

INSPECTION REPORT

MAIDS MORETON C of E SCHOOL

Buckingham

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 110438

Headteacher: Mrs Jean Taylor (Acting)

Reporting inspector: Ms Vreta Bagilhole
17517

Dates of inspection: 30 June – 2 July

Inspection number: 255154

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Avenue Road Maids Moreton Buckingham Bucks
Postcode:	MK18 1QA
Telephone number:	01280 812058
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Owen
Date of previous inspection:	23 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17517	Vreta Bagilhole	Registered inspector	English Mathematics Foundation stage Information & communication technology Geography	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
14732	Enid Korn	Team inspector	Science History Music Physical education Art and design Design and technology Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Maids Moreton C of E School is a rural village school in the north of Buckinghamshire. It draws pupils from the village and also the town of Buckingham, which is very close by. There are 71 pupils on roll with 29 boys and 42 girls. The school has three classes for pupils from reception to Year 2. The pupils live in predominantly private housing with a few in rented accommodation. Almost all pupils are from a white UK background and no pupils speak English as an additional language. No pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well below average. There are 7 pupils with special educational needs, which is well below average. There are no pupils with a Statement of Special Educational Need. In the last year the number of pupils joining the school has been low whereas the number of pupils leaving the school has been above average. Most children have attended a local playgroup or nursery before starting school. The children's attainment on entry to the school is above average. The school no longer makes provision for pupils in Year 3, which was the case at the time of the previous inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is coming through well after a period of instability in staffing. Standards are well above average in reading and mathematics, above average in writing and average in science. Teaching in the reception class is very good and it is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and often good. The school is well led and managed. It has been very well led by the acting headteacher and a new permanent headteacher will join the school next term. The pupils are enthusiastic learners and enjoy coming to school. The school has established a very good partnership with the parents. At present the budget is in deficit and it will take some time for it to recover. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and support in the reception class
- Standards in music and art and design
- Leadership and management
- The partnership with parents

What could be improved

- Standards in science
- The monitoring of teaching and learning
- The achievement of the more able pupils
- Attendance

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1998 and it has made satisfactory improvement since then. Standards have been maintained in English and mathematics but are lower in science. The school has made good progress in developing schemes of work in all subjects and is keeping up to date with reviewing schemes of work and policies. The acting headteacher has recently resumed the cycle of performance management interviews so that teachers and teaching assistants now have up-to-date job descriptions and objectives. With the appointment of a permanent headteacher, the school is in a good position to make further improvement.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
reading	A	A	A	A
writing	A	A	C	D
mathematics	A	C	A	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The tests for 2002 show high standards in reading and mathematics. The school has taken good action this year to improve standards in writing, and indications from the tests for 2003 and inspection evidence show that standards have improved significantly in writing and are now above average. In 2002, the teacher assessments in science were below the national average and well below average when compared to similar schools. Standards in science are also improving and are average. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. There are a good proportion of more able pupils and not enough of them are attaining the higher levels, particularly in science. Trends over the last four years have been above the national average in all subjects except for a noticeable dip in writing last year and in mathematics the year before.

Standards in art and design and music are above those expected nationally and pupils are doing well. Standards in all other subjects are typical for pupils at the end of Year 2 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils' progress in information and communication technology (ICT) is good. It was not possible to judge standards in physical education as no lessons took place in Year 2 during the inspection.

Standards in the reception class are above those expected in all areas of learning except physical development where standards are average. Standards in communication, language and literacy are high. Children of all abilities make good progress and more able children achieve very well with some working confidently in the first two levels of the National Curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. They are very good in the reception class.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good: Pupils in all classes usually behave well in lessons, but a few boys do sometimes behave in an immature manner. Behaviour is very good in assemblies.
Personal development and relationships	Good: Pupils are co-operative and helpful. They enjoy taking responsibility.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates did improve following the last inspection and reached well above the national average three years ago. Since then, they have been declining and have fallen still further in the current school year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Satisfactory	N/a

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.

Teaching and learning are very good in the reception class and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. The skills of literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily taught and there are some good lessons in mathematics in Year 2. Clear targets to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy are shared with pupils and parents, and pupils are encouraged to reflect on and review their work. Teaching in science is satisfactory and teachers provide a range of interesting opportunities for the development of scientific skills and knowledge but teachers' expectations are insufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. In Years 1 and 2, there is some very good teaching in music and art and design. During the inspection, good teaching was observed in history and ICT. The teaching observed in physical education was satisfactory with some good aspects. No teaching was observed in geography and design and technology during the inspection. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils with specific difficulties.

In the reception class the quality of teaching by the teacher and teaching assistant is very good. They plan challenging and inspiring activities in all areas of learning for children of all abilities but daily activities in physical development do not always take place. They assess and monitor the children's progress very well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with some good features. The curriculum is enriched by visitors and parents who contribute very well to the quality of provision in some curriculum subjects. The school has good links with the community and with other schools. The curriculum is good in most areas for children in the reception class but is satisfactory for their physical development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good: Pupils receive good support which is well planned to suit their individual needs. Parents are fully informed and consulted and all available external support agencies are used well. The provision for the most able pupils is satisfactory.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: The provision in all four areas is good. Pupils are helped to develop a good understanding of their own and other cultures. Children in the reception class are given many imaginative opportunities to experience the joy and wonder of learning.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: The school pays good attention to the welfare, support and guidance of the pupils and to the monitoring of their academic and personal progress. In the reception class the staff assess and monitor the children's progress very well. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory.

The school's partnership with parents is very good with some excellent features. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and highly value what it provides and achieves for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good: The school has been very well led by the acting headteacher who is liaising effectively with the headteacher designate on identified areas for improvement and ensuring that she is aware of the stage of development that the school has reached.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and fulfil their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: The school identifies and act on areas for improvement such as writing and information and communication technology. The monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and the standards achieved is good. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching and pupils' learning is satisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Good: Due to the financial implications involved in ensuring effective leadership after the recent staffing difficulties the school has found itself in a deficit budget situation. The school is working well with the local authority to recover the deficit. Staffing is now good. The accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The school is using available funds wisely to improve the quality of education by ensuring best value when purchasing supplies and services.

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 child likes school. • The quality of teaching. • Their children make good progress both academically and personally. • The school is well led and managed. • The school works closely with them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities outside lessons • Homework

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. Inspectors found the activities outside of lessons and the level of homework to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the 2002 national tests, the attainment of pupils by the end of Year 2 was well above average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. Compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils, standards were well above average in reading, average in mathematics and below average in writing. Teachers' assessments showed pupils' attainment in science was below the national average and well below average when compared to similar schools. Indications from the tests for 2003 and inspection evidence show that standards have improved in writing and are now above average and standards in science are average. Results in reading and mathematics are similar to last year but are not quite as high in reading. Improvement in standards since the last inspection is satisfactory and standards have been maintained in English and mathematics but are lower in science. There is no significant difference in the attainment of girls or boys.

2. Standards are above those expected in the reception class in all areas of learning except physical development where standards are average. Standards in communication, language and literacy are high. The more able children attain even higher standards in all areas of learning and are very well challenged to achieve as much as they can. This is because the curriculum for these children is very well planned and resourced and the teachers have a very good knowledge of the needs of children of this age. Teaching is consistently very good and the classrooms provide rich opportunities to develop skills in all the areas of learning. Very good opportunities exist for children to take part in role play to extend their development in all areas especially communication, language and literacy and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Improvement from the previous inspection in the children's knowledge and understanding of the world has been very good and the children now have a good knowledge of their immediate environment. Standards in all other areas have been maintained but physical development could still be better. The school is due to have new improved accommodation for reception children with a large outside play area which should have a positive impact on the children's physical development.

3. In English, pupils of all abilities make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. By the age of seven, standards are well above average in reading and above average in speaking and writing. Standards in listening are average and could be better. This is because pupils do not always listen to the teachers or other pupils as carefully as they should. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 show an interest in a good variety of books and are confident readers. By the end of Year 2, standards in writing are above average. Pupils are imaginative writers and use their literacy skills well in subjects such as science and music. They make some good use of the computer to record their ideas. Work is well presented and most pupils make good progress in their spelling, handwriting and knowledge of letter sounds and strings. There are a number of pupils in Years 1 and 2, who although attaining well at present, could do even better and reach the higher levels.

