of pupils' technological vocabulary, as was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 6 on making a musical instrument, in which the teacher emphasised the correct use of terminology when referring to techniques to be used. Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their behaviour in lessons is good. They are keen to talk about their work in design and technology and are able to work co-operatively, allow others to express an opinion as well as listen to their advice. They show that they recognise the need to work safely when engaged on technological tasks. In general, teachers need to have higher expectation of the quality of the finished product.

103. The co-ordinator has only just recently been appointed, so leadership is at an early stage of development. There are secure planning arrangements, but assessment arrangements are in need of further development to enable teachers to set targets for improvement. There are adequate resources to cover all aspects of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

104. Standards for pupils in Years 2 and 6 match those expected nationally and pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriately. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. No lessons were seen in the Year 7 classes but a scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that attainment matches the level expected and that pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
105. By the age of 7 pupils have successfully learned about their local environment through the practical observation of it and they are familiar with features within their own school and locality. Pupils are introduced to the concept of maps and how to plot features on them as they make simple plans of their route to school. They recognise features of their own homes, for example, "terraced, semi-detached and detached". Pupils extend their knowledge of the wider world as they keep a record of Barnaby Bear's travels to different locations. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 show a good understanding of "natural" and "man made" features as they contrast their own locality with a village in Mexico using first hand observations and good quality photographs. Pupils record their findings through pictures, labelled diagrams, maps and simple accounts. However there are too few opportunities for applying and extending independent writing skills and follow up work lacks challenge for the older and more able pupils in these classes.
106. By studying maps and plans of the local area and photographs of village features pupils in the Year 3 and 4 classes are developing a sound understanding of the conventions of mapping and the use of symbols and scale. Through practical investigations pupils in the Year 5 and Year 6 classes develop an understanding of the importance of clean water as they begin a study of water treatments. By the age of 11 pupils are aware of river systems and can describe features such as "meander" and "erosion". They have a satisfactory understanding of countries within the Commonwealth. They make appropriate comparisons between Britain and the Caribbean using information about landscape and climate and understand the differences in city and village life. Pupils in Year 7 correctly identify differences between settlements of varying sizes and functions. They can compare their own life style to life in Pakistan and effectively investigate shopping habits in a number of countries. Pupils aged between 7 and 12 record their work in a variety of ways which include charts, diagrams, maps, worksheets and factual reports. However many opportunities are lost in follow up activities to apply and extend pupils' literacy skills for example, to write independently at length. Although there is limited evidence of pupils using factual resources they do not have

sufficient research skills to select and combine information from different sources. The presentation of their work is often untidy and, in some cases, of an unacceptable standard. Marking is not used effectively to improve presentation or inform pupils of how well they are achieving.

107. The quality of teaching overall is satisfactory with good teaching in the Year 3 class and very good teaching in the Year 4 class. Here the teachers' effective questioning and very good organisation of good quality learning resources ensures a good pace to the lesson and pupils are well motivated. Pupils are very clear about what they are to learn as the teachers share the learning intention with them. Pupils listen attentively, concentrate and stay on task because the activities are well planned and the teachers give clear instructions. Teaching is less successful in the Year 5 and Year 6 classes because of the inefficient use of time and the lack of challenge in follow up activities. This results in limited gains in pupils' learning. In the satisfactory lesson seen in a mixed Year 1 and 2 class pupils became restless due to the lack of pace in the introductory activity. However in all lessons teachers gave pupils the opportunity to work collaboratively and share ideas and pupils respond well to this. Relationships are good, pupils enjoy the practical aspects of their work and behave well.
108. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has a good subject knowledge and has produced an up to date policy and scheme of work to help staff with their planning. However although there are appropriate procedures to assess and record pupils' attainment and progress to ensure continuous learning as they move through the school, there are no opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning in the subject. The co-ordinator is gradually building up a series of good quality resources, which are well organised and easily accessible, to support teaching. However there are still some which are outdated and need replacement. Visits are used well to enhance geographical knowledge and understanding. These include localities around the school, for example, Furzton Lake and Bletchley Park and to a variety of carefully selected more distant and contrasting places, for example, residential visits to Dorset and France. Good links are made to other areas of the curriculum, for example, history when studying settlements, design and technology when working with Caribbean fruits and numeracy when tackling map work and recording information. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

HISTORY

109. The pupils' attainment at Year 2 matches the national expectations and pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. This is good improvement since the previous inspection. As only two lessons were observed for pupils aged 7 to 11 and none were observed for pupils in Year 7 it is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching and learning. However a scrutiny of pupils' work, discussions with pupils and teachers and displays around school, indicate that pupils reach the nationally expected levels for their age and that progress is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
110. By the age of 7 pupils have developed their understanding of time by listening to stories of the past and how famous people contributed to change, for example, Florence Nightingale. They learn about life in the past as they make appropriate comparisons between old and modern day toys and record their findings satisfactorily in words and pictures. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 show a clear understanding of the passage of time as they accurately trace five generations of a family using photographic evidence. Although pupils record their findings in a variety of ways too few opportunities are given for them to write independently.

