

INSPECTION REPORT

HOWE PARK FIRST SCHOOL

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 132786

Headteacher: Mr Alan Killman

Reporting inspector: John Messer
15477

Dates of inspection: 24 - 27 March 2003

Inspection number: 249000
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 8 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bowland Drive Emerson Valley Milton Keynes
Postcode:	MK4 2SH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Charlotte Cashman
Date of previous inspection:	No previous inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15477	John Messer	Registered inspector	Art and design Design and technology Science English as an additional language Foundation stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9519	Sue Pritchard	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	How high are standards? (b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils?
20149	Malcolm Childs	Team inspector	History Mathematics Music Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
28320	Robert Willey	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography Physical education Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This community first school opened in September 2001. It has 177 boys and girls on roll aged between four and seven years. The school is due to increase in size to 240 pupils in September 2003 when it will admit pupils to Year 3. It will then be the same size as most other primary schools. The school serves children from a residential housing estate that is growing rapidly. The latest census data indicates that the school is situated in an area where children come from social backgrounds that are typical of national averages. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year; the attainment of many of the pupils in its first intake, those currently in Year 2, was low. These pupils came from many different schools. The attainment on entry of the children now in the Reception class was broadly average, and this pattern is more likely to continue. A much higher proportion of pupils enter and leave the school partway through their schooling than is usual in this phase of their education. Many of the pupils are due to leave this school when a new school that is closer to their homes, and will cater for four to 11 year olds, opens in September 2003. A small proportion, less than 10 per cent, of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and several are fluent in other languages as well as English. Around four per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs varies as pupils enter and leave the school. Around seven per cent have been entered on the register, which is below the national average and most of these have mild learning difficulties, although a small number have statements of special educational need because they require considerable help with their learning.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that provides an effective education for its pupils. It has been established successfully according to a skilfully planned set of priorities. The teaching is good and contributes to pupils' good achievement. Despite their low attainment on entry, pupils in Year 2 are likely to attain average standards by the end of this school year in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The leadership and management of the school are good. The leadership by the headteacher is excellent and his influence has had a positive effect on pupils' learning and the ethos of the school. The deputy headteacher provides very good support and together they form a very strong leadership team. Governors are closely involved in the development of the school and make a very good contribution to its effective leadership and management. The school has good capacity to improve further. Resources are used well and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership.
- The care of pupils is very good and provision for their moral and social development is a strength.
- Relationships throughout the school are excellent and ensure a high standard of behaviour.
- Teaching is good and much of it is very good; teachers and support staff are hard working and committed to raising standards.
- Governors are well informed, supportive and have an excellent understanding of all school issues.

What could be improved

- The development of a common understanding among teachers of the high quality of work that should be expected of pupils.
- The links that are made between the different subjects of the National Curriculum.
- Assessment procedures so that they are easily accessible and give clearer information that can be used to plan the next steps in learning.

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 not been inspected before.

STANDARDS

In most reports a table showing the school's performance in national tests compared with other schools is published here, but pupils in this school have not been entered for national tests yet. The pupils in Year 2 are due to take the tests in the summer term.

Children's achievement in the Reception classes is good and most are likely to exceed the early learning goals, specified in national guidance, before the end of the Reception year. Many are beginning to work at the first levels of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics.

Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2. However, pupils in Year 2 commenced their schooling from a low starting point. Several had not spent any time in a Reception class and many others had spent only one term in Reception classes in other schools. As a result of their good achievement in this school, however, most are likely to attain average standards in English, mathematics and science, as well as in all the other subjects, by the end of the year. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are average in Year 2 but there is scope for achievement to be even higher as the school's practices bed down.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They are keen and eager to learn and love to show what they can do.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils work and play happily together in and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work well in pairs and in groups. They enjoy taking on responsibilities and excellent relationships help to promote keen attitudes to learning.
Attendance	Very good - well above that of other schools.

Pupils are confident and sensible. They take great pleasure in learning and are pleased with the work they produce.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2
Quality of teaching	good	good

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

The quality of teaching is good. There are many strengths in teaching; teachers plan lessons meticulously, lessons proceed at a brisk pace, relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and many lessons are taught imaginatively. Teaching is effective because teachers strive hard, on a daily basis, to help each individual to learn as much as possible. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs, for higher attaining pupils and for those with English as an additional language is as good, as it is for all the other pupils. Time is used very well and classroom assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching. English and mathematics, as well as skills in numeracy and literacy, are taught well. An area for improvement is the development of a common understanding among teachers and support staff of the standards that pupils are capable of attaining in order to raise expectations of pupils' performance to a uniformly high level so that the quality of work produced improves further.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The National Curriculum has been introduced successfully but the school is not yet identifying opportunities to link the different subjects together.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Provision is very well organised and pupils receive very good quality support and make good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils have a good command of English and achieve well. Their needs are noted in teachers' planning and extra support is provided according to the pupils' particular needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Provision for moral and social development is very good and represents a strength of the school. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual and cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school is a very caring community and all pupils are nurtured according to their individual needs.

Parents hold the school in high esteem and the partnership with parents is already well developed. Parents particularly appreciate the open channels of communication between home and school. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught according to statutory requirements and the core subjects, English, mathematics and science, have been established well. The school has good plans to review provision for the non-core subjects. The school ensures that high levels of care are maintained so that pupils work in a supportive learning environment.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and his deputy gives strong support. The roles of subject co-ordinators are developing well. Overall curricular management is good and is improving as new teachers are appointed to share the responsibilities.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are closely associated with the school. They are well informed, fulfil their responsibilities very well and make a strong contribution to the school's development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school looks critically at every aspect of its work and puts in place effective strategies to address areas for development.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used well. A good number of support staff and voluntary helpers support pupils' learning well.

The school has a satisfactory number of appropriately qualified teachers who have been appointed in phases as the school has grown. Two more teachers have been appointed as from September 2003 to take the two new Year 3 classes. Accommodation is adequate but the playground is too small and is too close to classrooms which limits physical education lessons outside. The computer room is badly ventilated and quickly becomes over-heated. Resources to support teaching and learning are adequate. The headteacher and his deputy worked tirelessly with teachers to prepare the school for its first intake

and the school is now well established. The governing body are aware of the principles of best value and apply them very well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school, are well behaved and make good progress.• The school is well led and managed and the teaching is good.• Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.• The school is helping children to become mature and responsible.• The school works closely with parents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework that their children receive.• The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' positive views. Inspection findings indicate that an appropriate amount of homework is set. The range of activities outside lessons is modest but there are good plans for more educational visits.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. There are no past national test results to report for this school. The first group of pupils to sit national tests will do so in the summer of 2003.
2. Pupils achieve well in the Reception classes and most are likely to exceed the early learning goals specified in national guidance before the end of the Reception year. Nearly all pupils speak with confidence and demonstrate an increasingly wide vocabulary. They enjoy words as demonstrated by one boy who stated, 'I like the word 'greedy' in that story'. Their early reading and writing skills are particularly well developed. Many are already at the stage of reading simple texts and all enjoy stories. They are highly motivated to read and receive good support both in school and at home. When they enter the school, many are very reluctant to write mainly because they lack confidence. They are too ready to say that they cannot write at all. The school is very successful at breaking down the barriers and instilling more positive attitudes, particularly by emphasising that it is absolutely fine to make mistakes and that making meaningful marks and play writing are also highly valued. A significant proportion are still sceptical about their abilities but most are achieving well. Most now have a go at writing and produce strings of letters that they can 'read' back to themselves. The higher attaining pupils write clear sentences and use full stops to separate one from another. Their spelling becomes increasingly more accurate. Handwriting skills are practised regularly and most children form their letters well. Mathematical skills are developing well. Children recognise patterns and can name two and three-dimensional shapes. Many have a fascination for very large numbers.
3. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well in Years 1 and 2. However, many of the pupils in Year 2 entered the school with levels of attainment that were well below average. This group of pupils represented the school's first intake into Year 1 and many had little or no experience of education in Reception classes. They came from many different schools. Very soon it became clear to the school that they would have to adjust the planned Year 1 curriculum in order to meet the learning needs of these pupils. Many required a curriculum more usually associated with children in the Reception year. The school lowered its sights and worked hard to fill in the gaps in pupils' prior learning. This proved highly successful and it is now likely that most will attain average standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science, as well as in all the other subjects. The standards pupils attain in speaking and listening are above average. If, as seems unlikely, the school maintains stability with few pupils moving into or out of the school and the quality of provision stays the same, the current Year 1 pupils are likely to attain standards that are above average in most subjects by 2004. The current Reception year have had a very good start to their schooling and all have spent three terms in the Reception year. They are on course to attain even better results in the national tests in 2005.
4. Most of the pupils in Year 2 can read simple texts fluently with good levels of understanding. Higher attaining pupils read with good expression; they recall stories and explain the plot succinctly. Many can predict what will happen next and express their opinion about characters in the story. They have favourite authors, such as Janet and Alan Ahlberg and Roald Dahl. Humorous titles such as, 'The Great Spaghetti Suit,' and ' The Toilet of Doom' appeal to many. Writing skills are developing well and most write a sequence of sentences that follows a logical pattern. Higher attaining pupils write lengthy passages that shows imagination and clarity. Spelling of commonly used words is mainly accurate and most pupils make phonically plausible attempts at longer words, such as 'sparcalin' for 'sparkling'. They have a good understanding of number and describe the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes accurately. Many are good at explaining how they arrived at answers to problems. In science, they have a good understanding of electrical circuits and know about the conditions that plants require to grow successfully.

