

INSPECTION REPORT

NEW BRADWELL COMBINED SCHOOL

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110245

Headteacher: Mr J White

Lead inspector: Mrs H Ranger

Dates of inspection: 2 – 4 March 2004

Inspection number: 256997

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First and middle school
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	3 to 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	440
School address:	Bounty Street New Bradwell Milton Keynes
Postcode:	MK13 0BQ
Telephone number:	01908 312244
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Franklin
Date of previous inspection:	6 July 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

New Bradwell Combined School is a large school situated in a neighbourhood of Milton Keynes. Most pupils live in the local area, but a significant minority transfer to the school from other parts of the city as a result of parental choice. Mobility levels are very high; a quarter of pupils moved into or out of the school during the last school year at times other than the usual transfer points. Pupils come from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds, which are below average overall. Ten per cent come from various ethnic minority heritages; almost all of these are English speakers, or are bilingual, and do not need extra learning support to speak English. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school in the nursery or reception classes covers a wide range but, overall, is well below average, especially in language and social skills.

A quarter of the school's population has special educational needs. This is a higher proportion than most schools. The school provides a specialist facility (The Language Department) for pupils with speech, language and communication needs. This is attended by 17 pupils, all of whom have Statements of Special Educational Need. These pupils spend most of their time as part of the school's mainstream classes.

The school has experienced difficulties in recruiting teachers in recent years and this continues. At the time of the inspection, two-thirds of the classes were taken by newly qualified or inexperienced staff, or by staff covering for long-term absence.

The school received a School Achievement Award for its improvements in the results of national tests in 1999.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22223	Mrs H Ranger	Lead inspector	English as an additional language English
16472	Mrs C Stormonth	Lay inspector	
23385	Ms S Gerred	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology Physical education
23054	Mr G Johnson	Team inspector	French Geography History Religious education
27243	Mr I Tatchell	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Citizenship
18116	Mr C Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a satisfactory academic education for its pupils within a setting that caters very well for their personal development. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory as a result of sound teaching, but standards are below average. This is partly due to high pupil mobility and the high proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. The leadership and management of the school are sound and the school gives satisfactory value for money. The school has been adversely affected by difficulties in recruiting suitably experienced teachers.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher and governors provide a strong vision and very effective leadership for pupils' personal development, which promotes the pupils' very positive attitudes to school.
- Standards in several subjects are below average and there is underachievement in science and religious education.
- Skilled teaching in the nursery and reception classes gives children a good start.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and are cared for very well.
- The more able pupils are not challenged enough in some classes.
- The arrangements for planning improvements do not focus enough on raising standards and are not supported well enough by the school's systems for assessment and monitoring.
- The statutory curriculum is greatly enriched by a wide range of extra activities for pupils.

The school has maintained well the strengths in the quality of education from its last inspection, especially in pupils' social development, but its academic performance remains below that of most other schools. There has been satisfactory action on the key areas for improvement from the previous inspection in assessment, monitoring performance, the management of special educational needs and the French curriculum. However, the recent high turnover of staff has meant that some of the monitoring and assessment arrangements are again areas for further improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E*	D	E*	E
Mathematics	E*	E	E	D
Science	E*	E	E*	E

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, overall. It is good in the nursery and reception classes. From a low starting point, children are on course to reach the goals that are expected by the end of the Reception year in their personal and social development, creative development and their physical development. Standards are below expected levels in language, mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Achievement is satisfactory in most subjects in Years 1 to 7, and is good for the pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Language Department. There is underachievement in science in Years 1 and 2 and in religious education in Years 1 to 6. Standards are below average by Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. By Year 6 and Year 7, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in religious education are below expected levels in Years 1 to 6, but in line with expectations in Year 7. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school and standards meet expected levels.

The provision for pupils' personal development is very good in all age groups and is a significant strength of the school. As a result, pupils have very positive attitudes to school and to learning and behave well. Attendance is average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall.