There is an over-dependence on photocopied worksheets and drawing and colouring activities and insufficient opportunities are given for pupils to develop their research skills through the use of information and communication technology and information books.

111. By the age of 11 pupils have experienced a wide range of historical topics. As they learn about Ancient Greece they show a sound knowledge and understanding of main events, people and changes that occurred and make comparisons between home life then and now. In their current work on the Victorian era pupils in the Years 5 and 6 classes have studied the lives of the ordinary working people and those of famous people of the age. They have carried out research into family and school life, wages and working conditions and this has given them a good insight into the similarities between life then and now. Pupils currently in the Year 3 and 4 classes are effectively building on their prior knowledge of invaders and settlers to Britain as they study the life of Boudicea from different perspectives. Pupils in Year 7 study the development of settlements in Britain from Norman through to Medieval times. Pupils aged 7 to 12 are given too few opportunities to write independently, creatively or at any length. Pupils' application of the basic literacy skills of spelling and punctuation is inconsistent and in some instances unsatisfactory. Follow up activities do not always take into account the different abilities of the pupils and this results in a lack of challenge particularly for the higher attaining pupils. Standards in presentation are variable and in some cases not good enough. However information and communication technology is used satisfactorily to support the subject and enhance pupils' learning.
112. The quality of teaching seen is satisfactory overall with some very good teaching in the Year 4 class and good teaching in the mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class. In these lessons teachers effectively build on pupils' previous knowledge, extend their thinking skills by using good questioning techniques and use resources well to further enhance learning. Teachers show a good subject knowledge, give clear explanations and plan stimulating activities which develop pupils' literacy skills well. In lessons that are less successful there is an inefficient management of time which results in unfinished work and as the pace of the lessons slows pupils become restless. In all lessons seen relationships are good and pupils share their teachers' enthusiasm for the subject. They listen carefully, concentrate on their tasks and behave well. However, throughout the school, teachers' written marking does not enable pupils to know why their work is good and what they must do to improve their historical knowledge and understanding, nor does it help pupils improve the presentation of their work.
113. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic, has a good subject knowledge and has produced an up to date policy and scheme of work to help teachers with their planning. Although there are appropriate procedures in place to assess and record pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school the co-ordinator does not have a clear overview of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Resources for the subject are good, well organised and easily accessible. In all topics studied timelines are used to support pupils' sense of chronology and enhance their numeracy skills. Maps are used to identify areas being studied and a range of historical "Big Books" are used appropriately with the younger classes during the "literacy hour". There are effective links to religious education as pupils study the values and beliefs of other civilisations. A range of visits to localities of historical interest such as Bletchley Park and Bradwell Abbey further enhances pupils' learning. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114. There has been major improvement in the provision for information communication technology (ICT) since the last inspection, with the establishment of a computer suite that allows for whole class skills teaching. There has been training for teachers that has led to improved confidence and expertise in the teaching of this subject. As a result, most of the attainment of the majority of pupils currently in year 6, now matches the national expectation in word processing and data handling. Opportunities to take part in activities involving control and monitoring are still limited. As a result the skills involved in these aspects are not as well developed.
115. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, with teachers planning their lessons well and showing secure subject knowledge when demonstrating new techniques for pupils to use. This was evident in lessons in the ICT suite when teachers used the interactive board effectively to develop the pupils' basic skills in the subject. The teachers and classroom assistants work effectively as a team, so that all pupils receive a high proportion of direct teaching. As a result, the pupils are able to maintain their concentration, stay on task and have a good work rate. In Years 1 and 2, there is appropriate emphasis given to developing pupils' basic skills in the subject and they are taught that computers can be used to make words, pictures and to assemble text. They are also taught how computers can control movement when inputting a set of instructions into the 'Roamer' to make it move in a variety of directions. Pupils learn how to change the type and size of text and to retrieve, process and display information. Their attitudes to learning are positive and, when working in pairs on the computer, they work well together, which makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development. This was seen in lessons on developing their ability in using a paint programme to draw straight lines to create pictures in the style of Jackson Pollock and Paul Mondrian. The teachers were able to confidently demonstrate how to use the 'flood fill' tools to add colour to the pictures. The pupils treated the computers carefully and were well behaved.
116. The pupils in Years 3 to 7 continue to receive direct teaching of basic skills in the subject. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 3, in which they were being taught how to use the computer to support their work in literacy by adding speech marks to a piece of familiar text. As a result of the teacher's clear explanation and demonstration, they were able to successfully edit the text. In lessons for pupils in Years 6 and 7, the pupils showed confidence in logging onto the Internet to research information. The Year 6 pupils were effectively shown by the teacher how to find out information about clean water, as a part of their work in geography, and then use the cut and paste functions to select the text they required. As a result of the demonstration of the teacher, the pupils in Year 7 showed appropriate understanding of how to access information from a variety of sources by using different 'search engines' to find out about the Battle of Hastings. By the time that they are in Year 6, pupils use ICT to enhance some of their work in other subjects, but the school has identified this as an area for further development. In these activities, the pupils are able to appropriately use ICT to organise and present their ideas and show confidence and enjoyment when using computers.
117. There is good leadership by a co-ordinator, who has played an important role in the improvement since the last inspection. Planning procedures are secure and enable teachers to set work that builds on previous learning. Arrangements for assessment are not effective in enabling the school to track pupils' attainment and progress and then set targets for improvement. Resource provision is good, and the school is actively trying to further improve this by providing more software to make more opportunities available for pupils to take part in activities involving control and monitoring.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