5. Pupils achieve well and complete a good range of work in the other subjects of the National Curriculum and attain average standards. However, there are few examples of any really high quality work produced by pupils. This is partly because the school has, as a matter of first priority, been concentrating hard on developing the literacy and numeracy skills of pupils in Year 2 to bring them up to average standards. It is also because it is not always clear what constitutes work of the highest quality. The school has begun to compile a portfolio of work that represents work of different levels but it does not yet include examples of work indicative of the higher levels. Also teachers do not yet share a common understanding of the heights that pupils are capable of attaining and so expectations of performance are uneven.
6. In the school's recently conducted assessment of the achievement of pupils with special educational needs in Year 2, three quarters were found to have made good and often very good progress. The quality of the independent educational programmes designed for these pupils is very good. Targets are very specific, realistic and often challenging. However, staff and pupils are not always sure what criteria they should use as evidence that the target has been met. As a result, the guidance lacks precision and staff and pupils are not quite sure at what point targets have been met. When targets are not met, they are sympathetically amended in order to make them more attainable. The co-ordinator recently conducted a good evaluation of pupils' success in reaching their targets. This showed that 64 per cent of targets were fully met and 29 per cent were partially met. The fact that only seven per cent of targets are not met indicates that target setting is highly appropriate to pupils' needs.
7. In a period of just over four terms, the school has established very effective systems for supporting pupils with special educational needs. The school is responding well to the challenges presented by a high rate of pupil mobility, a growing special needs register and the increasingly diverse needs of pupils. In spite of the difficulties faced the co-ordination of human and physical resources is very good and this is resulting in many pupils achieving well.
8. Close attention is paid to ensuring that there are no barriers that might constrain the achievement of pupils who have English as an additional language. Although all demonstrate a good command of English, teachers are careful to monitor their achievement and check that their understanding is complete. As a result these pupils' good progress is fostered effectively.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to their learning. They relate exceptionally well to teachers and other adults in school and to each other. Because they feel safe, secure and valued, they are confident, outgoing and enjoy their time in school. Children in the Reception class quickly adjust to the daily routines and rules of school and enter wholeheartedly into their lessons and all the activities. The good quality of the teaching across the school and the very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils form a powerful combination that helps create a most effective environment for pupils to learn and flourish.
10. Pupils arrive cheerfully in the morning, eager and ready to get down to work. The stimulating activities provided excite the pupils' interest and imagination so that they relish learning. A fine example of this was seen in the geography lessons in Year 1 where pupils made one thrilling discovery after another, excitedly opening suitcases packed with clues on where 'Barnaby Bear' had travelled. Pupils respond very well to their teachers who firmly believe in pupils' capabilities and their potential to achieve. There are frequent instances where positive and supportive relationships help promote a 'can do' attitude in school. In a very well taught lesson in the computer suite, for example, the Reception age pupils were all able to log on and off and complete the tasks planned for them because they had listened so well and had been encouraged to experiment and see what they could do for themselves.
11. The behaviour of pupils is very good. Ninety-nine per cent of the parents responding to the pre-inspection survey agreed their children liked coming to school and behaved well when they were there. The inspection evidence confirms their very positive views. Pupils play contentedly in the playground by finding toys to occupy them, hopping, skipping and running happily in the limited

space available. Attentive supervisors ensure pupils behave well in the dining hall and demonstrate good table manners. Pupils respond promptly and positively to the strong emphasis the school has on being helpful and kind to one another. The few pupils who, from time to time, find it difficult to conform to the firmly established 'Golden Rules' learn from the overwhelming majority who behave very well. This is patently obvious in assemblies where pupils appreciate the contribution of others and show due respect for the occasion by singing enthusiastically and praying reverently. There are shared, social expectations in school that pupils recognise and are very content to follow.

12. No incidents of unkind behaviour or bullying were observed during the course of the inspection, neither was there any evidence of tension amongst individuals or groups. No exclusions have been made. All adults in school are vigilant about the need to look out for any pupils showing signs of distress from the behaviour of others. This results in pupils who are settled, secure and confident and who see it as their duty to seek help from an adult for someone who is injured, unwell or unhappy. Pupils know that staff always have time to listen.
13. Pupils with special educational needs co-operate and work well in their class groups, where they receive good support. The school has been very successful in creating a harmonious community where pupils irrespective of their cultural differences or attainment get along exceedingly well. These excellent relationships do much to enhance the learning opportunities of all pupils.
14. Pupils make very good gains in their personal development. They seek responsibility for everyday school routines such as helping tidy classrooms or distribute registers and resources. Pupils work with an increasing degree of independence. For example, on arrival at school the youngest children choose their name and hang up their coats. Pupils select their own reading books and most show a responsibility for the work they are expected to do at home. The strongly held view of the parents who responded to the questionnaire and/or attended the meeting before the inspection was that their children had grown in maturity and independence during their time in school.
15. The attendance and punctuality of pupils is very good. Taking into account the higher than average rate of pupil mobility affecting the school, the school has been very successful in promoting and maintaining its attendance figures. Pupils are very keen to come to school. They arrive in good time, allowing a calm and well-ordered start to their day.
16. The school places strong emphasis on good behaviour. Pupils are expected to respond positively in any situation. They are actively encouraged to support each other in the classroom, during physical education and informal times, such as lunchtime and playtime. This results in pupils working well together and developing very good relationships with their peers. For those pupils who do have difficulties with appropriate behaviour in classrooms, or within relationships, the school has strategies and support assistance in place to help them to modify their behaviour. Behaviour amongst pupils with special educational needs is usually good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good. The teaching in the lessons seen was always at least satisfactory; it was very good in just over two fifths of lessons, good in just over a half of lessons and satisfactory in a few. Teaching in the Reception classes was very good in a half of lessons and good in a half. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 was very good in well over a third of lessons, good in just over a half and satisfactory in a few. There is then a high proportion of good and very good teaching across the school. Teaching is good in all subjects, except design and technology where insufficient was seen to form judgements. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and pupils' learning of the basic skills associated with reading, writing and number work, is good.
18. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and in great detail. Lessons are very well prepared and classroom assistants are well informed about their roles and responsibilities. Voluntary helpers, mostly parents and grandparents, provide valuable extra support. There are several factors that

have resulted in the high frequency and consistency of good teaching. The experienced headteacher has been successful in appointing a good team of teachers who are appropriately trained and bring to the school a good range of different specialist knowledge and expertise. The headteacher and his deputy, who is not in full time charge of a class, have monitored, evaluated and supported teachers well in their professional development. Teachers who are new to the profession have been supported well through in-service induction training and have a good proportion of time away from their class teaching duties each week. Teachers evaluate the success of each lesson, assess pupils' learning and use this information to adjust subsequent lessons. Close attention is paid in lessons to the differing needs of each individual. The team of teachers is highly motivated and works hard to improve the quality of provision.

19. Much of the teaching in the Reception classes is very good, though it does not reach this high level in all aspects of all lessons and is, thus, good overall. A sound balance has been achieved between direct instructional teaching and encouraging children to make decisions about the activities that they wish to take part in. When making choices, children are observed closely and any child that does not settle to the activities provided is given guidance and directed to participate. The co-ordinator has identified the need to improve the level of adult involvement and interaction during activities that are chosen by the children. There are occasions when adults are merely supervising, rather than actively supporting learning. The outside area is used well as a learning resource. It is well structured and many of the activities are changed each day. This area is used well in inclement weather, which increases the range of experiences that pupils encounter. For example, they are able to feel the difference between digging in the soil on a dry sunny day and digging on a rainy day. They follow the principle that there is no such thing as bad weather only bad clothing. All activities, both inside and outside, are carefully planned and include particular challenges that are linked to specific learning objectives. Many of the tasks suggested, such as 'Can you sail the boat across the water?' or 'Can you dig a hole?' are not always sufficiently challenging. Equally the learning intentions associated with each are sometimes too vague and imprecise. When sailing the boat the intention was that children should, 'investigate objects'. Many of the children are capable of tackling more demanding challenges. By contrast the learning intentions in phonic work are often much more precise, 'To write the final blends ld,ck,ll,ss and nd'. This tighter focus resulted in more effective learning.
20. There were examples of very good imaginative teaching in each year group. In one particularly good English lesson for pupils in Year 1, for example, the teaching was especially imaginative. The pupils were learning about how to write instructions. Father Bear, a large bear dressed in jacket and tie, arrived and demanded his porridge. The teacher then produced an interesting bag that she and the pupils would explore in their search for porridge. Already the pupils' interest was aroused. As each item was withdrawn from the bag it was examined for instructions. These instructions were found in a recipe book, on the packaging for a computer game and on a skirt. A good discussion followed on the need for following instructions if disasters were to be avoided. Eventually a packet of porridge was found. The pupils read the instructions carefully, line by line, mixed the ingredients and cooked the porridge in the microwave. There were many good links with numeracy as they measured heaped tablespoons, poured millilitres of milk set the microwave oven for a set number of minutes and seconds. Good attention was paid to health and safety factors. The pupils then had to work in small groups to follow instructions for making different breakfasts, such as jam sandwiches and different cereals. Although there was little significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, several gender differences were noted in this lesson. Girls were better at spreading butter than boys and whilst boys thought that labels in clothing only indicated size, the girls knew that labels also included instructions for washing. In a good review session towards the end of this fast moving lesson, pupils had to provide detailed instructions on the sequence of actions needed to brush teeth efficiently. All pupils were fully included in the teachers' questioning which was adjusted so that lower attaining pupils could answer some questions successfully whilst also posing questions that challenged the thinking of higher attaining pupils.
21. In literacy and numeracy lessons, in particular, activities and tasks are well matched to pupils' varying stages of development. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and assistants know their pupils very well, are very involved in setting targets for them

and give very good support through carefully planned tasks to ensure that the targets are met. This is reflected in the high frequency of completed and partially met targets set for pupils within their individual educational programmes. This was evidenced during registration in a Year 1 class where individual pupils were working in turn with a learning support assistant to rehearse high frequency words. The assistant was very familiar with the relevant targets for pupils and used the short time available very effectively. During an afternoon registration time for Year 2

pupils, a learning support assistant supervised two pupils rehearsing vocabulary on a language master machine whilst preparing art materials for the next lesson. She appropriately praised both pupils as they had successfully achieved their tasks.

22. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent. As a result, the management of behaviour is very good and is generally simply not an issue. On the few occasions when specific pupils present challenging behaviour, it is dealt with well. Teachers have good systems for attracting pupils' attention during busy periods. They clap a rhythm and the pupils have been trained to clap a response. This system works very well because it is non-verbal and pupils have to put down what they are doing in order to clap a response.
23. Time is used well. During registration periods, pupils are given a short challenge such as 'How many words beginning with 'pl' can you find in five minutes?' Classroom assistants work closely with individuals during this period for a short sharp session on learning letter sounds. Pupils work individually on an audio tape system that reinforces the recognition of whole words. This busy start to each day sets the pace for the rest of the activities. Pupils work hard and are kept busy and actively engaged in activities until home time. This active working atmosphere is interspersed with times for quiet reflection during assemblies, when listening and appreciating music and when listening to stories. In this way a good balance is struck.
24. Throughout the day, teachers, support assistants and voluntary helpers work together to assess, evaluate and record pupils' learning. This on-going assessment, often recorded on well designed record sheets, is used well to plan further lessons. Homework is also used well, particularly in reading, to consolidate and extend reading. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach but are also keen to improve their practice further.

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

25. Overall, the school's curriculum is good. It covers all statutory requirements and gives pupils of all levels of prior attainment suitable opportunities to learn. There is a limited range of out of school activities, such as the school choir, though the school is considering ways of extending this.
26. The curriculum provided in the Reception year is good. The staff know the children well and full account is taken of their needs. An appropriate balance is struck between work directed by the teacher and that initiated by the pupils. Planning is thorough and is based on national guidance for the Foundation Stage; the children benefit from a well-balanced and interesting programme of activities.
27. In Years 1 and 2, the high levels of pupil mobility, and the range of different schools from which they have come since the school opened, have made curriculum development more difficult. For example, pupils in the present Year 2 had very low levels of attainment on entry that made it necessary for their Year 1 teachers to complete a preparatory curriculum before many of them could begin to work on the National Curriculum. Planning is rigorous for English, mathematics and science, and is thorough in other subjects. There is no overall curricular plan that identifies how the different subjects of the curriculum might be linked to make learning more meaningful and more in tune with the way in which young children learn. The school has identified this as an area for development. National Curriculum programmes of study and national guidance have been used effectively to produce a broad and balanced curriculum. The school faces a continuing challenge

to maintain and develop curricular provision over a period of instability caused by the building of an adjacent school and the proposed reorganisation of local schools into infant and junior schools.