4. In mathematics, by the end of Year 2, standards are well above average and pupils use their mathematical skills well in other subjects. Pupils can discuss their work at a good level and justify what they have done. They have a good grasp of subtraction and addition and are able to perform simple division and multiplication sums. Data handling and the understanding of units of measure are well developed. However, work is not always planned well to match the needs of pupils and some tasks are insufficiently challenging. There are a number of pupils in Years 1 and 2, who although attaining well at present, could do even better and reach the higher levels.

5. In science, pupils achieve satisfactorily, but the more able pupils are insufficiently challenged or extended in their work. By the end of Year 2, pupils have considerable experience of the processes involved in experimental and investigative science and are achieving well although few pupils are attaining the higher standards. Pupils begin to evaluate evidence and consider whether tests or comparisons are fair. They are developing a good knowledge of life processes and living things in our world. Science is used effectively to extend pupils' development of literacy and numeracy skills.

6. Standards in ICT at the end of Year 2 meet those expected nationally. Pupils explore ICT and learn to use it confidently and with purpose to achieve specific outcomes. They make good progress in exploring new software programs and use the Internet well for research. Pupils know how to plan and give instructions to make things happen by using a programmable toy. Very good use is made of the digital camera to record their work in a range of subjects.

7. Standards in music and art and design are above average and pupils are doing well. The quality of art and design work on the classroom walls and around the school produced by pupils in Year 2 is good. They have used a range of media including paint and pastels and produced high quality clay tiles, the designs of which came from pupils' observations in science lessons. Pupils in Year 1 made a wide range of sculptures from natural materials on the field. In music pupils make good progress in performing, composing and appraising music. They sing well in tune and with enjoyment and listen to music from around the world. Pupils compose confidently showing considerable creative ability.

8. There are no major strengths or weaknesses in other subjects and standards meet those found nationally. Pupils achieve satisfactorily and show a good level of interest in subjects such as history and geography. In geography pupils investigate their local area and a contrasting area, they begin to use geographical vocabulary and are developing a good understanding of some countries in the world. In history, pupils are beginning to recognise differences between their lives and those of people in the past and to use their enquiry skills and observation skills to find out more. In design and technology, pupils are introduced to the full design process. They plan their work, draw designs and describe how they could be improved. It was not possible to judge standards in physical education as no lessons took place in Year 2 during the inspection.

9. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good and they achieve well throughout the school in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils with special educational needs receive good teaching and effective support from teaching

assistants. Most pupils benefit greatly from the planned support that the school organises and the parents provide, in aspects of reading and handwriting.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development have been maintained at the same good standards reported at the last inspection. This is a positive achievement in view of the significant amount of changes in teaching staff that have taken place over the past few years. With a more stable team of staff and a permanent headteacher next term, the school is in a good position to raise standards further.

11. Pupils' attitudes to school and to learning are good. They are very good in the reception class. The reception children are very enthusiastic about the stimulating and challenging range of activities which are presented to them by the class teacher and support assistant. They are totally involved and excited when playing number games and amazed when finding out how long it takes ice cubes to melt in different conditions. Both boys and girls love changing their books in the library and enjoy sharing their chosen books with each other and with adults. Pupils in Year 1 relish the challenge of working with larger numbers in mathematics and writing a class poem about cats in English, but higher-attaining pupils can sometimes become restless with the follow-up activity if it does not stretch them further. Most pupils in Year 2 are usually interested and involved in their lessons, and other activities such as the country dancing club, but a few boys are sometimes slow to settle down to work.

12. Behaviour is good. It is very good in assemblies, when the acting headteacher makes her expectations very clear, for example, that the pupils should sit still and not call out. The pupils comply readily and listen to her very well. Behaviour is good at lunchtimes and there are very few incidents of misbehaviour or bullying. There have been no exclusions. Pupils in all classes usually behave well in lessons, but they are sometimes restless when they sit together on the carpet and can forget to put up their hand when they have something to say. A few boys in Year 2 sometimes behave in an immature manner, for example, by laughing at music from cultures with which they are not familiar.

13. Personal development and relationships are good. Children in the reception class are making good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and achieve standards above those expected for their age. All can dress and undress independently, for example, when going home at the end of a wet day. They wait patiently for their turn to take part in team games in preparation for sports day. They work very well individually, in pairs, and as a whole group, to express their response to music that evokes different kinds of feelings. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 played very well and productively with each other during a wet lunchtime, showing a good degree of independence. All pupils carry out their class duties sensibly and respond well to the opportunities to reflect on their learning, for example, they know their targets in literacy and numeracy and contribute to their annual reports. Parents are very pleased with the caring relationships which their children develop at the school.

14. Attendance is satisfactory and very similar to the position reported at the last inspection. Attendance rates did improve following the last inspection and reached well above the national average three years ago. Since then, they have been declining and have fallen still further in the current school year. The main reasons for absence are sickness and term-time holidays. Very few absences are for longer than two weeks which means that pupils' progress is not hindered too much. The school reports no unauthorised absence but there are missing marks in the registers. Attendance is slightly better in the reception class than in Years 1 and 2.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching and learning are good. They are very good in the reception class and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In the reception class teaching is very well planned and challenging for children of all abilities. In Years 1 and 2 there is some very good teaching in music and art and design. The skills of literacy and numeracy are satisfactorily taught. Teachers could challenge higher attaining pupils more than they do at present, especially in science. There are some good lessons in mathematics in Year 2.

16. Teaching and learning are very good in the reception class in all areas of learning except for physical development where the teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff have high expectations and plan challenging activities for the children to experience and enjoy. Questioning is used very effectively to challenge the children to do more and to check their understanding. The work is challenging for all children and activities are well considered and organised. The teachers assess and monitor the children's progress very well. In physical development, teaching is satisfactory. The reception team does not plan whole class daily sessions for outside play that offer appropriate physical challenges using a range of small and large equipment.

17. In English, teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teachers apply the National Literacy Strategy appropriately and there are clear targets for the pupils. Teachers involve pupils well in discussions and check their learning at the end of the lesson. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. Planning is thorough, however, it needs to challenge the more able pupils and teachers' expectations could be higher. Pupils generally listen and concentrate well but there are small groups who lose interest and show inappropriate behaviour being silly and calling out of turn.

18. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory with examples of good teaching in Year 2. Teachers implement the National Numeracy Strategy well and lesson objectives are clearly identified. There are some good and enjoyable sessions at the beginning of lessons which motivate and encourage the pupils to improve their mental skills in calculation. The pupils show a confidence in mathematics and their learning is enhanced by their positive attitudes towards their work in the subject. Sessions at the end of lessons are good in both classes and used well to reinforce learning and introduce new learning. However, tasks for main activities are not always planned well to match the needs of pupils and can be insufficiently challenging.

19. Teaching and learning in science are satisfactory. Teachers plan motivating lessons for the pupils and recording skills are well developed. They make lessons interesting for the pupils and investigative and experimental work feature predominantly. Pupils enjoy what they are doing and are interested. However, assessment and analysis of results of all pupils' work has yet to focus teaching on where it can have the most positive effect on raising standards further for the more able pupils.

20. Time on computers is well planned and teaching and learning in ICT are good. The pupils are making good progress in their learning and are beginning to use the computers well to apply their ICT skills in other subjects. One lesson was observed during the inspection in both art and design and music and the teaching was very good in each of them. In art teachers plan so that pupils experience a wide range of techniques and pupils work with confidence and concentration. Teachers ensure that parent helpers are well briefed before lessons enabling the parents to add considerably to the learning. The school is using a very skilled part-time teacher to teach music to Year 2 and singing to all classes. The enthusiasm of the teacher is infectious and the pupils are extremely keen. There is a lively pace to lessons and a very good attention to musical vocabulary. A new scheme of work is being introduced to help non-specialist teachers when teaching the subject in future.