118. Pupils in Year 7 are on course to meet the national expectations by the end of Key Stage 3.
119. French is taught regularly in school and all pupils in Year 7 undertake these lessons. The school has good links with the High School to which most of the pupils transfer and two members of the staff at the High School visit each week to teach lessons in Spanish and German. Overall, the pupils are beginning to understand new vocabulary and can use it successfully in everyday situations. Besides gaining proficiency in simple conversational language pupils across the year group gain a good understanding of the sight vocabulary of items, such as pencils, rulers and books which they use in school. Additionally they are developing a sound understanding of basic numbers. Where written work is undertaken it is done with a good degree of accuracy.
120. Pupils have good attitudes to these lessons. They work with interest and enthusiasm and are able to sustain their concentration well. They show a good capacity to work alone or in pairs and groups. They understand a growing vocabulary and many are keen to show their developing understanding. Good links with music are established as pupils sing songs in French. The songs are well-chosen, frequently using repeating choruses, which contributes positively to the pupils recall of the words.
121. Teaching is good. The lessons are well planned and move at a very encouraging pace. Good use of overhead projectors, particular in the teaching of Spanish and German, enable pupils to identify pictures with the sight vocabulary which they are using. Identifying missing items and recall of objects in sequence again tests the pupils' understanding, and frequent, well directed questions ensure pupils get good collective and individual practice with their pronunciation, thus promoting their speaking skills well. The lessons present the pupils with a good level of challenge in a rigorous, but enjoyable manner and help them to develop good levels of listening. The pupils respond well and make good gains in their learning.
122. The subject is managed well and the school makes good use of the high quality expertise it has within its own staffing and through good links with the High School. These arrangements are meeting the needs of the pupils well and this is an area where significant improvement can be seen from that reported when the school was last inspected.

MUSIC

123. Standards of attainment in music are in line with national expectations throughout the school.
124. By the age of seven, pupils can readily distinguish long and short sounds through singing and listening as they interpret a 'Meteor Storm'. They know the names of simple percussion instruments and can identify them accurately. Pupils are able to clap simple rhythms and a group perform an ostinato well as they whisper the word 'caterpillar' whilst the rest of the class a song to the tune of 'Mary, Mary, quite contrary'.
125. By the age of eleven, pupils have developed their rhythmic sense, as they clap more complex rhythms. Starting with a simple four-beat pattern, groups of pupils are able to successfully pick out the first and third beats, whilst another group use the first and fourth beats. They try hard to maintain the pulse accurately and develop a good understanding of a syncopated beat. More groups of pupils are formed and they too seek to maintain the beat. They do so with

good levels of success. In this way the task increases in difficulty. The pupils gain a clear understanding of how to write musical notation using symbols such as crochets and minims accurately.