28. The school has correctly identified its curriculum priorities and the initial focus on the National Literacy Strategy has successfully raised standards and ensured that pupils make good progress in English. Although mathematics and science initially received less attention, good curriculum development has meant that the National Numeracy Strategy has been well introduced and that standards have risen in both subjects because of the good progress being made by pupils. Curriculum planning in other subjects is thorough, although there is not always sufficient focus on the skills to be learned. It is for this reason that the school is working further to refine the current procedures for tracking pupils' progress, in order to identify any gaps in their learning. The school uses the expertise available for curriculum development within the local education authority well; this includes the literacy and numeracy consultants and the Milton Keynes Music Service.
29. Special educational needs support is very well organised. All staff are fully involved in aspects of planning and informal review. All have direct accesses to pupils' individual educational programmes and are very conversant with individual pupils' targets. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
30. Individual plans are drawn up for pupils on the special educational needs register by the class teacher in conjunction with the learning support assistant and, where appropriate, with the special educational needs co-ordinator or outside agencies. Targets set are attainable and realistic and are very well focused. Each specifies a review date. Two pupils have formal statements of special educational need, and the requirements specified in their statement of education need are fully met. These statements are fully reviewed, as required each year.
31. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. These pupils have a good command of English and achieve well. Their needs are noted in teachers' planning and extra support is provided according to their particular needs.
32. The way in which all pupils are given equality of access to the curriculum is very good, although gifted and talented pupils are not yet formally identified. While there is no register of such pupils, some gifted readers from Year 1 work occasionally at guided reading with Year 2 pupils. A gifted mathematician in Year 2 is working on tasks that are between one and two years ahead of what is required by the National Numeracy Strategy for pupils of this age.
33. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. The school promotes reflection, religious beliefs, moral values and tolerance for others. Pupils are given good opportunities in daily acts of worship and religious education lessons to develop their spiritual awareness. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Teachers are good role models for the pupils. They praise good practice and reward pupils for their efforts. Pupils have a clear appreciation of the difference between right and wrong and have a good understanding of the reasons for the school rules. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on ethical issues, such as care for the environment. There is a caring and welcoming ethos throughout the school.
34. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The excellent relationships that are promoted throughout the school encourage pupils to live and work harmoniously together. In classrooms and around the school, pupils carry out a range of tasks that encourage them to take responsibility and help each other. Teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' ability to work independently and to sort problems out between themselves through negotiation.
35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to understand their own cultural traditions through stories, poetry, art and design and music. Their work on sculpture included the study of work by Henry More, for example, and in assembly they listen to and learn to appreciate music by many composers from different periods. Pupils are also provided with opportunities to extend their understanding of cultural traditions through studies in history, geography and religious education. In addition, appropriate

opportunities are provided for pupils to develop an understanding of other cultures. They discuss features of the cultures represented in our society and gain a satisfactory appreciation of our multi-cultural society. Visitors, such as a mother who talked to pupils about her Indian wedding, extend pupils understanding of other cultures. Much of this is supplemented through studies of world religions in religious education and stories from other cultures in literacy lessons.

36. The overall provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good, and it is very good in relation to personal and social development. The planned programme is effective in helping these young pupils to realise that each of them has responsibilities as well as rights, and that everyone has to learn how to make choices. Appropriate attention is given to all the required aspects of health education. Pupils sit quietly in a circle to discuss personal issues and to reflect on aspects of social development. The effectiveness of the work in specific PSHE lessons and in the 'circle time' sessions is evident in almost every aspect of the life of the school, with its caring and nurturing ethos where every individual matters and where levels of mutual respect are exceptional.
37. The provision for the development of information and communication technology is a growing strength, with the recently opened computer suite beginning to be used well in subjects such as English, mathematics, art and design and history. Nevertheless, the suite appears to be underused and computers are not used enough in other subjects, such as science, music and religious education.
38. Visitors, such as the road safety officers who visited the Reception classes during the inspection, act as an effective stimulus to pupils' learning. The pupils are relaxed with visitors and enjoyed making the Mayor of Milton Keynes feel welcome, at the official opening of the school, as they asked him to remove his shoes before sitting on their carpet. The very regular contact with governors means that their expertise is also having a positive impact on curricular provision. A community school is developing, valued and respected by the local community. There are plans to extend links further through an increase in the number of visitors and the number of outside visits, like those to a variety of local places of worship.
39. There are constructive relations with a number of partner institutions: the school has worked closely with three other new schools to maximise their joint expertise and to maximise their purchasing power in order to get the best possible value when buying books, furniture and equipment. In addition, at this time of building and reorganisation, the school does everything that it can to ensure a smooth transition for pupils into their new schools.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The steps taken by the school to ensure the welfare, health and safety of pupils are very good. The procedures in place to monitor and promote good behaviour are exemplary. Everyone involved with the school expects each pupil to do their best and behave well and this is a key factor in the quality of support pupils receive. The procedures for attendance and child protection are very good with all staff very clear about their responsibilities for children who may be at risk. Systems for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring the pupils' academic progress are good.
41. Teachers implement a good range of practices to eliminate potential risks to the safety and wellbeing of all. Pupils are trained to keep classrooms and corridors free of unnecessary clutter; teachers are careful to ensure lesson activities are without risk and there are very good procedures for dealing with injuries and administering first aid. All staff know what to do in an emergency and are aware of the extent and type of aid and treatment they can give. There are good links with medical practitioners and parents of pupils with specific medical conditions. Staff closely monitor sick and injured pupils and make every effort to contact the parents should there be any concerns. Accurate and detailed records are kept and archived on all accidents and injuries. The school has been designed to enable those with physical or mobility difficulties to have good access to all areas.

42. The school has very good procedures for child protection. Staff are very mindful of the need to listen carefully to what pupils say and to be alert to any indication of neglect or abuse. Teachers and all staff working with pupils are aware of the correct reporting procedures. The trusting relationships established within school help keep open vital lines of communication between children and adults.
43. Procedures to support pupils' personal development are good. A continuing dialogue with parents help the school have the right strategies in place to respond to the pupils' individual needs. All staff respect the pupils as responsible members of the community and value them as individuals. Forms of address are courteous. Staff as well as pupils observe school rules and are treated with equal respect. Toilets for children and adults are of the same high standard; offices and classrooms are kept equally neat and tidy. The headteacher sets a positive example to the rest of the staff in demonstrating a wish to understand the pupils' views. He is frequently around the school talking to pupils about their day, encouraging honesty, openness and friendly conduct.
44. Good procedures are in place to manage the transition of children from home to school and to help pupils who move on to other schools. Governors are working closely with staff in the soon to be opened combined school. At the same time, they are mindful of the need to support those who will remain in a school with a new set of friendship groups.
45. Excellent systems are in place to promote positive behaviour. Everyone knows about the 'Golden Rules'. Children in the Reception class, engrossed in a writing activity, drew sad and smiley faces. 'The sad face', said one 'is a girl who has just lost her golden time'. The caretaker gently reminds one small boy to walk back properly to class. The lunchtime supervisors refer pupils to the 'Golden Rules' when someone needs calming down at playtime. Parents re-affirm the rules by going through them with their children at home.
46. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the caring environment of the school. The school has procedures in place to identify pupils who may have a learning or physical disability. When a concern is first raised, either by the parent or class teacher, the pupil is monitored. If necessary, the pupil is placed on the appropriate stage of the school's special needs register. Pupils requiring specialist help with speech therapy or with a specific learning difficulty, have the necessary support and guidance provided. The school supports specialist help well and, between reviews, classroom assistants support pupils in line with the specialist guidance.
47. There are very good procedures to monitor and eliminate any incidents of oppressive behaviour, bullying or racism. The school follows up all discovered and reported incidents by working closely with the parents and the pupils involved. Pupils are given very good opportunities to express their concerns by talking to an adult in school and they have no hesitation in seeking help if they feel in any way threatened. They are consistently encouraged through individual and group discussion to show kindness and tolerance to others. In this respect, pupils develop a good sense of equality and fairness in their dealings with each other, helping them work and play collaboratively. The carefully considered and consistently used procedures have had a strong impact on the standard of behaviour in school, which is very good.
48. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality are very good. The secretary monitors all latecomers, queries all unexplained absences and ensures registers accurately reflect reasons for absence. The school provides caring and effective support for individual families where attendance has been an issue. Holidays during term time are actively discouraged and parents take due note of this. Registers are kept properly and marked promptly. Very good use is made of registration periods with every minute used constructively. Some teachers may call the register in French; others in German and all pupils regularly calculate the total number present. Parents are often still in school at this time. This helps them realise that registration periods provide a range of learning opportunities that their children would not want to miss.

49. The school's arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic performance are good. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are well established for children in the Reception year, and ensure that individual needs are met well. In Years 1 and 2, the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good in English, mathematics and science, and they are satisfactory and developing well in other subjects. The systems are not fully computerised and are rather unwieldy. The school is exploring the development of more manageable systems. This is the first year that statutory assessment tests at the end of Year 2 will be taken in this new school. The teachers make very good use of assessment information to guide their lesson planning in English, mathematics and science, to support pupils' learning and to help plan work that is matched to their prior attainment. Assessment, recording and monitoring of attainment and progress are an integral part of teaching procedures in literacy and numeracy, and are an important factor in achieving the good progress that pupils are making in these areas. The use of assessment information to inform planning is less well developed in other subjects. At present, individual pupil targets are only being set in English, and for mathematics in Year 2 although this procedure is to be extended to include science in the near future. The quality of teachers' assessments is good. Assessments are made against set criteria and the school is creating a portfolio that includes samples of pupils' work, which illustrate the standards that pupils attain in English. The school has identified the need for the development of such portfolios in other subjects to illustrate standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. The school enjoys a very good partnership with parents who are recognised and valued as being the prime educator of their children. Parents admire the way the school is led; the quality of the teaching; the encouragement given to pupils to work hard, behave responsibly and the ease at which they can speak to teachers. With this in mind, parents are prepared to put in the time and the effort needed in helping their children get the most from their time at school. In turn, the school makes every effort to reach out to parents, to inform and to involve them in their children's education. However, around half of all parents responding to the pre-inspection survey of their views felt the school could offer pupils a wider range of activities outside lessons. The inspection evidence supports their very positive views but found the range of extra-curricular activities appropriate for a school in the early stages of its development.
51. The quality of information for parents and the way it is communicated to them is very good. The school finds a number of different ways to keep parents informed about its events and activities, primarily through newsletters but also by way of assemblies, meetings and workshops for parents, photographs and displays of pupils' work and website information. The focus of all information is very much on what pupils are expected to gain and learn from an event or activity, rather than just the organisational aspects of it.
52. Parents have no qualms whatsoever about approaching teachers and are happy to come in and discuss the progress of their children, whether or not there is a problem. They are helped in this respect by staff, who make themselves available to parents before and after school. A high number of parents take up the opportunities the regular consultation evenings provide to discuss any factors that may be limiting their children's good progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs have additional opportunities to work in partnership with the school and to understand the individual steps their children need to take to help them progress.
53. The end-of-year reports provide a good indicator to parents of their children's progress over the year. The language and style of reporting are clear and easily understood. The section on the pupils' personal progress is very good and helps clarify any mismatch of perception between home and school. Most reports make it clear to parents where their child needs to improve, particularly in English and mathematics.
54. The school has very good relationships with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents know who the special educational needs co-ordinator is, and teachers have regular

contact with the parents of pupils who have individual education plans to review the targets that have been set.