21. History teaching observed during the inspection was good and caught the pupils' interest well. Physical education is well planned, encompassing all aspects of the curriculum; dance, games and gymnastics and the quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good aspects. No teaching was observed in geography and design and technology during the inspection.

22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils' special needs are identified well on their individual education plans but their targets are not always reflected in the class teachers' planning. One pupil receives very good teaching from a classroom assistant on a one to one withdrawal basis and is making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support by teaching assistants to help them participate in class activities.

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

23. The school provides a satisfactory curriculum with some good features. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The key issue identified in the last inspection report, requiring the school to develop schemes of work in all subjects, has been satisfactorily addressed. The national literacy and numeracy strategies have been soundly implemented and national guidance on other subjects has been adopted. Under the leadership of the current headteacher, the staff team have reviewed and revised the whole-school curriculum planning for Years 1 and 2 to secure the breadth, balance and time allocations of the subjects they teach. A good feature is the way in which the new long-term plan now identifies the cross-curricular links between the subjects. The curriculum is enriched by use of the school grounds and the local environment; by visitors and parents who contribute to subjects such as art, design and

technology and history; and by dedicated weeks such as for ICT and the arts. Parents are very pleased with the curriculum their children are experiencing, commenting on the sense of fun in the school.

24. The curriculum is good for children in the reception class. It is securely underpinned by clear and detailed planning which covers all of the areas for learning required for children of this age. Most areas of learning are enriched by stimulating activities, displays and resources. The curriculum for physical development is hampered by the lack of a specifically designed outdoor play area. Plans for this are incorporated into the proposed new building development.

25. Extra-curricular activities are not as strong as at the last inspection, when the school had a Year 3 cohort, but provision is still good. All year groups are given the opportunity to take part in the ICT club, and the Year 2 country dancing club makes a significant contribution to the older pupils' social development. A series of football training sessions was provided earlier this year, with a view to running further sessions in the autumn.

26. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory. It is very good in the reception class where planning is closely linked to the personal, social and emotional development area of learning. A very good session was observed in which the teacher encouraged the pupils to reflect on feelings of anger which they had encountered in a story read the previous day and linked this very sensitively to an incident which had occurred in the class. The school has been slow to develop a formal programme of personal and social education for Years 1 and 2 which was suggested in the last inspection report. A scheme has only just been adopted and incorporated into the curriculum plan from September onwards. Health and drugs education is effectively delivered by visitors such as the school nurse and the dental hygiene team. The school has an appropriate policy on sex education. Very good use is made of events such as a teacher's pregnancy or the birth of a younger brother or sister to help pupils understand the implications of parenthood and the needs of the very young.

27. The school has good links with the community and with other schools. These enable pupils to develop a good understanding of the immediate environment and their place within it, and also to transfer smoothly between educational settings. There are strong links with the local parish church. Walks round the village enrich the curriculum for geography and history. Pupils make a significant contribution to village life by taking part in the 'Summer Fayre' and the 'May Day' celebrations and by singing to elderly residents. Links with other schools enhance the curriculum in music, art and science. Students on work experience placements provide useful support in classrooms.

28. The school pays good attention to educational inclusion including race equality. All pupils, whatever their age, background, ability or ethnic group, are fully included in all school activities and their contributions are celebrated. There are good plans in the proposed extension to the school to improve the accessibility of the buildings to pupils with physical disabilities.

29. The provision for pupils identified as having special educational needs is good. The headteacher, acting as the special needs co-ordinator, has ensured that the new

Code of Practice is fully implemented. Parents are fully informed and consulted and all available external support agencies are used well. Pupils have individual education plans that are up to date and they all contain appropriate targets for learning. It is not possible to identify if pupils have made good progress over time as there is no historical data and the headteacher has established the system from new. Those pupils identified as being on School Action Plus appropriately receive very good and very specific daily support from the school and make good progress. All other pupils receive modified work by the class teacher. In the main this takes place. In addition, the school works closely with the parents and a feature of most education plans is a daily programme to be carried out at home. Provision for higher-attaining and gifted and talented pupils, although satisfactory, is not as effective as it could be in helping them to achieve the very most that they are capable of.

30. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is broadly similar to that described in the last inspection report, with some improvement in the promotion of pupils' understanding of the diversity of Britain's multi-cultural society. Opportunities to promote the four aspects of development are well planned for in assemblies and in the reception class, but are not so specifically planned for in Years 1 and 2.

31. Pupils' spiritual development is promoted well in assemblies and in the opportunities provided for reflection. For example, at the weekly birthday assembly, the current acting headteacher encouraged reception and Year 1 pupils to think about why we celebrate birthdays and what makes us special. Before eating lunch, the pupils listened to and applauded a teacher playing a reflective piece of music on the piano and then joined in a prayer. Children in the reception class are given many imaginative opportunities to experience the joy and wonder of learning. For instance, a corner of their classroom has been converted into a 'hide' where they can observe birds feeding in the grounds outside. In Year 1, pupils listen to classical music which inspires their creative writing. In Year 2, pupils contemplate the wonders of the sea by asking themselves questions such as 'Why is a rainbow fish so colourful?'.

32. Provision for moral and social development is good. Moral and social themes are a strong feature of the assemblies. For example, the Rector's assembly about the story of David and Goliath linked well to the school's end-of-term themes of courage and overcoming fears at a time of moving on, and involved the pupils well in role-play. Moral development is promoted through stories, such as in the weekly 'Golden Rules' assembly, and in class discussions and displays about friendship. Pupils have learnt about the importance of recycling rubbish as part of caring for the environment. Pupils of all ages are given an appropriate range of responsibilities and they develop some understanding of the democratic process when they vote for the May Day king and queen. They have raised money for a children's cancer research charity. They are given good opportunities to work in pairs and teams and to perform in front of other children and adults.

33. Cultural development is good. Pupils are helped to develop a good understanding of their own culture through the school's effective links with the village community and the church. They learn about the cultures of other countries through stories, art, music and dance. In Year 2, good use is made of souvenirs which the

pupils have brought from holidays in other countries. A parent has visited the reception class to talk about Ramadan and the children have dressed up in ethnic clothes such as saris. They also celebrated Chinese New Year through a range of activities including making a stir-fry meal.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school pays good attention to the welfare, support and guidance of the pupils and to the monitoring of their academic and personal progress. There have been improvements in some procedures, such as in assessment and in health and safety, but deteriorations in others, such as in continually promoting good behaviour and attendance.

35. Parents are very pleased with the ways in which the school helps their children to learn and develop. The pupils' individual needs and backgrounds are very well known to all staff. The current acting headteacher is highly successful in obtaining the support of external agencies to help individual pupils when required, for example, the educational psychologist or a counsellor. Parents particularly appreciate how the school builds up the confidence and self-belief of shy children. Clear targets to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy are shared with pupils and parents, and pupils are encouraged to reflect on and review their work. Achievements in work and behaviour are celebrated in the weekly 'Golden Assembly' and recorded in a special book which is displayed outside the headteacher's office. The school provides satisfactory support and guidance for higher-attaining and gifted and talented pupils but could do more to raise their achievements further.

36. The development of assessment procedures has been a priority in the school improvement plan this year and has been effectively addressed by the staff team under the leadership of the current acting headteacher. Procedures are very good in the reception class where informal observations and written annotations on lesson plans are used well to determine the next steps in learning. Children's progress through the reception class is tracked very well and clearly recorded on bar graphs. In Years 1 and 2, procedures are good for the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. The pupils have clear targets and they know them well. Assessment information has been used well in English and mathematics to identify gaps in learning and put in place remedial action such as booster groups in mathematics and extra support from a teaching assistant for English. It has not been used satisfactorily in science to ensure that a greater number of pupils are equipped to gain the higher levels of which they are capable. Assessment is developing soundly in ICT, which has also been a focus in the school improvement plan this year, and it is at an early stage of development in the other subjects.