126. In Year 7, pupils gain good access to a wide range of styles of music. They have recently heard harp music from South America, and jazz from the USA. Many pupils recall the strong features of these varying styles well. In a lesson when they listened to some rock music they accurately identified the rhythm of the bass, knew the drum beat set the pulse and made some appropriate comparisons to the previous weeks lessons. They documented their observations on specially prepared sheets, and made appropriate comments about their feelings.
127. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall, and shows some good features. Good classroom organisation and management of pupils is central to the best lessons. It makes a positive impact on pupils' learning, giving them ample opportunities to try out their developing skills and refine them. A small group of older pupils find listening very difficult. This has a negative effect on their learning and that of others around them. The behaviour of the minority causes this lesson to be halted and the teacher does well to maintain adequate control. As a result, pupils' learning was unsatisfactory.
128. Throughout the school, the music curriculum is supported well by singing. The pupils sing well together, as when they sang 'The Streets of London' during one act of collective worship, and they have a good range of opportunities to sing. The school choir are active, frequently take part in events within their community and clearly enjoy their singing. Additionally, a small number of pupils are able to take lessons in playing a wide range of musical instruments.
129. Planning shows that the National Curriculum requirements are appropriately covered and the school makes good use of the musical skills and expertise, which are present amongst the staff. The school has maintained the music curriculum to the standard reported when the school was last inspected.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Standards of attainment seen in physical education are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, with some examples of above average attainment in Key Stages 2 and 3. Throughout the school behaviour is good in physical education and pupils have a positive attitude to the subject. The subject is used well to help foster pupils' personal development and social skills and relationships.
131. By the time they reach the ages of 11 and 12 pupils are able to work together to create gymnastic sequences, sometimes with apparatus. For example, in lessons in both years 6 and 7, pupils are encouraged to explain their planning and thinking when working co-operatively to improve their work. In a games lesson in year 5, pupils demonstrating good technique are used as exemplars for other pupils to help them to improve. In a hockey lesson pupils learn with increasing confidence to control a ball, dribble, defend and pass with accuracy.
132. Pupils make satisfactory progress at all ages including those with special educational needs, who participate fully in lessons.
133. Activities in physical education are suitably challenging and pupils listen well to clear instructions in well-organised and suitably planned lessons. Apparatus is handled carefully and sensibly and there is a clear emphasis on health and safety. The pupils learn how

physical exercise affects different parts of the body; for example, in a year 7 lesson and again in a year 5 lesson the teachers explained how a particular warm up activity would affect the lungs.

134. The quality of teaching in all key stages in those lessons seen, was never less than satisfactory and in some examples in Key Stages 2 and 3 it was good or very good. Generally lessons are well planned and are clearly well organised and structured so as to offer a good balance of warm up, main activity and cool down activities. Teachers give pupils clear opportunities to work well together and to co-operate to improve skills and techniques. Lessons are active with just sufficient direct teaching to enable pupils to know what is expected of them.
135. There is a wide range of extra curricular sporting activities including football, netball and cross-country running with regular competition against other local schools. An after school drama club was seen to be very successful at offering pupils the opportunity to role play, improvise and to project their voices in a well ordered, structured and non-threatening way. All these activities are successful in allowing pupils to develop wider horizons and are good opportunities for social, moral and cultural development.
136. There is currently no subject co-ordinator for physical education at the school and this is a situation that is weakening the overall strength of the subject. The governing body are aware of this and an appointment is imminent. There is a policy for physical education, which clearly states the role of the co-ordinator in supporting and monitoring the development of the subject, but at present this is not being carried out.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

137. Only a very small number of lessons in religious education were observed during the inspection and it is not possible to reach overall judgements about standards or teaching.
138. Where teaching was observed, older pupils worked on a simple text about St Bernadette. The work was part of a larger project focusing the pupils' attention on aspects of Pilgrimage. Some pupils were able to ask challenging questions and displayed a sound knowledge of the importance of pilgrimage in world faiths. There were few opportunities in the lesson to explain similarities and differences. The task of finding meanings for particular terms such as vision, grotto and miracle offered an appropriate contribution to the pupils' developing literacy skills. In Year 6, pupils were introduced to the Qur'an, the Muslim Holy Book. The teacher and pupils treated the book with good levels of respect and showed good levels of interest. They discussed 'special books', and made good connections between books that were special to them personally.
139. Pupils make appropriate progress through the lessons and most listen attentively. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, overall, although a small minority, in one class, were off task for a significant element of the lesson. They demand a high proportion of the teacher's time. The majority apply themselves to the task appropriately.
140. The teaching in the lessons observed is sound and the teachers demonstrate good relationships with the pupils. Most respond to the teaching appropriately. The subject makes a good overall contribution to the pupils' personal development. The scheme of work meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The subject is in a similar position to that reported when the school was last inspected.