55. Governors are keen to promote the school and its successes. Their annual report complies with statutory requirements and supplements other written information, including some specifically written for parents of children just starting school.
56. Parents are very keen to see their children do well and want them to do their best. The school makes effective use of the skills and aptitudes of parents. A significant number are willing and active volunteers, helping in lessons or on school trips. A parent has set up the school's website, another brought his lorry into the car park for a topic on transport, while others have made costumes for school productions. Parents arrive in high numbers at occasions that directly involve their children such as assemblies, concerts and parents' evenings. Their very successful fundraising activities and social events draw in local residents and parents of pre-school children and serve effectively to raise the profile of the school within the local community.
57. Many parents involve themselves with their children's learning by encouraging counting, reading, spelling and independent research at home. The school is pleased with the support it receives from parents in maintaining a high standard of behaviour in school and very good levels of attendance. The dedication of parents towards their children's success is evident in the way they work alongside the staff, take advice from the teachers and respond readily and willingly to the warm and friendly Reception they receive from the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

58. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and his deputy offers very good support so that together they form the core of a strong management team. In 18 months they have succeeded in opening a new school and establishing it effectively. This represents a great deal of hard work and careful planning. The school's management team, together with the governing body, devised an appropriate set of priorities so that the school could develop in a measured, secure manner. They did not try to do everything at once and indeed there are many areas that are still to be developed according to the school's very good long-term strategic plan. The curriculum has been developed carefully in a step-by-step approach to ensure that the foundations are laid securely. The school has gained the confidence of parents, who are very pleased with the education provided for their children.
59. The co-ordinator for the Foundation Stage (Reception classes) ensures that the provision for the youngest children is managed exceptionally well. She is analytical and constantly examines the learning environment in the Reception classes to find ways of improving it further. She also works well with the Year 1 teachers to ensure a smooth transition from one year group to the next. Across the school the teaching and support staff work closely together as a team. The roles of the subject co-ordinators are developing well and each has either written an action plan for the development of their areas of responsibility or is due to write one in accordance with the school's carefully staged curricular calendar. The deputy headteacher has far too many responsibilities but is due to shed some as new staff become available to take on co-ordinating roles. Co-ordinators present their draft policies to the governing body and this helps the governing body to become increasingly well informed about school initiatives and practices. They particularly appreciated the recent presentation given by the co-ordinator for mathematics that explained school procedures clearly. The school is developing good performance management systems. All staff are appraised annually and targets are set for their continuing professional development.
60. The special educational needs co-ordinator is well qualified to lead this area of the school's work. She is well-organised, well-informed, approachable, supports her colleagues very well and has built a highly effective, collaborative team to support pupils. This is especially commendable considering her numerous other commitments. During her year in the co-ordinating role she has spent much time setting up very effective systems and procedures in support of pupils with special educational needs.

61. One particularly good initiative was the way the school's aims were devised. Governors, teaching and support staff were all invited to participate in discussing and writing the aims. This helped to form bonds and gave all involved a feeling of close involvement in working towards the aims. Increasingly the school's work reflects these aims and values. Governors have been busy making appointments as well as examining and ratifying policies. Aply led by the chair, they fulfil their responsibilities very well. Governors are closely associated with the school and provide good support. A clear committee structure has been established to maintain efficient management practices. The school has produced an excellent school improvement plan that helps to focus resources on areas of priority and makes a strong contribution to the clear educational direction of the school. The plan is detailed and set out very clearly. Deadlines are set for the completion of tasks and responsibilities are clearly defined. The plan is closely linked to budgetary planning.
62. The governing body are aware of the principles of best value and apply them very well. Three new schools in the area have joined forces to create a purchasing consortium so that they can benefit from bulk buying of services and equipment. The school consults with parents to determine their views about school developments. When setting the budget, governors ask challenging questions about financial allocations in order to ensure that limited resources are used to best effect. There was a relatively large underspend last year but this was because the rates from the previous year had not been paid and a reserve had to be retained for furnishing new classrooms. The school uses money allocated to special educational needs very well. The specific budget for spending on learning resources for these pupils is used mostly in personnel that are very well deployed to ensure very good support. The special educational needs budget is well managed and monitored but incurs some small overspend from year to year. The balance is met from the school's basic budget. This reflects the school's strong commitment to supporting pupils with special educational needs.
63. Resources to support teaching and learning are good and they are used well. Accommodation is adequate but there are deficiencies in provision. The ventilation the computer room is inadequate and it becomes unbearably hot when the computers are being used. Storage space is inadequate. The under-floor heating responds very slowly to adjustments so several areas of the building are often too hot or too cold. The exterior tarmac area is small and is too close to classroom windows. This creates a potential problem when outdoor physical education and games lessons take place close to classroom windows. Also the playground is rather barren with little to stimulate or interest pupils at playtime.
64. The school secretary ensures that day-to-day office procedures run smoothly and efficiently. All school accounts are kept meticulously and audited regularly. Taking into account the high proportion of good and very good teaching together with the improving standards, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to improve standards further the headteacher, staff and governing body should:
- (1) Develop systems that show teachers and classroom assistants the quality of work that pupils in each year group should aim to achieve. (paragraphs 5, 90, 92, 101)
 - (2) Develop links between the subjects of the National Curriculum so that there are more opportunities for pupils to apply the skills learned in one subject to their work in other subjects. (paragraphs 27, 94, 98, 102, 105, 112, 137)*
 - (3) Refine assessment procedures so that that they are more easily accessible and give teachers a clearer picture of pupils' attainment and progress so that plans enable individual targets to be set for the next steps in learning. (paragraphs 28,49, 109)*

Other less significant issues that the governing body should consider:

- Develop the playground to make a more interesting environment and provide greater learning opportunities. (paragraph 63)*
- Address the poor ventilation in the computer suite. (paragraphs 63, 115)

*** These areas for development have already been identified by the school and feature in its planning.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	53
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	22	28	3	0	0	0
Percentage	0	42	53	6	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	177
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

Special educational needs

	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	13

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	67
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.4

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.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	67	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	2	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.1
Average class size	29.5

Education support staff: YR – Y 2

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	199

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	244 815
Total expenditure	211 619
Expenditure per pupil	1196
Balance brought forward from previous year	3086
Balance carried forward to next year	33 196

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	177
Number of questionnaires returned	117

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	83	16	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	67	29	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	70	29	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	35	15	2	2
The teaching is good.	80	19	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	34	4	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	11	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	61	34	2	1	2
The school is well led and managed.	87	12	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	31	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	32	17	22	7	21

Other issues raised by parents

Parents are very pleased with the school and believe that it provides a good education for their children.

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

A revised curriculum that follows national guidance has been introduced for children in nursery and Reception classes. National guidance recommends six areas of learning and these are:

- *personal, social and emotional development;*
- *communication, language and literacy;*
- *mathematical development;*
- *knowledge and understanding of the world;*
- *physical development; and*
- *creative development.*

The curriculum details 'stepping stones' in each area of learning that lead to 'early learning goals' for each area.

66. A rich learning environment is provided for the children. They are given plenty of opportunities to choose activities, balanced by periods when the teacher specifically directs tasks. The school is participating in a national initiative, the 'Effective Early Learning Programme' that involves a great deal of analysis of children's learning. As a result the early years co-ordinator has produced an action plan to refine procedures and to further improve children's learning opportunities. The quality of teaching on each area of learning is always at least good and in personal, social and emotional development as well as in knowledge and understanding of the world it is very good.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. This area of development features strongly in the daily activities and pupils' achievement is very good. It underpins much of the work that is organised. From their very first days in school, children are encouraged to become increasingly independent. For much of the day they are required to choose what learning activities they will engage in. These activities are carefully structured and each features a challenge, such as 'Can you write an advertisement for a car?' or 'Can you take a customer's order?' These challenges are displayed near each activity and help to focus attention on what the children are supposed to be doing. This helps to develop high levels of motivation and an excitement in learning. They sit and listen sensibly, as when an Indian parent told them about her Indian wedding. This helped them to develop a better understanding of, and respect for, cultures other than their own. They learn to share and to take turns. There are disputes about, for example, who should be the lollipop person and who the police officer. However these minor squabbles are settled amicably by the children themselves through negotiation. They are encouraged to solve problems themselves. When using the programmable robot to draw a straight line down the middle of a road made of paper, for example, the nursery nurse invited ideas from the group about what they should do when they ran out of paper and how the new pieces of paper should be joined on. The materials they use are accessible and children are good at collecting what they find they need to complete an activity. They use the electric pencil sharpener carefully, without wasting too much pencil. They also take care of one another. When building a school from large wooden blocks, for example, the children recognised that the roof was made from heavy blocks that could hurt somebody if they were not positioned carefully. They are sensitive to the feelings of others and admire their work, 'Wow! That's good writing'. They show responsibility and are indignant when children do not keep to the road chalked on the playground or stop at the traffic lights. They undress and dress quickly and efficiently for lessons in physical education and willingly help others with buttons or zips. They reflect thoughtfully on their learning and answer honestly when asked which parts of the tasks they found the hardest and which the easiest. Teachers organise special times when children sit together in circles with an adult. They pass a smile around the circle and then a handshake and explain how this makes them feel, 'It makes me feel good – I want to smile back'. In this way they explore feelings and emotions. Most are likely to exceed the early learning goals before the end of the school year.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Children are given many opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills and they achieve well. They are encouraged to express their views and opinions about issues such as road safety. They are required to explain how they arrive at solutions to problems in mathematics and how to solve problems that occur when building or making models. They have good opportunities for social interaction at the roadside café. They listen carefully to the views of others, usually without interruption, and listen avidly to the stories that are read at the end of the day. They love wearing headphones to listen to stories on audio tapes.
69. Every day children participate in a carefully planned and thoughtfully prepared session that concentrates on developing reading, writing and language skills. In one very good lesson, the school secretary delivered a large envelope addressed to the class. There was much discussion and speculation about whom it was from. This developed a strong motivation to read the letter. Children were asked to discuss with their learning partners what they would do if they encountered any unknown words. One of the objects of this lesson was to find out how to read new words. Children were good at explaining the strategies they could use, 'You could try sounding out the word' and 'You might be able to read on to find out what it could mean'. With their strategies at the ready, the letter was opened and they read it in unison, having first looked at the bottom of the letter to see who had written to them. Several of the higher attaining pupils could read 'restaurants' but found 'nice' tricky. One child explained that she could read 'school' because she recognised it from the sign at the entrance. All noticed a question mark and understood that it indicated a question that required an answer. They read regularly in school and at home.
70. Various activities take place during group reading time. One group of pupils played 'Word Bingo' which helped them to recognise commonly used words. Another group read a book with the teacher, whilst another wrote holiday booking forms in the travel agents. Other pupils read books individually with classroom assistants or voluntary helpers. Children know that it is absolutely fine to ask for help if they get stuck with words in reading or writing. Many enjoy play writing that comprises lines of squiggles. Records show that children make good progress in writing. One higher attaining pupil, for example, wrote 'he has got fode' in November and by March he was writing longer sentences with appropriate punctuation, 'Hes soft and culdey. He has not got a name yet'. Lower attaining pupils move from squiggles to writing initial letter sounds, such as ,m t' that the child reads as 'my teddy' or ' e c f y e e s r t' which reads as ' It is fluffy. It is red'. Children's early reading and writing skills are developing well and are most are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the school year.