37. Procedures for ensuring the welfare, health and safety of pupils are good. They are very good for first aid. All staff have had recent training and are very well aware of what to do in any medical emergency. Very good records are kept and parents are well informed of any incidents. The school makes good use of external professionals, such as the nurse and a police officer, to teach pupils about keeping healthy and safe. Year 1 pupils have conducted their own surveys in geography lessons relating to road safety.

Governors and staff undertake their responsibilities for health and safety effectively. Risk assessments are carried out for school trips. Arrangements for child protection are satisfactory. Staff are vigilant and have received some training in the past, although this will need to be reviewed when the new headteacher joins the team in September. The current acting headteacher is familiar with local procedures and is able to access effective support from the relevant agencies.

38. Procedures for monitoring and improving behaviour are satisfactory. There are some examples of very good practice, such as the use of home-school behaviour record books, which have contributed effectively to the improvement in behaviour of a very small number of identified children. Any incidents of bullying are picked up promptly and are well dealt with by discussion with pupils and parents. The current acting headteacher makes her expectations very clear, for example in assemblies. However, other staff do not consistently remind the pupils of the behaviour required in classrooms. Classes do have weekly targets such as 'to be kind and helpful to other children' and 'to walk over to the hall quietly and sensibly'. There are no whole-school guidelines to support staff, as the behaviour policy, which was reviewed and approved by the governing body a year ago, is not available in the school and there are no references to it in the prospectus or staff handbook.

39. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are unsatisfactory. They have been ineffective in reversing the decline in attendance rates which has taken place over the last few years. Following a recent training course, the school secretary has entered the attendance data from the registers into a computer program which now enables weekly monitoring. Some attendance and registration procedures have been tightened up, but absence codes are not always used consistently in class registers and reasons for absence are not always entered. There are no targets for raising attendance. The importance of regular attendance has not been sufficiently promoted within the school community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The school's partnership with parents has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now very good with some excellent features. This is a very notable achievement for the school during a period when there have been many changes in staff and no permanent headteacher. A greater percentage of parents responded to the questionnaire than at the last inspection and well over half strongly agreed with all but two of the statements. Parents are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching which enables their children to make good progress both academically and personally. They feel that the current acting headteacher has made several important improvements and has established very good communications with them. A significant minority responded that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. As reported elsewhere, this provision is not as extensive as at the last inspection when an older year group was in the school, but inspectors found that it is still good for an infants school. A very small number of parents were not satisfied with the amount of homework provided, but inspectors again found that this is good, and very good in the reception class. For example, the children take it in turns to take a teddy

bear home and then, with the help of their parents, draw a map of its journey between home and school.

41. The impact that parents have on the work of the school is exceptional and makes a very significant contribution to children's learning and development. Parents are determined to do all they can to support the school and to ensure that it remains at the heart of the community. The Parent Teacher Association is an extremely active organisation that runs many events throughout the year. A considerable number of these involve the village and also the children which enhances their social development. Very large sums of money are raised - through events, sponsored activities and the collection of vouchers, for example - which help fund equipment, visits and visitors. Parents have already raised over £20,000 towards a separate appeal to help fund the school extension. Parents are very active on the governing body, and its key curriculum committee, and significant numbers provide valuable help in classrooms, with the library and around the school. Pupils' high standards in reading are partly due to the strong support which parents provide at home in hearing their children read. Parents are guided very effectively to do this by the school through, for example, a curriculum evening held last term, a useful 'Learning to Read' booklet and the new home-school reading record books. Meetings, such as about the Year 2 National Curriculum tests, are very well attended. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very closely involved in the provision for their children.

42. The school's links with parents are very good. All teachers are very accessible to parents and carers at the start and end of the school day. Parents are invited to a wide range of events, assemblies and meetings. The acting headteachers and class teachers have provided good continuity of information for parents in the monthly newsletters and curriculum letters. Reports have improved since the last inspection and now provide better information about what the pupils know, understand and can do in each subject, and the areas in literacy and numeracy where they could do better. Very good information is provided on pupils' progress in their personal and social development and pupils have the opportunity to report on what they have enjoyed in the past year and what they are looking forward to next year. The reports do not include an evaluation of pupils' progress in speaking and listening and there is still room for improvement in reporting on the progress made in other subjects. The prospectus and governors' annual report provide good information for parents and now include all the detail that is required by law. Parents have been consulted about provision in ICT as part of the school's drive to raise standards in this subject. A small number of parents have taken their children away from the school before the end of Year 2, because they want them to be educated in a private school or in a state school with provision for junior pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The leadership of the school is good and the school has been very well led by the acting headteacher after a period of instability in staffing. A new permanent headteacher takes up her post next term. The acting headteacher identified priorities, which she has successfully met in the short time she has been in school. Of particular note is her careful review of the curriculum resulting in revised whole-school curriculum

planning for Years 1 and 2. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and highly value what it provides and achieves for their children.

44. The school is well managed. Good systems for monitoring the curriculum and using assessment to identify priorities have been established. The monitoring of standards is also good and as a result of careful analysis the standard of pupils' writing has improved. There has been some monitoring of teaching in literacy and numeracy but at present the programme is not rigorous enough to improve aspects of teaching such as making sure that all pupils are sufficiently challenged or that the behaviour policy is being implemented effectively.

45. The school has a good governing body. Governors are committed, supportive and have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This has enabled them to make a valuable contribution to shaping the direction of the school. Statutory requirements are fulfilled well and the school is organised efficiently. Staffing has been a high priority for the school and the governors have now reached a stage where, with the appointment of a new permanent headteacher, the school can look forward to more settled times. All avenues are being explored so that the budget deficit can be recovered in a short a time as possible although they recognise that this may take until 2005. The governing body appropriately views admissions to the school over the next few years as a priority to ensure that the school can remain as 'a great village amenity'.

46. The leadership in the foundation stage is very good. Very effective procedures are in place for running the reception class smoothly and inspiring the children who attend. Subject coordinators have a good understanding of what needs doing. The parents have noticed the improved provision for their children and have been very supportive of the school. The leadership and management of special educational needs provision is good and makes a significant contribution to the good progress made by these pupils. The headteacher, acting as the special needs co-ordinator has ensured that the new Code of Practice is fully implemented. Parents are fully informed and consulted and all available external support agencies are used well. All identified pupils have individual education plans that are up to date and they all contain appropriate targets for learning.

47. The provision of staffing is now good. Turnover has been high, but there is now a more stable team of experienced teachers and a permanent headteacher has been appointed to start in September. The current acting headteacher has used the weekly staff meetings very well to forge a staff team and to enable the staff to review and develop a whole-school approach to the curriculum planning and assessment. She has resumed the cycle of performance management interviews so that teachers and teaching assistants now have up-to-date job descriptions and objectives. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the system for teacher appraisal was a key issue. The teaching assistant in the reception class makes a very significant contribution to provision for the children and the life of the school. The school secretary and caretaker support the school effectively within the limits of their part-time hours. The new headteacher has already visited the school several times and the current acting headteacher is ensuring that she is made aware, through discussion and

collection of documents, of the stage of development which the school has reached. The induction pack for other staff is out of date, as is the staff handbook.

48. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Classrooms are spacious and enlivened by stimulating displays. A spare classroom is used effectively as an ICT technology suite, for practical activities and for work in small groups. The large and attractive grounds are used well to enhance the curriculum in art, science and physical education, for example. The current acting headteacher has successfully transformed the space outside her office into a library area and has improved the provision of books. There is still a shortage of books which reflect Britain's multi-cultural society, although this has been identified by the school. The range of musical instruments is good and contributes to the above average standards achieved. The governing body has successfully bid for some government money and is working hard with the support of the local education authority and the parents to secure the building of an extension that will replace the two temporary classrooms for Years 1 and 2, add an outdoor play area for reception children and improve the accessibility of the buildings. The office is located on the other side of the hall from the headteacher's office and in a corner of the staff room, which means that work cannot always be carried out efficiently and with appropriate attention to confidentiality.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

49. The school should:

- (1) improve standards in science by making sure that sufficiently challenging work is planned in all attainment targets which challenges all pupils, especially the more able and that teachers expect the most of them in lessons; (paragraphs 74-79)
- (2) plan a programme for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning in all classes and subjects (starting with English, mathematics and science) and then identifying clearly what teachers need to do to improve, (paragraphs 44, 69, 73, 79)
- (3) ensure that planned activities are sufficiently challenging for the most able pupils and that teachers' expectations are raised for this group; (paragraphs 3, 4, 5, 15)
- (4) reverse the decline in attendance by implementing effective procedures for monitoring and improving it making sure that it is sufficiently promoted within the school community. (paragraph 39)

The school should also

- update all staff information and review staff induction procedures; (paragraph 47)
- ensure the behaviour policy is clearly understood by all and remind the pupils of the school's expectations for their behaviour in class. (paragraphs 11, 12, 65)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	17
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	6	6	0	0	0
Percentage	0	30	35	35	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 five percentage points.