Mathematical development

71. This area features a directed, carefully planned and closely focused teaching session each day. Children's achievement in this area of learning is good. Children have a well-developed understanding of patterns. The lower attaining pupils make repeating patterns by threading beads in a sequence of red and yellow, for example, whilst higher attaining pupils create more complex patterns, such as red, red, yellow, blue, blue red, red, yellow, blue, blue. They have a good understanding of pattern and most can name simple two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, rectangles and triangles. When making model bears from play dough, the teacher grasped the opportunity to reinforce the children's understanding of three-dimensional shapes, 'Look the larger sphere is the body and the smaller one is the head. What shapes are you rolling the arms and legs into?' They study the class thermometer and predict what the temperature will be at different times of day. They sing songs, such as 'Five Speckled Frogs Sat On A Speckled Log', that help to develop an understanding of addition and subtraction. The children play a game where they count how many people are on a bus as family groups of different sizes get on at different stops. An understanding of payment for services are developed when pupils have to pay 50p at the car wash to wash their tricycles and in the Sunway Travel Agents where holidays to all parts of the world are remarkably inexpensive. They have taken photographs of staff cars with a digital camera and have written inviting advertisements to sell the cars for as much as 72p. In the café children scribble bills and receive payments although the amounts often vary from those set out in the menu. The children explain their reasoning skills well. When playing this game, which at one

point involved adding 5 to 8, one girl explained, 'I put the eight in my head and added on the five'. They understand why it is easier to put the larger number in your head and count on the smaller one. Another girl, when playing independently, quietly placed the whole set of families on the bus and counted up to 47. Children enjoy counting and are challenged to count numbers in order as far as they can go. The highest attaining children count to 100 with ease. They count in unison in tens up to a hundred and in thousands up to ten thousand. The children are interested in numbers and several are particularly interested in very large numbers. Boys discussed their views on the biggest numbers that could be made. They were sure that a zillion comes before a googolplex in order of size. Most are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the school year.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. Children achieve very well in this area of learning because they are provided with many rich learning experiences. As part of a project on transport, a parent brought the huge cab of a lorry into school for the children to explore. Another brought a camper van and explained what parts of the world it had visited. Road safety officers visited and explained the principles of road safety well. A mother with a young baby visited the classes as part of the children's investigation into what babies need. As part of their work on celebrations, a mother visited to explain her Indian wedding ceremony. This gave pupils a good insight into the practices of different cultures. The realistic toy babies are not always looked after with care, however. They are dressed, undressed, bathed and fed but are soon abandoned when something more interesting captures the children's imagination. Children explore their environment with great enthusiasm. When digging in the soil in a specially reserved area, a group of boys and girls identified chalk by rubbing each stone they unearthed on the tarmac. Several appeared to be developing an early interest in geology. One girl spent a long time experimenting in the water table that was filled with bubbles. She made a bubble stretch over a plastic frame and watched carefully as she then poured water through the bubble. Sometimes it burst but on most occasions the water passed through, leaving the bubble intact. She was experiencing surface tension at first hand. The children study forces when they watch the wind blowing their streamers in a westerly direction across the fence in the outside area. They make fruit salads, vegetable soup and pizzas as they learn about food technology and where fruits and vegetables come from. They use a programmable robot skilfully; most remember to press the 'clear' button before entering the direction and then the amount of movement they have chosen. They use computers in the computer room well. They start up the computers, learn specific skills, such as manipulating images on screen, before saving their work and shutting down the machines. They answer the register in a different language each day and know, for example, that 'Bonjour' is French and 'Guten Tag' is German. Pupils are likely to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year.

Physical development

73. Children have many opportunities to develop physical skills and they achieve well. They ride the tricycles in the outside area and demonstrate good steering skills as they keep within the chalked highway. They dig persistently in the earth as they remove barrow loads of soil. They enjoy physical activity sessions in the hall where they learn to weave in and out of the apparatus. Many boys and girls are intrepid as they climb high on the apparatus in the hall. The children handle small tools, such as scissors, crayons, chalk and pencils skilfully. They are taught how to grip pencils correctly and how to form their letters accurately. They use peelers and knives carefully as they peel vegetables and cut up fruit. Their fingers become increasingly nimble as they fix plastic bricks together and connect pieces of puzzle together. They concentrate hard as they stick things together with glue, sellotape and paper fasteners. They run fast in the playground and are good at avoiding collisions. The children are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the school year.

Creative development

74. Children have a good understanding of how to pretend, 'I'm the mummy and I'm taking you to school and you pretend you don't want to go and I get cross.' They worked collaboratively with

large wooden blocks to make a school that was big enough for a classroom assistant to squeeze into. Role-play in the travel agents, the café and when digging in the soil is frequent. The reason for digging deeper each day varies; sometimes boys are digging through to Africa to find lions and sometimes girls are digging for buried treasure. Inspired by the work of Monet, they have worked together to make a large mural that really is evocative of Monet's style of painting. Children listen to music and paint their feelings. They use recycled materials imaginatively as, for example, when one boy explained seriously that his model had two swivelling electronic aerials that picked up loads of information from a satellite and showed it on the large cardboard screen he had placed on top of his creation. Two bicycles with 'For Sale' labels were wheeled into the classrooms. The digital camera had gone wrong so the children had to draw detailed pictures with charcoal so that potential buyers could see what the cycles looked like. The pictures produced by most were highly detailed and showed good powers of observation. After the visit from road safety officers, they drew detailed, road safety posters that indicated clearly that traffic must stop for pedestrians at zebra crossings and at traffic lights. They learn a great deal when playing schools. The child who takes the part of the teacher asks her class about adding sums and knows that she herself must know the correct answers. One child spends a great deal of time filling in his class register with great care. The children are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the school year.

ENGLISH

75. Pupils' achievement is good and by the end of Year 2 pupils are likely to attain average standards. The school has well developed assessment systems and the most recent assessments of pupils in Year 2 indicate that the pupils' overall performance in reading and writing will match national averages. The good achievement has been consistent and has helped to fill gaps in pupils' prior learning. When they first arrived in the school at the beginning of Year 1, many were working at levels more commonly found at the beginning of the Reception year. There was a great deal of catching up to do.
76. Pupils develop their speaking and listening skills well and are on course to attain above average standards by the end of Year 2. Most pupils communicate clearly and are confident when talking about their work. They listen well to teachers and to each other. In discussions with partners they exchange ideas sensibly, consider alternative points carefully and reach decisions agreeably.
77. In literacy lessons, there is a good balance of speaking and listening activities, with frequent opportunities for pupils to participate. These skills are developed in other subjects also. Familiar stories were the stimulus for the work in dance taking place in physical education. In mathematics pupils are given many opportunities to explain the strategies they have used. In science a prediction activity created good opportunities for pupils to develop their ideas logically and in geography pupils were able to express themselves clearly when explaining how they had worked out where Barnaby Bear had been.
78. Standards in reading are average. Pupils handle books confidently and most are able to talk, in some detail, about the books they are reading. The school recognises the importance of teaching basic skills, such as phonics (letter sounds), and extra training has been given to staff to develop their confidence and establish a consistent approach throughout the school. Phonics and reading were given priority during the first year. Staff agreed that guided reading improves reading standards and that consistency throughout the school was important, so again training was given. Teachers listen to pupils read individually, as well as checking their understanding of the book by asking questions. Pupils have a reading diary that contains a record of the books they have read and regular entries from the class teacher and parents. The records include useful comments about the way their child has read, any difficulties they have encountered and whether the child has enjoyed the book. The diaries are a useful way of developing a reading partnership between home and school. The majority of pupils are able to explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and use the contents' page and index when locating information. Higher ability pupils also knew how to use a glossary.