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)		71
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs		YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		7

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	1
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

%

Unauthorised absence

%

School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.4

School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	10	9	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	17	17	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (100)	89 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys*			
	Girls*			
	Total	17	19	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (100)	100 (100)	89 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

* Data for boys and girls has been excluded because the number of girls in the year group is less than ten.

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
61	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
8	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)	3.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	42.5

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
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	£
Total income	191,899
Total expenditure	216,991
Expenditure per pupil	3,056
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,413
Balance carried forward to next year	-20,679

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	71
Number of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	73	28	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	70	25	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	68	30	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	48	40	10	0	3
The teaching is good.	73	25	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	45	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	28	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	35	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	38	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	63	28	3	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	73	20	5	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	33	28	0	3

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

50. Children join the reception class at the start of the academic year in which they will be five. Teachers' planning reflects the foundation stage curriculum, nationally recommended for these young children, which consists of six areas of learning. Most children have had experience in a playgroup or nursery before attending school and assessments indicate that their attainment on entry to the school is above average. Children make very good gains in learning, including those with special educational needs. By the time they are ready to start Year 1 the majority of children exceed the nationally expected standards in all areas of learning, except in their physical development where standards are average.

51. In the last inspection standards were below those expected in the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and the children lacked knowledge about their immediate environment. Improvement has been good and standards are now above those expected with the children having a good developing knowledge about their immediate environment. The school has completed the new Foundation Stage Profile well, making judgements about each child's progress. Reports to parents are very good and the children add comments on what they have enjoyed and what they are looking forward to.

Personal, social and emotional development

52. High priority is given to this area of development and attainment is above average. The children are happy, confident and secure in school and they work and play well together. They show great enthusiasm and curiosity for the work they do in class. They know the classroom rules such as lining up sensibly when changing library books. They can change independently for physical education tidy up happily at the end of a session. Children are learning to understand feelings such as anger and will talk about their experiences to the class. In these sessions the children are good at taking turns and seldom shout out or interrupt each other. As a result most children demonstrate positive behaviour and very good attitudes to learning, have good relationships with other children.

53. Teaching and learning are very good. The teacher and teaching assistant have very good relationships with the children. Very good opportunities are planned for children to work alone and in small and large groups. Resources are very well organised. The reception staff plan thoroughly to ensure that all aspects of the children's personal, social and emotional development are well promoted such as planning time for reflection at the end of the day to pick up on activities and incidents that occurred earlier. The children concentrate very well on activities they have been given or selected for themselves.

Communication, language and literacy

54. By the end of the reception year, the children achieve high standards. Progress is very good in speaking and listening, reading and writing and many children attain levels higher than those expected for this age. Some are confidently working within the first 2 levels of the National Curriculum. This is because there is very good focused teaching which extends and challenges children's language and literacy skills through the activities provided. The children listen well, focus on their teacher and other adults and follow instructions. They work well in small groups reminding each other of what has happened so far in the 'Bear's Adventure'. One child starts the story and then other children take over and continue it. Most children speak confidently in front of others and visiting adults. More able children read from their diaries, one boy giving a very good account of his visit to the Planetarium in London. Children choose books very enthusiastically from the library and many already know the difference between fiction and non-fiction. The boys enjoy a range of non fiction books and the girls get absorbed in looking at their own and others' books. The children make very good progress in their knowledge of letter sounds and strings and know sounds such as 'ow' and 'gr'. Children make very good progress in their writing skills. Many write sentences confidently and use capital letters and full stops. They write contributions to 'Goldie Bear's Diary' and describe what happens in 'the Lighthouse Keepers Lunch'. They write thank you letters and while in the role play area do good independent writing. The more able children write very good lists of birds that they have observed from the class hide making sure that words such as thrush, blackbird and woodpecker are spelt as accurately as they can.

55. The teaching and learning are very good. Staff have high expectations and plan challenging activities that develop language and literacy skills very well. Questioning is used very effectively to challenge the children to do more and to check their understanding. The children concentrate very well on tasks they are given and make very good gains in their learning. In response to the teacher asking 'What happens next?' a boy uses language not found in the book and says 'the waves are sweeping him onto the shore'. Assessment is detailed and well used to identify where children are and what they need to do next.

Mathematical development

56. Standards of work seen are above average and the children make good progress. The majority of children exceed the early learning goals. There is a very good emphasis on counting and number recognition. Many children can count up to forty with the more able easily going to 60. They add and subtract small amounts of money and complete order forms in the Ice Cream Kiosk. Many know that double four is eight. Ability to recognise shape, space and measure is well developed. They work cooperatively with a friend to solve a problem in building a rocket as tall as their friend and use mathematical language well. One child says 'It's not tall enough yet – we need more paper on top'. They know that when measuring they have to be accurate and know that rulers are used to measure.

57. Teaching is very good and challenges all abilities well. Resources are very well organised and each child has their own resources bag with a number line, number square, number fan and cards with their own ruler. The children are very interested and

enthusiastic about their lessons and at times are completely inspired by their work in number. Sessions at the end of lessons are well used to encourage the children to check their answers and pick up on common mistakes such as reversing the number 3 when writing it down.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. Standards of work seen are above average and most children exceed the expected levels of learning by the end of the reception year. They are encouraged to develop a good awareness of their local environment and draw a map of their route to school. They find Buckingham on a map. They draw pictures to show their development since they were babies. Good opportunities are provided for children to develop their computer skills. They drag and drop pictures to sequence the life cycle of a frog and select and sort different foods showing good control of the mouse. They use the word processor to write a message. Children are developing a very good knowledge of living things. There is a bird hide in the class from which to observe birds and the children find the names of the birds in a very good range of books available. They sort objects into metal, glass, plastic and wood and find out about waterproof and non-waterproof materials. They know that an ice pop will melt once it has been frozen and use terms such as 'solid and liquid'.

59. Teaching is very good and children are challenged in their learning. Interesting activities help children develop a deep curiosity about their world. Questions are used well to extend awareness and to check children's understanding. The work is challenging for all children and activities are well considered and organised. In a very good lesson about ice melting the children observe a block of ice through a magnifying glass. They find out which materials are best to keep the ice from melting for the longest time. The teacher constantly introduces the language needed such as 'insulation'. She asks a question such as 'Can you see through it?' and instantly the children look through it and make observations making very good progress, leading to the introduction of the word 'transparent'. This is very good progress. There is excellent support from the teaching assistant who takes groups of children to play in 'Polar World' and pays very good attention to safety issues by reminding the children that they can only spend 4 minutes in Polar World because it is too cold.

Physical development

60. Standards of work seen are average and most children will achieve the expected levels of learning by the end of the reception year. Children achieve well in fine motor skills because they are encouraged to improve their manipulative and fine motor skills with a range of appropriate activities. They use pencils, crayons, scissors and paint brushes effectively and with confidence. They know what they want to do and how to achieve it. There is one structured physical education lesson each week to promote their physical development but daily outdoor activity sessions are not always planned. There are no regular opportunities for children to climb and develop their balancing skills and to travel under, over and through. With the new accommodation planned there will be a dedicated outdoor play area for the reception children, which will need appropriate resourcing. The children do play outside on wheeled toys and show

confidence and control. They make good progress when they use a range of prepared equipment to practice for the school sports day and know about the effects of exercise on their bodies. They also make good progress in learning to respond to music imaginatively. They close their eyes to imagine waves and move well to show a calm and rough sea.

61. Teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning but it is good in lessons that are specifically planned such as dance and sports practice. The children enjoy moving to music and are enthralled by ribbons that the staff give them to help depict the sea and waves. However, the reception team do not plan whole class daily sessions for outside play that offer appropriate physical challenges using a range of small and large equipment.

Creative development

62. Children achieve above the expected level of attainment by the time they enter Year 1. Scrutiny of work reveals that children have opportunities over the year to work with a range of materials and experience different methods. Children make good progress using paint imaginatively. They paint very good underwater pictures using colour wash techniques; they make good clay snails and do observational drawings. The role-play areas provide children with opportunities to use their imagination playing in the Ice Cream Kiosk or at the vets. Singing is well developed and children sing a range of songs from memory confidently. They sing 'If you're happy and you know it' with gusto showing real enjoyment. They listen to quiet and loud sounds.

63. The teaching is very good. A strength of teaching is the good organisation and planning for the children to experience activities they enjoy. In a very good lesson the staff recreated scenes from the 'Bear's Adventure' using sand, play people and underwater creatures so that the children could retell the story and become absorbed. The support assistant uses questions well to check children's understanding and knowledge and to develop their language. Children's work is appreciated and shared with others.

ENGLISH

64. In the 2002 national tests standards were well above average in reading and average in writing. Compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils, standards in reading were high but standards in writing were below the average. Inspection evidence finds standards in speaking are above average and those in listening are average. Indications from the 2003 tests and inspection evidence show that standards in writing have improved this year as a result of a good action taken by the school. This year, standards in reading are not quite as high as last year but are still well above average. Standards are similar to those found at the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to well focused teaching. More able pupils also make good progress but there are a significant number of more able pupils and not all achieve as highly as they could.

65. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking are above average and those in listening are average. Year 1 pupils are effectively encouraged to contribute to discussions during their literacy lessons such as, after listening to a poem, describing where cats sleep. They are confident in giving their point of view. In Year 2, pupils think of good humorous verses using varied vocabulary such as 'The cat from Leeds did some very good deeds'. They have a well developed vocabulary and think of synonyms for big such as 'giant, enormous, massive and huge'. Pupils' listening skills could be better. They can listen well especially when their interest is caught but too often pupils in both classes call out of turn and show immature behaviour as a result.

66. Standards in reading are well above average. Reading is an enjoyable activity and pupils are generally fluent and read very well. These pupils read with enjoyment, and some but not all read with expression. They have very good prediction and recall skills about their favourite books. They are good at using information books and the Internet for research. They know how to access information and confidently use the dictionary and thesaurus. The library is being well used to improve pupils' appreciation of books and also their referencing skills.

67. By the end of Year 2, many pupils use imagination well in their writing. They have become confident writers, able to organise their thoughts into sentences with full stops and capital letters in the right places. Pupils take notes and write instructional text. They write a prayer for harvest time. Stories show imagination such as 'I was shaking with fear'. Pupils' literacy skills are used well in subjects such as science when they use whiteboards to write about sound. In music writing is inspired by Vivaldi's Four Seasons. They make good use of the computer to record their ideas. Mostly their handwriting writing is joined and neat.

68. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There has been very good attention this year to improving writing with positive results and pupils have been encouraged to extend their writing skills at home. Pupils know their targets well and there are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. Teaching assistants give good support to pupils with special educational needs. However, teachers' expectations need to be higher still to ensure that every pupil is being challenged fully. Sometimes worksheets limit what is expected of the pupils and there are a significant number of pupils who although attaining well at present could do even better. Planning needs to take account of this. It is noticeable that in literacy lessons the behaviour of some pupils is not good enough and too much lesson time is taken correcting this.

69. Co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear idea of the standards in both classes and has been instrumental in effecting the improvement in writing. To help teachers have a clear idea of standards work samples have been moderated in staff meetings. Optional test papers have been analyzed and targets have been set to improve connectives, adverbs and adjectives. No lesson observations have taken place but this is due to happen. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented since the last inspection.

MATHEMATICS

70. In the 2002 national tests standards were well above average and average when compared to schools with a similar intake of pupils. Indications from the 2003 tests and inspection evidence show that standards are still well above average. Standards are better than those found at the previous inspection.

71. By the end of Year 2, pupils are making good progress. They add, subtract, divide and multiply simple number problems. They have a good grasp of mathematical language, can discuss what they have done and many are good at explaining their results. Most pupils work competently with numbers up to 100 and can order numbers to 1000. They make good progress in solving problems related to money, weight and length. Many pupils measure distance using metres and centimetres. They know a cube has 6 faces. Data handling is good. Pupils construct good charts to show their favourite playground game and complete them carefully. They complete a Venn diagram well showing who goes to Country Dancing as well as Brownies.

72. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with examples of good teaching in Year 2. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and implement the National Numeracy Strategy well. Lesson objectives are clearly identified. Teaching assistants provide good support in lessons and contribute well to the progress the pupils make. Teachers sharpen and develop pupils' mental skills at the beginning of lessons but this is not consistent in all lessons. In some lessons the teachers include time for pupils to discuss their mathematical work and to explain their thinking using mathematical language. The pupils show a confidence in mathematics. Sessions at the end of lessons are good in both classes and used well to reinforce learning and introduce new learning such as 'remainder'. However, work is not always planned well to match the needs of pupils and some are insufficiently challenged. There are a number of pupils in Years 1 and 2 who although attaining well at present could do even better and reach high levels. Numeracy skills are well applied in lessons such as science and there are some good examples of the use of ICT. There is some good teaching for pupils with special educational needs through the recently introduced booster sessions.

73. The co-ordination of mathematics is good and there is a clear action plan. New procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are being put into place and there is careful and thorough analysis of test papers. A priority at present is to improve problem solving. Pupils know their targets well. Monitoring of lessons has been limited and this is an area of development on the action plan. Assessment is good, making good use of ICT.

SCIENCE

74. The 2002 teachers' assessments showed that standards were below the national average. In comparison with schools in a similar context the percentage of pupils attaining at the expected level was well below the average. Indications from teachers' assessments for 2003 and inspection evidence show that this year the attainment of almost all pupils at the end of Year 2 is around the national average. However, the number of pupils attaining above average standards is not high enough. Although pupils achieve satisfactorily, the most able pupils are insufficiently challenged

or extended in their work. Pupils with special education needs achieve satisfactorily. Standards in science have declined since the previous inspection when they were identified as good, with an above average number of pupils attaining at the higher levels.

75. There is some inconsistency in attainment across the elements of the curriculum. By the end of Year 2 pupils' knowledge of 'life processes and living things' is better than their knowledge of 'materials and their properties' and of 'physical processes'. Pupils' previous work shows that they have considerable experience of the processes involved in 'experimental and investigative science' and are achieving well although few pupils are fully attaining the higher standards.

76. By the end of Year 2, pupils have progressed sufficiently to make measured observations, such as the rate of ice melting. These pupils are starting to make predictions and to understand the idea of a fair test. They confidently record their findings in tables and block graphs, making good use of the skills learned in their numeracy lessons. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of the life cycle of the butterfly and of snails and appropriately use the Internet as their source of information. Higher attaining pupils are able to recognize if animals have specified characteristics and to sort animals in this manner but most pupils have a lower than average ability to group animals by their external characteristics. Higher attaining pupils are starting to identify the characteristics of animals that are conducive to their survival, such as the shell of a snail protecting it. These pupils know that a plant needs light and water to grow. However, although they have good general knowledge about many animals and aspects of plants they are not able to identify the life processes common to all animals or all plants. Pupils confidently identify the changes when water freezes and when bread is toasted, but they do not define these changes in terms of reversible and irreversible changes as would be expected of higher attaining pupils. Similarly, pupils' knowledge and skills in the study of physical processes are limited. They have little knowledge of the study of light sources. Pupils have studied some physical phenomena, such as sound and electricity but they have little experience of describing similarities and differences and in making comparisons, such as the impact of adding more light bulbs to a simple circuit. In Year 1, pupils listen carefully to the recorded sounds of animals, vehicles and people they know. With practice they become accurate in their observations. In previous work, in order to answer the question 'Do plants need light to grow?' they conducted a simple scientific investigation to find the answer. They have also observed the characteristics of a range of materials and recorded their observations in the form of a table.

77. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers provide a range of interesting opportunities for the development of scientific enquiry skills and the acquisition of scientific knowledge. For the potentially higher attainers, their expectations are insufficiently challenging, despite providing a range of practical opportunities for them to learn. Teachers plan their lessons to involve all pupils and manage the pupils satisfactorily. Teaching assistants usually provide appropriate support to the lower achieving pupils and those with special educational needs and these pupils' achievement is sound. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good by the end of Year 2. They enjoy what they are doing and are interested. They remain concentrating on their tasks for some time and complete them, working co-operatively with their partner. The

ongoing assessment of the pupils' learning is good particularly in Year 2, where the teacher assesses at the end of every section of work and frequently identifies the support a pupil has needed in order to achieve the work. These assessments are not used as well as they might be to ensure that the work is modified to extend all the pupils. The written comments in teachers marking give a clear understanding of where work is incorrect but they do not extend learning by informing pupils of the next stage in their learning. Homework is set regularly in Year 2.

78. Teachers in both classes use specific scientific vocabulary. Both literacy and numeracy skills are used in science, for example, when writing lists of 'mini-beasts' found in a locality and in the construction of graphs. Good use is made of the digital camera to record habitats and pupils use a program for drawing 'minibeasts'. ICT is also used as a research tool when pupils use the Internet. Health education is developed through the study of healthy eating and pupils have kept a homework diary linking the impact of exercise on pulse rate. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development as they observe the local fauna and flora. There are good curriculum links with art, such as visually appealing mobiles made from plastics that decorate the Year 1 classroom.

79. Leadership of the subject during the short time that the headteacher has held the position has been satisfactory but there is still much to do. There has been considerable development of the planned curriculum in recent months. This planning is monitored but as yet there has been no direct monitoring of the teaching or learning to ensure that the planning is implemented. The assessment data collected is not used sufficiently well to ensure that all pupils are achieving as well as they should. Recently, science has not had a high priority but this is due to change with the imminent introduction of the target setting system and the tracking system in use in other subjects, along with a newly developed specific assessment system. The quality and provision of resources are satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

80. The standards achieved by the end of Year 2 are good, and pupils achieve well. Standards are higher than those identified in the previous inspection. A wide range of work is displayed and some of the observational drawings and decorative clay work is of a very high quality. Art techniques are used effectively throughout the school to support and enhance the work in other subjects, particularly religious education and science. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

81. The quality of work on the classroom walls and around the school produced by pupils in Year 2 is good. They have used a range of media including paint and pastels to make observational drawings of flowers and 'minibeasts'. Pupils' drawings following a visit to the local church are very good. These pupils have recently completed the first stages in the production of clay tiles. Digital photographs show the pupils working like sculptors. They rolled and flattened the clay under a board to make sure their tiles would be the same thickness throughout and used slip to attach their decorations onto the tile surface. The inspiration for these designs came from pupils' observations in

science lessons and enabled then to apply intricate, realistic decorations to the surface of their work. The quality of these tiles is very high. Pupils in Year 1 have had an extensive study of sculpture. They have looked at the work of a range of artists and they have also observed natural sculptures within the school's grounds. In the lesson observed, the standards many pupils achieved particularly in relation to their sense of space and proportion were very high. These pupils worked with remarkable confidence and concentration composing and constructing a wide range of sculptures made from natural materials. Others wove coloured, recycled plastic strips to make pleasing sculptures on the fence. Previous work includes a mixed media sculpture depicting the creation that pupils planned and produced as a class.

82. It was possible to see only one art lesson during the inspection. In this lesson the teaching and learning were very good and standards were very high. The concentration of the pupils and their creative effort over an extensive length of time were very good. This lesson was well planned and the support of several parents who had previously been well briefed by the class teacher added considerably to the learning.

83. The co-ordination of art and design is satisfactory. The curriculum has recently been re-planned using commercially produced planning documents as a basis for the medium term planning. Although in need of some refinement this planning is providing pupils with a range of opportunities to meet the demands of the National Curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on skills development in two and three-dimensional work. As yet there is no assessment process and the co-ordinator has not been able to monitor teaching. The co-ordinator is keen for local artists to work with the pupils and a salt-dough craftsperson is planned to work with Year 2. In addition, an arts week is planned for all the school later in the term. Resources are satisfactory for all aspects of the subject, including three-dimensional work but opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their art need to be increased.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84. Design and technology was not being taught during the time of the inspection and judgements are based upon photographic evidence, the planning and the work in pupils' books. From this evidence, it is clear that standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with the national expectations and the progress pupils make is satisfactory. Standards remain similar to those reported upon at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs follow the same curriculum and make similar progress to the rest of the class.

85. The work sample clearly illustrates that pupils are introduced to the full design process. All pupils in Year 2 made animal puppets and these were of a good quality. For this project pupils drew a design for their puppet and identified the materials and trims they would use. They used mainly sewing to join their puppet, some using a blanket stitch that was very even and neat for their age. The decorations and designs were obviously made by the pupils. All pupils provided some verbal evaluation of their work that the teacher recorded. The higher achieving pupils identified special features in their original designs and made constructive criticisms of how they would like to improve and modify their work. Pupils in Year 2 have designed vehicles and identified

the parts of a jeep. In Year 1, pupils' books show they have made a fruit salad. They used their literacy skills to write a list of the fruits used and recorded health and hygiene aspects such as washing their hands before touching food. These pupils have also studied lever mechanisms and how scissors work.

86. There has been sound leadership over recent months. The co-ordinator has ensured that the teachers all have sufficient resources. The planning has been reorganised and is monitored but as yet the teaching has not been monitored. Assessment in the subject has not yet been put into place. Resources are satisfactory, appropriate and are accessible to all staff. Statutory requirements are being met but there is little evidence that pupils use construction kits.

GEOGRAPHY

87. Standards of attainment are typical of those expected by the end of Year 2. Standards have remained similar to those identified at the time of the previous inspection. No lessons were observed during the inspection but judgements are based on a scrutiny of work, discussions with pupils and teachers' planning documents. Pupils' work is well marked by teachers and learning objectives are clearly identified.

88. By the end of Year 2, pupils investigate their local area and a contrasting area. In Year 1 pupils have made a map of the school and do a tally of how they travel to school. They know the direction and route they take from home. They do a leisure survey covering the popular sports in the area. Year 2 pupils contrast Maids Moreton with an island home, identifying the similarities and differences. They begin to use geographical vocabulary. They know they like the centre of Buckingham because there is a good range of shops and a castle but do not like the traffic and some ugly buildings. They know the countries of the British Isles and record them well on a map. They also begin to learn about the wider world. They name places they would like to visit such as Australia and China and know that flying is the best way to get there. They can find countries well in an atlas using the index. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills well in their work in geography and there is some use of ICT.

89. Leadership and co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The coordinator monitors teachers' planning to check its quality and has taken photos of previous work on display. However, no monitoring of teaching has taken place. The school follows the national guidelines and is adapting them so they are personal to the school. Assessment is at an early stage of development.

HISTORY

90. Pupils in Year 2 are working at a level similar to others of the same age nationally. Standards have remained similar to those identified at the time of the previous inspection. Most pupils achieve satisfactorily because the teaching holds their interest and they listen well. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers as the work set is appropriate.