79. Standards in writing are average at the end of Year 2. Over time, pupils have experience of a reasonable range of writing opportunities, which includes writing diaries, letters and instructions. Higher attaining pupils construct simple sentences properly, use simple punctuation appropriately and their spelling is increasingly accurate. Generally their written work is grammatically correct. Most pupils hold pencils properly and form letters reasonably well, with appropriate attention to shape and size. The progress of lower attaining pupils is uneven. Their use of punctuation has not yet developed beyond the use of full stops and capital letters and their spelling is often inaccurate.
80. The school felt that pupils were reluctant to write and that they lacked confidence in this area. As a result, writing was identified as a focus for development. More examples of writing done by teachers were included in the classrooms and handwriting was given greater priority. Learning partners, where pupils discuss their work in pairs, have been successfully introduced to help develop pupils' confidence by talking through their ideas before committing them to paper.
81. The quality of teaching throughout the school is generally good and often very good. During the inspection there were good harmonious relationships in classrooms and pupils of all abilities were included and involved well in lesson activities. This helped to develop pupils' confidence and positive attitudes to learning. All the lessons seen were good or very good. Teachers are secure about what pupils need to know. A very effective feature of the teaching is the sharing of learning intentions at the beginning of lessons. These are usually revisited at the end of the lesson so that pupils and teachers can assess the extent to which they succeeded in meeting the intentions. Teachers ensure that there are purposeful links with pupils' previous learning, which build well on what they know, understand and can do. There is very good use of well-focused questions, which develop pupils' understanding and also enable teachers to assess what pupils have learned. Teachers and assistants work as effective partners to support pupils' learning and develop their concentration and this is a particularly strong feature in work with pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. Groups in Year 2 are targeted and get effective additional support from the deputy headteacher on three days each week.
82. Above all, planning for lessons is imaginative and delivery is stimulating. Pupils in Year 1 were to write a character profile. The class teacher came into the room dressed as Goldilocks' mother weeping copiously because she had lost her daughter. She asked for help. As no-one had seen Goldilocks she asked the pupils to produce a 'Missing Person' poster. The pupils were mesmerised by her performance, which ensured their total co-operation as they discussed the information they needed to complete the task. Pupils in Year 2 were taken to the playground and taught how to play hopscotch before being asked to write the instructions for the game.
83. Assessment procedures in English are good and are being developed further. Pupils have individual targets, which in Year 2 are mounted on card and kept inside the pupils' workbooks. They are well monitored by class teachers to determine when targets are met. The English co-ordinator is working closely with the assessment co-ordinator to develop a system for record keeping and procedures that will allow staff to check the rate at which pupils acquire skills in the subject. Together this summer, they will analyse the results of the first national tests taken by pupils from the school.
84. The curriculum in English meets the requirements of the National Curriculum well. The main elements and skills of the National Literacy Strategy are incorporated into the planning, which the school believes matches the needs and abilities of all pupils well. The school delivers several effective additional programmes for pupils who need extra support.
85. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who has a good understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses. She is to begin a closer monitoring of the subject from the beginning of the summer term when she will join the headteacher and his deputy in the monitoring of planning, the scrutiny of pupils' work and the observation of lessons.
86. Resources in English are generally satisfactory and meet the needs of the curriculum. The library is well located and has a good range of books. The school also makes use of the County Library

Service to supplement its own stock. Much advice has been sought from this service during the year, both to develop the library and to establish book weeks.

87. The use of information and communication technology in English is satisfactory. A set of acrostic poems on display had been produced on a computer. Pupils produced pictures to illustrate the story of Goldilocks. Having opened a screen of small pictures of artefacts from the story, they selected those they wished to use to produce an illustration for a scene of their choice.
88. The subject makes a good contribution to all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils work well together in pairs and groups and this promotes social development well. They read traditional tales from different cultures and reflect on the significance of moral issues that arise from the stories they read. They consider the beauty of language in poetry and fiction and make thoughtful responses to the ideas that are captured in verse and prose.

MATHEMATICS

89. Pupils' achievement is good and, by the end of Year 2, most are likely to attain average standards. Standards in number work and shape, space and measures are average, but opportunities for investigative mathematics are under-developed. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those who speak English as an additional language achieve well. When the current group of Year 2 pupils entered the school, there were many gaps in their prior learning and many had had little or no learning experiences in a Reception class. As a result, they have had to work hard to fill the gaps and attain average standards. The school has developed assessment procedures for mathematics well and these indicate that, whilst nearly all pupils will attain the national target of Level 2 in the national tests, a lower proportion than the national average will attain the higher Level 3 standard. As a result, the school's overall performance is likely to be below the national average in the 2003 national tests.
90. During the early part of this school year, pupils were being insufficiently challenged and this was reflected in relatively poor presentation in their books and the slow progress that they were making. The effective way in which the quality of teaching and learning are monitored meant that this weakness was quickly identified and addressed. Inspection evidence shows that levels of challenge have increased and that most pupils of all levels of prior attainment are currently achieving well. Pupils in Year 1 successfully solve simple addition and subtraction problems and they understand that addition can be done with the numbers in any order, such as $7+3=10$ and $3+7=10$. They have begun to measure length in both standard and non-standard ways such as metres and hand-spans. Most are able to recognise simple two-dimensional shapes, such as squares and triangles. In lessons observed, pupils enjoyed identifying odd and even numbers, and most were able to explain that the even numbers could be shared equally, whereas the odd numbers could not. A significant proportion of pupils in both classes could recognise patterns and number sequences up to 100 using a 100 square. Although several teachers maintain high expectations of pupils' performance, a significant proportion of higher attaining pupils are not given tasks that are sufficiently challenging. Overall standards are higher than they were for the previous Year 1 and pupils are now achieving well.
91. Pupils in the present Year 2 entered the school when it opened in September 2001 from many other schools. Standards were generally very low and much time was given in Year 1 to the completion of work normally provided for children in Reception classes who are not yet ready to work on the National Curriculum. It is evident that the good work done at that time enabled pupils to make good progress so that they were prepared to tackle appropriate work in Year 2. Pupils' attainment is now broadly average in measure, shape, space and number although opportunities to engage in mathematical investigations are too infrequent. Most pupils have extended their understanding of number to include two digit addition and subtraction, and the halving and quartering of numbers and shapes. They use these skills well when solving problems. Although gifted pupils are not formally identified, provision is being made for one higher attaining pupil to work at an advanced level. In lessons, pupils were challenged to discover the relationship between multiplication and division, and to recognise that the order of numbers could be reversed in a multiplication sum. It is an indication of the good quality of the teaching that most were able to achieve this successfully. Pupils do not yet have a full

understanding of division. The effective use of additional support to target pupils who are believed capable of moving to a higher standard within the expected Level 2 is likely to have a positive impact on the standards achieved by the end of the year.

92. The quality of teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to very good. Pupils' good achievement is a direct result of the good teaching that they receive. Teachers are well qualified to teach this subject. This is evident in the high quality planning on which they base their lessons. Rigorous on-going assessment in lessons leads to constant revision of these plans in order to ensure that the work given builds upon the prior knowledge of individual pupils. However, pupils do not yet have individual targets for improvements, as they do in English, although these are due to be put in place soon. A particular strength in lessons is the way in which teachers revisit previous work at the start of each lesson. In the good and very good lessons, pupils were challenged appropriately and a brisk pace of learning was maintained. Pupils were also well motivated, well behaved and anxious to succeed. In such lessons, pupils worked well together, showing respect for the contributions of others. On occasions there were moments of wonder, for example as a pupil saw a pattern for the first time or discovered the relationship between multiplication and division. In the less effective lessons, the pace of learning was slow and pupils were not always given tasks that matched their varying stages of development. Teachers occasionally used mathematical terms imprecisely and inconsistently and this led to some confusion.
93. Teaching assistants and adult volunteers are well managed by teachers and are full and effective members of the teaching team. It is through their skill and commitment that teachers are able to ensure that all pupils have full access to the content of their lessons. The quality of discussion observed throughout lessons was good, or better, and made an important contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils of low prior attainment and those with special educational needs are particularly well supported during the oral/mental introductions to lessons and during any key teaching periods during the lessons. Lower attaining pupils are taught in small groups. Work is well matched to their needs and this helps to advance their learning. At present the needs of gifted pupils are not being formally addressed and no register of gifted and talented pupils is in use. Overall, formal and informal assessment procedures are used well to inform teachers' planning, but there are inconsistencies in standards of marking that the school has recognised need to be addressed. All teachers manage and organise their pupils well. Pupils respond well to the challenge presented in lessons and think hard about their answers. Teachers make good use of resources, and consequently learning is supported with the most suitable apparatus. Computers are used effectively to aid mathematical understanding throughout the school, although this remains an area for further development.
94. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership which has given all staff a secure understanding of the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy and a shared commitment to raising standards. She has put in place the rigorous planning and good procedures to record pupils' attainment and progress. She manages all aspects of the subject well, ensuring that staff receive appropriate training and support, and that resource provision is of good quality and sufficient quantity to meet their needs. The co-ordinator has recognised that, while mathematics is used across the curriculum, there is no whole school plan that links the subject to other areas of the curriculum. As a result numeracy skills are not always applied in a meaningful way to activities. One exception was a lesson where skills associated with quantity, capacity, weight and time were used purposefully when making porridge for father bear.

SCIENCE

95. Pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 2 are likely to attain average standards. This is confirmed by the most recent teacher assessments conducted by the school. Pupils in Year 1 explore magnets and find out about their properties. They show good observational skills as, for example, when playing with magnetic spheres, one boy observed, 'Look, if you roll it close it suddenly speeds up and sticks'. They note the different power of the magnets, 'The bar magnet is

much stronger than the small horse shoe magnet'. They know that magnets are used in the home as door catches and as fridge magnets. They have learned, and most fully understand, the terms 'attract' and 'repel' although several lower attaining pupils still get these terms muddled. They conduct experiments and find out that magnets will attract objects through paper and card. However, the experiment to see if magnets worked through water was inconclusive because the water was not deep enough for any firm conclusions to be drawn. Good links are made with numeracy as pupils count how many paper clips their magnets will pick up. They learn that the blue end of a bar magnet attracts the red end of another but the blue end repels the blue end of the other. They experiment widely and, by placing a magnet against a metallic coat zip, find out that magnets do not attract some metals. Pupils learn to predict which materials will be attracted to magnets before testing them. Ten per cent thought that plastic would be attracted whilst 50 per cent of pupils thought that glass would be. The principles of magnetism are developing well. Last term these pupils completed good work on forces and developed a good understanding of how to distinguish between forces that pushed from those that pulled.

96. Pupils in Year 2 are developing a good understanding of electricity. They understand that there is a big difference between mains electricity and the electricity that comes from batteries. Alarming, however, one pupil suggested plugging a crocodile clip into a mains socket. The teacher rapidly and firmly rehearsed, again, the dangers of mains electricity and that plugs, sockets and electrical appliances are potentially dangerous and life threatening. The warning was so strong that several pupils were rather worried about working with batteries and the teacher's good questioning revealed all manner of misconceptions. One pupil, for example, thought that it would be dangerous to cut through the wire that they were using to make their simple electrical circuits. Several were unsure about whether a battery could impart an electric shock, even after the teacher had explained that the power of the electricity in the batteries they were using was so low that they would be unable to feel any electricity. Pupils learned how to make simple electrical circuits and most understood that a bulb will not light up if the circuit is broken. Higher attaining pupils understood the term 'conduct' and knew that wire will conduct electricity but that plastic will not. Pupils experimented with torches. They demonstrated good observational skills. One pupil explained, 'I put the batteries in one way round and they wouldn't work but when I put them in the other way round they worked. You have to have the negative and positive the right way round.' Most completed accurate circuit diagrams showing the battery, a lamp and a switch.
97. Teaching is good and much of it is very good. Highly effective, imaginative teaching was seen in a lesson where 'Mr Magnet Monster' appeared. This was a monster whose eyes lit up when he was fed anything that was attracted to magnets. This proved a very good way of classifying which objects were and which were not attracted to magnets. Firstly, the pupils made predictions, then tested their predictions, recorded their results and at feeding time, checked their results with a magnet before feeding the monster. As each object was eaten, the teacher quietly pushed a switch at the back of the monster, much to the pupils' delight, to make the monster's red eyes light up to indicate that he had enjoyed eating the item because it was attracted to magnets. Several pupils were very wary of the monster and were reluctant to approach. One said that she had seen its hand move. One braver girl came to the rescue, 'It's only pretend. I'll come with you. It's all right – he won't eat you – you're not magnetic'. Several pupils noted the magnetic symbol on cans that were fed to the monster and a good discussion followed about why cans might be labelled in this way. The review session at the end of the lesson helped to consolidate learning well. The pupils recognised that they had discovered which materials were and were not attracted and, furthermore, that not all coins were attracted so not all metals were attracted. The scene was set for further exploration into the different composition of metals and alloys. In this lesson, the pupils made good use of the digital microscope linked to the computer to study the materials before making their predictions. This indicates that the school is beginning to use computers well to support learning.
98. The co-ordination of the subject is sound and is developing well. The co-ordinator is new to the post but has already formulated good plans for the development of the subject. She is a specialist and has a very good understanding of the subject. She has conducted a good evaluation of how effectively pupils in Year 1 learnt about forces last term. Her findings indicated that the teaching had been successful but that several pupils could not remember the term 'forces'. She concludes

in her findings that the term 'forces' must be revised and that teachers must emphasise the correct use of scientific terminology. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning and the school pond is a useful resource. Computers are not used enough to support learning. The school follows a nationally recommended planning framework that promotes good coverage of all aspects of the subject. Opportunities are missed, however, to use the skills that pupils develop in other areas of the curriculum. The circuits produced, for example, were not used to light dioramas of the Fire of London and the work on magnetism was not used to design and make games that involved the use of magnets. There is scope to apply the skills pupils develop to the work they complete in other subjects. Assessment systems are being developed well and the school is able to predict that most pupils will attain standards that are broadly average and a good proportion will attain standards that are above average. The co-ordinator has good plans for the development of the subject and the school has good capacity to improve standards further.

ART AND DESIGN

99. Pupils achieve well and are on course to attain average standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils are introduced to a good range of materials. Pupils in Year 1 have produced examples of good work in sculpture. They have studied the work of Henry Moore and the sculptures in their local environment as well as pictures of sculptures. Good links are made with literature as pupils respond to the sculptures, 'I see that sculpture every time I go to the library. The man is whispering to the lady. It makes me feel happy' and, 'It looks like Hans Solo when he was frozen. It looks like the eyes will glow. It looks wonderful'. Pupils used plaster to make life sized babies in different poses and a plastic medium, that hardens after it is exposed to air, for making more detailed sculptures based on the theme of movement. They draw pictures of each other's faces before modelling them in clay.
100. Pupils in Year 2 have used pastel crayons to represent the different textures on the surface of different types of fruit. They are also working on collages made from different threads and textiles on the theme of their environment. They learned how to make a pattern in order to cut out pieces of felt accurately. Here the work did not match the quality of work normally associated with this year group. This was partly because the pupils had little understanding of the standard of finish expected and partly because the teacher's explanation was insufficiently precise. The trees they produced, for example, did not follow the pattern of branches growing and the limited range of threads available reduced the pupils' ability to reproduce detail. Pupils have produced sensitively painted pictures of poppies by using water colours with the detail picked out in pen and ink. They have replicated these well by using a computer program to generate carefully drawn and coloured pictures. Computers have also been used well to illustrate work in history. Pictures representing the Great Fire of London were particularly vivid.
101. The teaching in the lessons seen was good. However, the subject has not been a priority for development and there is scope to produce more high quality work. Lessons are meticulously planned and carefully prepared. Teachers usually teach skills with great precision. They are taught, for example, how to spread glue evenly with a spatula and all understand why they should not trail the spatula over their work. Lessons end with a good review session where pupils evaluate their work and suggest improvements. Classroom assistants and voluntary helpers make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching. Volunteers join forces with the staff regularly and they help to supervise activities well. Children enjoy the subject and concentrate well for long periods.
102. The deputy headteacher, who has many curricular responsibilities, co-ordinates provision well. The subject is at an early stage of development. A policy is due to be written in the school year 2004 to 2005. Sound assessment systems have just been introduced. The co-ordinator has conducted demonstration lessons for new teachers and has ensured that resources are adequate to support teaching and learning. The school follows a nationally recommended planning framework but there are too few links between the different areas of the curriculum to make activities meaningful. Activities, such as the sculptures and collages produced, are not clearly

linked to a particular theme. The skills are, therefore, taught in isolation rather than as an integrated part of the pupils' learning.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. There was insufficient teaching seen to make judgements about its quality across the school. This was because the subject alternates with the teaching of art and design and during the week of the inspection, art and design was the focus for most lessons. The work produced by pupils indicates that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and that they are on course to attain average standards by the end of Year 2. Pupils in Year 2 have produced good designs for vehicles, which they have used to make good models with axles and wheels. Pupils have developed a good understanding of the function of axles. Pupils in Year 1 have made a good study of playgrounds and as part of their research visited a local playground to study the equipment. They took photographs to help them with their own designs. They then completed good drawings of equipment and used these as a basis for making models of playground equipment with construction apparatus. 'Strong and sturdy' were the watchwords that guided their construction.
104. One good lesson was seen in Year 1 where pupils assembled outside on their playground and carefully considered where to place equipment on a large green grid that represented the construction site of an adventure playground. They considered safety factors, discussed who would be using the area and how litter would be dealt with. They engaged in sensible discussions. Eventually they decided to put the litter bin near the seat at the edge of the playground where older people could sit away from the potentially noisy activities. They placed the low swings for the youngest children out of harm's way near the seats and made sure that the slide was positioned so that children would not canon into the roundabout. They then went back to the classroom to draw their own playgrounds following the principles they had learned about. Several of the drawings were highly imaginative and featured ghostly theme parks or miniature 'Disney Worlds'. By the end of the session, pupils had developed a good idea of the principles of good design, that designs lead to the production of prototypes and that designs can be evaluated, modified and improved.
105. The deputy headteacher, who has many curricular responsibilities, co-ordinates provision well. The subject is at an early stage of development. A policy is due to be written in the school year 2004 to 2005. Resources are adequate but there is little evidence of computers being used to support teaching and learning. The school follows a nationally recommended planning framework but there are too few links between the different areas of the curriculum to make activities meaningful. Activities, such as making vehicles, are not clearly linked to a particular theme. The skills are, therefore, taught in isolation rather than as an integrated part of the pupils' learning.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Pupils' achievement is at least satisfactory and they are on course to attain average standards by the end of Year 2. The school has adopted a nationally recommended planning framework to guide teachers' lesson planning.
107. In Year 1 pupils have followed the journeys of a toy bear to different countries. They have identified these on a world map and described their climates and modes of transport. In Year 2, pupils have researched the differences between their home town and the remote fictional Isle of Struay, as featured in the Katie Morag stories. Through this work pupils have developed a good range of geographical skills, such as observing and recording the similarities and differences between contrasting environments. Planning for the rest of the school year shows full coverage of the National Curriculum requirements.
108. Teaching is good. The teaching in both the lessons seen was imaginative, stimulating and challenging. One teacher caught the pupils' attention by beginning her Year 1 lesson by having a conversation with Barnaby Bear. This led imaginatively to the main activity when he told her that he had not yet unpacked his suitcases, which were on the tables in the classroom. The pupils then examined these to discover where he had been, how he had travelled, what the weather had been like and the languages spoken in the speaking two of these languages. The second lesson began with the teacher asking pupils to formulate the questions they would need to answer if they

were to discover Barnaby Bear's location. This gave them a good opportunity to develop their speaking and listening skills, as did the review session towards the end of the lesson when each group reported back to the rest of the class. Although neither lesson produced much written evidence of the work done, the quality of learning in both was very good.

109. Teachers evaluate lessons and progress is recorded in their assessment books. The co-ordinator for the subject in turn monitors these records. This system is not yet as extensively developed as it is in English and mathematics so it does not have much impact on future planning by taking account of pupils' strengths and weaknesses. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge as her degree was in Humanities. She audited the resources already in school when she was given the role in September 2001 and bought further equipment so that all aspects of the geography curriculum are now supported. Computers are not used enough to support teaching and learning but there are good plans to promote their use. The co-ordinator ensures there is continuity and progression in the planning and teaching of the subject, and especially in the development of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. She looks at pupils' work and monitors lessons. This enables her to identify areas where extra training is needed. She plans to collect samples of pupils' work in order to develop a portfolio that can be used to develop the subject further. Leadership and management of the subject are good.

HISTORY

110. Overall, standards are broadly average in terms of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Discussions with Year 2 pupils, a consideration of pupils' work, teacher's planning and other documentation, has informed these judgements, as well a direct observation of lessons in Year 2. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well.
111. No lessons were observed in Year 1 but it was evident that they had enjoyed elements of historical study, such as looking at old and new houses and comparing the distinctive features of each. In Year 2, pupils were observed studying the Great Fire of London. It was a subject that had clearly caught their imagination and a constant forest of hands indicated their eagerness to contribute to the discussions. Most showed good understanding of the differences between then and now, expressing surprise that there were no fire services to protect a city that was largely built of wood. The quality of the discussions and the way in which teachers constantly challenged the pupils to think for themselves made an important contribution to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. The way in which pupils listened to, and valued, the contributions of others was an indication of the effective development of their social skills and the way in which their good behaviour contributes to the quality of their learning. Many pupils showed a good knowledge of the Great Fire. They could talk about where it started, why it spread so quickly and how people tried to put it out with buckets of water. They were especially interested in the changes in fire fighting technology between then and now. They were quite amused by the mixture of technologies, old and new, and that a Victorian steam pump fire engine was pulled through the streets by horses. The way in which teachers and support staff worked together was a strength and enabled lower attaining pupils to gain full access to the content of the lesson.
112. There are some cross-curricular links with geography, as the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' on holiday links in with studies of holidays in the past and how we tend to take holidays today. They are aware, as a result, that while today we would use cars, trains and planes to go on holiday, horses and carts would have been much slower. However, such links are infrequent and teachers' planning rarely identifies opportunities to link the work in this subject with that in others.
113. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with teaching observed being either satisfactory or good. Planning is thorough, is based on national guidance and covers appropriate topics. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress and their attainment in relation to the National Curriculum are satisfactory. They are being extended so that they can be used more readily to influence teachers' planning. Leadership of the subject is sound and has provided a clear sense of direction for further development and a whole staff commitment to raising standards.