91. By the end of Year 2, pupils' skills have developed appropriately. In the context of seaside holidays, these pupils are able to sequence photographs from different periods of

time, using time related vocabulary and to place them on a timeline. Pupils are challenged well by their teacher and as a result their observation skills are developed and they identify details such as the clothes people wore. Pupils know about famous personalities, in particular Florence Nightingale and her contribution to nursing techniques. Pupils have studied in some detail the causes of the Great Fire of London and the importance of the diary of Samuel Pepys in providing first hand evidence. Following this study, they used skills developed in literacy lessons well to write an account, in the first person, of this calamitous event. However, this was the only piece of non-worksheet based recording and the over use of work sheets restricts the attainment of the potentially highest achieving pupils. In Year 1, pupils develop a satisfactory sense of chronology by comparing old and new homes. They are introduced to historical enquiry skills as they construct questions in relation to toys of the past. These activities help the pupils to discover how objects and activities change over time.

92. In the one lesson observed, teaching was good and the attention of all the pupils was held through the use of good resources, challenging questions and interesting activities. Pupils were encouraged to formulate questions under the headings 'what' 'how' and 'why' and this effectively develops their historical awareness and understanding that helps pupils to remember their learning.

93. Leadership and co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Although history has not recently been a priority subject for development, the co-ordinator has ensured that the curriculum has been appropriately developed in the light of national guidance. Pupils are provided with an appropriate range of learning opportunities. The co-ordinator's priorities for development are achieved and now need to be extended. Pupils are encouraged to use their literacy and numeracy skills in history, such as recording observations and identifying how many years have elapsed over the period of a time line. The use of ICT is not as developed as it should be.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards of attainment are typical of those expected by the end of Year 2. The subject is a school priority and improvements to teachers' knowledge and the curriculum are taking place all the time with the result that pupils are making good progress. The school does well to make sure that skills learnt in lessons are practised during the week by all pupils. Standards have remained similar to those identified at the time of the previous inspection but pupils are progressing at a better rate.

95. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are confident when using the computer. They know how to open a program with a 'double click' and then close it again. They make good progress in exploring a new software program introducing databases and linked to their work in science. When attempting to identify animals they ask questions such as 'Has it got scales?' They paint and draw snails on painting software. They use the Internet for research about snails and have used e-mail. All Year 2 pupils have their own e-mail account. Year 2 have used a programmable toy. Pupils in Year 1 paint a self portrait and draw pictures of their homes using a range of tools. They take digital photos of springtime and to record their artwork on natural sculptures. They enter information on a database about eye colour and produce a pictogram. They know how to print their work.

96. Teaching and learning are good. The teachers are well prepared before a lesson and seek help from the coordinator well in time if they need it. The pupils are happy that they receive enough time to practise their computer skills. They are able to talk about their progress and one pupil talked eloquently about problems she had with her computer and what she did to solve it. There is good support from a parent who comes in regularly to work

in reception and Year 1. Teachers plan appropriate opportunities to use ICT to extend skills in mathematics, English, science and art and design and are planning to provide more in other subjects.

97. Co-ordination is good. The co-ordinator has very good expertise in the subject and is available to support teachers when needed and to help them plan. She has integrated the national guidelines for the subject with the software available in the school and each class has a CD-Rom. The school is keen to further increase the hardware available so that more pupils can use the computer at the same time but in the meanwhile, the time each pupils spends on the computer is carefully recorded. Assessment is satisfactory. There is a good action plan being drafted at present which has identified that monitoring of teaching is needed. The Acting Head and co-ordinator are monitoring the work on the action plan and plotting progress on the school improvement plan. The school has a very popular ICT club, which is very well attended, so much so that attendance has to be staggered.

MUSIC

98. Standards in music are good and are above those found nationally for pupils by the end of Year 2. All aspects of the subject are taught throughout the school including performing, composing and appraising music. There has been good improvement since the last inspection when standards were identified as satisfactory. To ensure a consistent approach and maintain standards, the school has introduced a published scheme of work to help non-specialist teachers when teaching the subject. This scheme is still in the early stages of implementation and is introduced into the Reception year. The school is also using a very skilled part-time teacher to teach music to Year 2 and singing to all classes. This is successfully raising their attainment, particularly in composing and performing. Pupils with special educational needs work well in mixed ability groups as a contributing member of the team and they make good progress.

99. Pupils achieve well. Pupils of all ages sing well in tune and with enjoyment. Most of this singing takes place in one lesson a week for all the classes of the school together and in assemblies. Pupils also listen to music from around the world in assemblies and this makes a good contribution to their cultural development.

100. Pupils in Year 1 name many untuned percussion instruments which they handle confidently. They construct and play their own composition that depicts an aspect of weather, working together well as they combine their instrument playing with voice sounds. These pupils recognise high and low notes. A display in the classroom shows that they have listened to the 'Four Seasons' by Vivaldi to develop their appraisal skills. In Year 2, pupils explain the meaning of basic musical terms such as tempo, pitch, rhythm and volume. Higher achieving pupils identify terms such as staccato and legato, explain their meaning and demonstrate their understanding by suggesting they would be suitable to describe the movement of a kangaroo and a snail respectively. Pupils are familiar with recording music in terms of crotchets, quavers and musical rests and the higher achievers use these symbols when performing their work. Pupils in Year 2 play a wide range of un-tuned instruments and xylophones well. They work well as a group and in the lesson seen they composed a musical piece that depicted the movement of a given animal. In this lesson pupils used their imaginations well to include movement and dialogue and sometimes props to enhance their interpretations. Pupils compose

confidently and accurately choosing instruments that give them their required effect and they perform to their colleagues confidently. Appraising skills are good. Pupils have the maturity to make constructive comments in relation to the music they have heard. Pupils are also able to listen to a piece of music played by their teacher and identify mood through tempo and pitch. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lessons and in these performances and attain similar standards in music to their classmates.

101. In the one lesson seen, the quality of teaching was very good. The pupils' previous work and the planning suggest that teaching is of at least a good standard throughout the year. In the lesson seen, good relationships were a strong feature, with pupils behaving well and eager to be involved. The enthusiasm of the teacher was infectious and the pupils were extremely keen. The teacher's good use of musical vocabulary, the lively pace and precise planning together with good use of supporting adults contributed significantly to the attainment of the pupils.

102. Leadership and co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory but the monitoring and evaluation aspects of the role need to be developed. At present, there is no assessment procedure or a record of pupils' progress as they move through the school. A strong feature of the provision is visiting workshops for the pupils. Recently, the pupils all participated in two workshops one devoted to percussion and drum playing the other to percussion, body sounds and music from around the world. For this latter workshop, the school joined with another local school. These sessions significantly contribute to the pupils' social and cultural development. The number and range of musical instruments in the school is good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

103. It is not possible to make a judgement on attainment in physical education at the end of Year 2, as no lessons were available during the inspection. One lesson was seen in Year 1 and standards are as expected for this year group. In Year 1, pupils are able to dribble a large ball and throw beanbags with some accuracy. They participate in simple team games and follow the rules as part of their practise for sports day. In warm up sessions, they follow the teacher in a straight line and have some understanding of the relationship between physical exercise and health. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved but they are not provided with additional support. These pupils make satisfactory progress because they persevere well with their tasks.

104. Physical education is well planned, encompassing all aspects of the curriculum; dance, games and gymnastics. Each aspect is planned to incorporate the skills to be taught in each year group. The school has opted not to include swimming in its provision. The country dance club, organised and run by the headteacher, gives many pupils opportunities to develop their skills and experiences and contributes to their cultural development. Due to the lack of opportunity to view a Year 2 lesson, it is not possible to comment on improvement since the previous inspection.

105. In the lesson observed, the quality of teaching was satisfactory with some good aspects. Pupils were managed well and there was a good range of activities planned into the lesson. Pupils generally were attentive to their teacher and concentrated and behaved well. The lesson moved along at a brisk pace with all pupils kept active and fully involved. Pupils completed the tasks as best they could but were not given useful pointers by the teacher to help them improve their skills. Demonstrations by individuals and groups of pupils, to share ideas and show good practice would be beneficial.

106. In a relatively short period of time, the headteacher has provided good leadership by ensuring that all aspects of the subject are well planned and are taught throughout the school. An area of planning that remains to be developed is the connection between exercise and health. The school's large field and range of small apparatus are used well by teachers and the school has indoor gymnastics equipment.