Resources are generally good and information and communication

technology is being used satisfactorily to enhance the curriculum. For example, the pupils created pictures of buildings burning in The Great Fire of London individually on computers in the computer suite.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

114. Pupils achieve well and most are likely to attain average standards by the end of Year 2. All classes have access to the computer suite that was opened in September 2002. The ratio of computers to pupils is now 1:11 and a further grant will be used to reduce this to 1:9, which is better than the national average. The good and improving level of resources is designed to enhance learning opportunities for pupils and to improve their attainment.
115. There is evidence of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school and also of its use in other subjects. The computer room is not used currently to its maximum capacity. Poor ventilation in the room is, however, a deterrent to its greater use. Teachers alleviate the heat by leaving the door open but then have to tolerate intrusive noise from the hall and other adjacent areas.
116. The planned programme for ICT provides good experiences for pupils in the computer suite and these are having a direct and positive impact on standards. Teaching assistants provide invaluable support during ICT lessons.
117. During the lessons in the ICT suite, pupils learn and practise particular skills as they gain new knowledge of what computers can do. Pupils in a Year 1 class confidently instructed their teacher when she asked how she should access a program. They showed good understanding of the tools it uses to draw and colour a portrait, which the majority were able to print out independently. This provided a good link to the art curriculum. By Year 2, pupils were able to highlight and move a picture before adding their own text. This provided a good link to the work they are doing in history, as the subject was the Great Fire of London.
118. Other aspects of ICT are also incorporated into the curriculum. Pupils learn how to control a programmable toy. They are able to make decisions about the angle and direction of a turn and to estimate the forward distance required to travel. They also use a computer microscope in science.
119. Word processing skills are practised in a variety of ways in other curriculum areas. There was a good display of poems, for example, in the hall. Classroom displays were also enhanced by computer generated work. Painted pictures of poppies were interspersed with poppy heads generated on computers.
120. The teaching of ICT shows that staff are confident. Planning is thorough and detailed. Skills are taught systematically. Explanations are clear and pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Lessons are well organised and managed, and pupils are well supported individually or in pairs. A serious intent is promoted and pupils approach their tasks sensibly. Pupils respond well in lessons and show obvious enjoyment in the work they produce and in the way they are developing their skills.
121. The subject is managed well. It is enthusiastically and confidently led by the co-ordinator. She monitors medium and long-term planning and there are plans for her to observe lessons and sample pupils' work in order to build a subject portfolio. She has introduced assessment sheets in the Reception classes that are to be adapted for use throughout the school. Resources for the subject are adequate but there is need for an interactive whiteboard in the ICT suite so that teachers can demonstrate teaching points more clearly to the class. She has reviewed the

software already available and has been given funding to purchase more to widen the range of support to other subjects.

MUSIC

122. Pupils achieve well and by the end of Year 2, most pupils are likely to attain average standards and they clearly enjoy music making activities. Standards of performance are above average. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and the small number of pupils with English as an additional language, are making good progress across the school. The subject makes an important contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
123. Singing is of a similar standard to that expected of pupils of this age, although the choir achieved an above average standard in their very first performance to Years 1 and 2. Pupils enjoy singing and, in both assemblies and lessons, their pitch is accurate and their tone is pleasing. Most pupils follow and maintain the beat, with good diction and control. They are developing a repertoire of songs - religious or otherwise - many of which they have learnt by heart. Pupils gain suitable understanding about making music and how to appraise the outcomes of their work. Opportunities are provided to play a range of pitched and unpitched instruments. All aspects of the National Curriculum programmes of study are being taught.
124. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn songs and particularly enjoy accompanying their singing, using percussion instruments. There is a strong focus on learning the musical skills that will enable them to develop their musical skills consistently. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils' singing skills were challenged and developed as they changed the pitch of their voices to follow a pattern of high and low notes indicated by a picture and a pointer used by the teacher. The final exercise where the pattern was a series of steps was particularly challenging and, yet, most pupils engaged with the exercise so well that most managed to control the pitch of their voices successfully. This was a challenging, well-paced lesson that would have benefited from a longer time slot so that the teacher could have consolidated and assessed the skills learned. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils had been learning about the story of the Shoemaker and the Elves and a song that was integral to the story and sung by the elves as they hammered away at their work. Within just 30 minutes, a group of pupils had to practise speaking the narrator's part from a challenging text, a further group had to practise the song and its accompaniment, and two further groups had to compose and be ready to perform morning and night music. Effective planning, high expectations, very good pace, high rates of learning, effective teamwork between the four adults involved, and the enthusiasm and excellent behaviour of the pupils ensured that the lesson achieved the objective of preparing a performance of the story in words and music. There was a real sense of pride in what had been achieved at the end of the lesson – a performance that was good for a first attempt – and a desire to refine it and perform it to the whole school. During this lesson, skills in singing, accompanying, composing and performing were developed and consolidated well. In addition, the introduction to the lesson, when the teacher read the story, the work done with the narrators by a teaching assistant and their final contribution to the performance made an important contribution to the development of their speaking and listening skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experienced a range of music from western and other cultures and learned about a number of composers.
125. Overall, teaching is good and it was either very good or good in lessons observed. The quality of teaching has been significantly enhanced by the contribution made by the Curriculum Support Programme of the Milton Keynes Music Service. Teachers show good understanding of the subject and many are able to play an instrument and/or to use their voices as effective teaching aids. Lessons are thoroughly planned and follow national guidance. There is sufficient pace and challenge to gain and hold the interest of all the pupils. Effective management of teaching assistants and adult volunteers leads to effective team teaching that ensures that every pupil is given an opportunity to participate fully, to enjoy music making and in most cases to make good progress. Pupils co-operate well in whole class and group situations, valuing and enjoying the contributions of others. Opportunities are provided for pupils to perform in class and for wider audiences through assemblies and school productions. Opportunities are missed to use computers to develop skills in composition.
126. The co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has provided a clear structure for future development. The subject is well resourced, and enriched through the support of the Milton Keynes Music Service. The monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress and attainment follow

national guidance, and are being extended to increase their impact on teachers' planning and improve the match of tasks to individual pupils. Links with other subjects have yet to be formally identified and there is no use of information and communication technology to enrich this subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

127. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and they are likely to attain average standards by the end of Year 2.
128. During the inspection three dance lessons were seen. Over the course of the year pupils are provided with a balanced programme of activities that also include games and gymnastics. A display of photographs in the hall showed pupils developing a range of gymnastic skills. These also illustrated a good link with ICT as they had been taken with the school's digital camera.
129. From the lessons seen it is clear that teachers always include warm-up activities at the start of lessons but do not always also include cool-down activities towards the end of lessons. Pupils in Year 2 began the lesson with warming up exercises of walking, marching and jogging and could explain the importance of these for the muscles of the body, in particular the heart. However, there was no cool-down activity so pupils are not being taught that the heart needs to slow its rate back to normal after exercise.
130. The teaching in the three lessons seen during the inspection was good overall. Class teachers maintained very purposeful working atmospheres and pupils remained totally focused and involved throughout. Pupils in both year groups were creating dances related to familiar stories. In Year 1, the emphasis was on remembering and repeating a variety of movements whilst changing facial expressions to reflect their actions. Those in Year 2 were working in groups using a variety of basic movements to create a dance. In this lesson, good use was made of demonstrations by pupils to enhance the performance of others. Pupils made sensible comments about how work could be improved.
131. The hall, which is a good size, and the grassed area provide good facilities for physical education. The hard surfaces, however, are irregular in shape and very close to the classrooms so lessons here distract classes that are working indoors. Large indoor apparatus is adequate and the school is considering joining the 'TOPS' scheme. This national scheme provides schools with sports equipment on condition that staff attend training sessions. This promotes good levels of expertise among staff and helps the school to increase its resources.
132. The management of the subject is good. Overall resources are adequate. The headteacher co-ordinates provision. He has a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses in school and is very pro-active giving demonstration lessons when needed. He also ensures that coverage of all aspects of the subject is balanced.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. Standards are in line with the expectations set out in the local agreed syllabus. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the small number with English as an additional language, benefit from teaching which emphasises a practical approach and the importance of discussions. The topics and issues addressed are sensitively taught and challenge pupils to think for themselves and, as a result, the subject makes an important contribution to the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils. Only one lesson was observed in Year 1 and the judgements made include discussion with pupils, scrutiny of lesson planning and discussion with the subject co-ordinator. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress across the school.

134. Pupils in Year 1 study themes such as *'Belonging, Celebrations, the Jewish Faith'* and *'Beliefs and Practice'*. The lesson observed focused on leadership – what it means to be a leader and the story of Moses. The emphasis on challenging pupils to think for themselves and to develop their speaking and listening skills evident in other areas of the curriculum was a strong feature of this lesson. The teacher and other supporting adults worked well together and ensured that all the pupils were on task and able to contribute to the discussion about good and bad leadership that was at the heart of this lesson. The teacher made good links between the doubts experienced by Moses and the doubts that pupils may feel when they attempt to do something that is difficult. The pupils' sensitive and revealing responses confirm the high level of trust that exists between pupils and adults in this school.
135. Inspection evidence confirmed that, by the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils have a secure understanding of the celebrations of different faiths. In particular they enjoy stories, such as those about *Jesus* from the Christian tradition, *Rama and Sita* from the Hindu tradition, the *Prophet Muhammad* from the Islamic tradition, *Moses* from Judaism and *Guru Nanak* from the Sikh tradition. They are able to recall the stories of Christmas and Easter and are beginning to apply their knowledge to their own experiences when considering the parables of Jesus. They are provided with frequent opportunities for reflection, as they consider the impact of their actions and words on others, in both lessons and assemblies.
136. Inspection evidence confirms that the quality of teaching and learning is good and that pupils are making good progress as a direct response to this. Planning is thorough and is based on national guidance and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Assessment procedures follow national guidance, but have been identified by the school as an area for further development, in order to make them a more useful tool for teachers when planning. In particular, teachers are seeking to ensure a better match of task to pupils' individual abilities. The key strength within the teaching is the way in which the common moral strands from within the different faiths are used to challenge these young pupils to think about the big issues in their own lives, such as friendship, leadership and caring for each other. This approach is making an effective contribution to pupils' moral and social development and, in addition, there are spiritual moments, such as when a child identifies the key meaning of one of the religious stories they have been listening to. The way in which the stories told are placed into their cultural context also helps pupils' awareness of the differences of others and to value them. Pupils respond well to the content of these lessons and in the lesson seen they behaved very well.
137. The subject is co-ordinated well. The co-ordinator has ensured that this subject is being sensitively taught and that the moral teachings of the great faiths studied permeate the ethos of the school, which is an exceptionally safe and nurturing environment. The school has identified the need to identify the links that can be made between this subject and other subjects. In addition, while visits to local places of worship are planned, none have taken place to date. Planning and learning outcomes are closely monitored and, although there is no formal observation of teaching, the co-ordinator, in his role as the headteacher, 'walks the job' so regularly that he is well placed to judge teachers' expectations and the resulting quality of teaching and learning. There is a satisfactory range of good quality resources and artefacts. These are used well to promote learning throughout the school. Information and communication technology is not presently used to support and enrich this aspect of the curriculum.