They are most effective in the nursery and Reception classes and for the many pupils in all age groups who have special educational needs. Teaching in Years 1 to 7 is satisfactory and two-thirds of the lessons seen in these age groups were good, indicating recent improvements in line with staff changes. All teachers promote very good relationships and behaviour so that pupils learn in a pleasant, orderly atmosphere. Science and religious education are not taught in enough depth in several year groups so that pupils' learning is too superficial. Able pupils could be challenged more at times. Assessment systems are satisfactory, but the information gained is not being used efficiently enough to support the drive for higher standards. A satisfactory curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra activities, such as clubs, visits and tuition in music and sport. Procedures to ensure pupils' care and welfare are very good. A very productive partnership with parents adds to the quality of pupils' learning, and there are very effective links with the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide very good leadership for pupils' personal development, but now need to focus as effectively on raising academic standards. The recent high staff turnover has been managed well, but has led to a heavy workload for senior staff. The new staff are monitored and supported well, but there has been less time recently to monitor the full range of subjects and age groups. This needs to be done to raise the consistency of performance across the school as a whole. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and have acted satisfactorily to develop the school. Statutory requirements are met, with the exception of a few omissions from the prospectus and annual governors' report.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very positive about almost all aspects of the school. A minority would like more information about their children's progress or feel that behaviour could be better. Inspectors consider that information and behaviour are mostly good, although the annual written report on children's progress could be improved to give more detail of their achievements.

Pupils' views are very positive. They like their lessons, teachers and classmates, and value highly the many clubs and visits provided for them. The main area they would like to see improved is the range of playground activities that is available.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- improve standards in English, mathematics, science and religious education;
- eliminate the underachievement in science and religious education;
- ensure that the more able pupils are catered for as well as other groups;
- ensure that the school's aims and its arrangements for development planning include sufficient emphasis on raising academic achievement, and that the systems of assessment and monitoring effectively support the efforts to succeed in this.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- the school should ensure that it includes all the required details in its prospectus and annual governors' report to parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory, overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage. It is satisfactory in Years 1 to 7. Standards of attainment are below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the nursery and Reception classes make a good start to their education.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the school's good provision.
- Standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are below average.
- The achievement of the more capable pupils is mostly satisfactory, but these pupils underachieve in some lessons.
- Pupils do well in ICT in all age groups.
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in science in Years 1 and 2, and in religious education in Years 1 to 6.

Commentary

1. At the time of the last inspection, the under-fives achieved well and pupils in all other age groups achieved satisfactorily, overall. This is still the case. In all age groups, two factors have a substantial impact on the standards achieved by pupils. These are the high levels of pupils with special educational needs and the very high rates of pupil mobility. In some classes, up to half the pupils have significant special learning or behavioural needs, which often limit the standards they reach. A much higher than average proportion of pupils is admitted to the school or leaves at times other than the beginning of the school year. Last year, for example, this affected a quarter of the pupils. These pupils are quite often children who have experienced difficulty settling into other schools, have been permanently excluded from at least one school, or have experienced serious family disruption.
2. In the school as a whole, pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of skilled teaching, including those in the Language Department. Bilingual pupils, the few who need help learning English and those from ethnic minority backgrounds, make similar progress to other pupils. Test results indicate that boys in the school do a little better than girls, overall, but, during the inspection, there were no significant differences in the progress made by either gender.

The Foundation Stage (the nursery and Reception classes)

3. Children join the nursery with levels of attainment that vary considerably, but are well below average overall. A high proportion of children have limited language and social skills when they are admitted. The children in both age groups achieve well as a result of effective teaching. They do very well in their personal and social development and are on course to meet the expected goals in this area of learning by the end of the Reception year. Their good achievement also indicates that they will achieve the expected goals in their creative and physical development. Attainment in communication, language and literacy, in mathematical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world is likely to fall below the levels expected for the end of the Foundation Stage, because of the children's low starting point.

Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2)

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.7 (13.6)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	13.5 (13.0)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	14.1 (14.5)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 41 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

4. The school's performance in National Curriculum tests in this age group in 2003 was well below the national average. In reading and writing, results were well below the average for similar schools and, in mathematics, were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. Very few pupils achieved Level 3 in the tests. Results in this age group have been low over recent years, although levels of improvement have been in line with national trends. Inspection findings show that most of the pupils who are currently in Years 1 and 2 attain below average standards in English, mathematics and science. Written recording of science is often well below average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment on entry, and those with special educational needs achieve well. However, the more able pupils in Year 2 do not achieve as well as they could at times in English, because expectations of them are too low. Achievement is unsatisfactory in science, where pupils do not cover enough ground and their learning lacks depth. Attainment is in line with the nationally expected levels in ICT and pupils achieve well. Attainment is below expectations in religious education; pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory because they do not cover the subject in sufficient depth.

Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6)

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	23.0 (25.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.5 (25.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	25.1 (26.9)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 66 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

5. The school's performance in the National Curriculum tests for Year 6 in recent years has been low. In 2003, results were well below average in mathematics and within the lowest five per cent of schools in English and science. Compared with schools whose pupils obtained similar results in the national tests at the age of seven, performance was below average in mathematics. It was well below average in English and science, mainly because of the small number of pupils who reached Level 5. The school acknowledges that in 2003, in addition to the factors of special educational needs and high mobility, there was some weak teaching in the age group; this situation has now been remedied. Performance in the results for this key stage has fallen behind the nationally improving trend over the last five years. The school sets satisfactory targets for its pupils in this age group, based on their prior attainment and reflecting any special learning needs. Most of these targets were not met in 2003, but the target for Level 5 in mathematics was exceeded. The targets for 2004, if achieved, would represent a substantial improvement on the results of 2003.
6. Inspection findings are that pupils in Years 3 to 6 achieve satisfactorily, overall, in relation to their attainment on entry to the school, and that those with special educational needs achieve well. Attainment is below average by Year 6 in English, mathematics and science, but not as

low as the most recent test results for this age group indicate. Achievement in English is satisfactory and there are indications that recent initiatives in reading are leading to good progress for the pupils who have been targeted for improvement. Pupils are currently achieving well in mathematics and ICT, reflecting the effective teaching in these subjects. In science, achievement is satisfactory for most pupils, but unsatisfactory for the more able pupils, who are not extended well enough. Achievement is unsatisfactory in religious education where, as in Key Stage 1, teaching does not enable pupils to cover the curriculum in sufficient depth to meet the required levels.

Key Stage 3 (Year 7)

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. However, they are better than indicated by the low results of last year's national tests when the same pupils were in Year 6. Teaching in this age group is now good and is raising standards. The school's tracking data shows that most pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their attainment when they were seven, and their achievements in the lessons seen were often good. Achievement is good in ICT and religious education and standards meet expected levels. In French, standards meet expected levels and achievement is satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and behaviour is good. The provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attitudes to school are very good and pupils are enthusiastic about all aspects of school life.
- The school works very hard to encourage pupils to attend school and arrive on time.
- The ethos is very positive and there is a pleasant and happy atmosphere.
- The youngest children make rapid progress settling into school.
- Holidays account for nearly half of all absences.

Commentary

- The school has maintained the very good provision identified by the previous inspection in this aspect of its work. It does all it can to promote good attendance and punctuality. It achieves attendance rates at the national average level and no unauthorised absence. The school employs an independent welfare adviser to visit and support families to encourage better attendance, with some success. Most parents respond well to the school's efforts, but some make insufficient efforts to ensure attendance. Some pupils go on holiday during term-time and this causes disruption to their learning. Punctuality on arrival at school is satisfactory, although a small number of families are regularly late. Lessons start on time and time-keeping in school is good. The school encourages good punctuality as an important life skill.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.8	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

9. In discussions, pupils were very positive about the school. They praised strong relationships with teachers and friends, good school dinners, clubs, trips and interesting lessons. Pupils show pride in their school and have very good attitudes to learning in the classroom. This is particularly impressive in those who have been excluded from other schools and have settled very well at New Bradwell. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils are helpful, friendly and polite. Break-times and lunch-times are lively and pupils amuse themselves well. Pupils show reverence during assemblies and sing very enthusiastically. Bullying and other forms of harassment are rare. When any pupil raises a concern about behaviour, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils from all ethnic backgrounds mix well together. Most pupils with special educational needs have a positive attitude to learning. When working individually or in a small group, with the support of a teacher or teaching assistant they show an improved level of confidence. They persevere with challenging tasks and enjoy the sessions. There have been no exclusions in this school year.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	391	4	1

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Pupils' personal development is fostered very well. The youngest children receive very good attention to their personal and social skills on starting in the nursery. Staff enable them to feel safe and confident in a calm and interesting environment. As they move through the school, pupils take on the responsibilities of living in the school community in an outstanding way. Older pupils have many good opportunities for helping with the smooth running of the school especially at lunch-times. They also chair the School Forum where they gauge views, carry out investigations and try and address any issues raised. For instance, a litter problem has improved markedly since Year 7 pupils have taken charge of this. The many residential trips provide great benefits for personal development and give huge enjoyment.

Positive reinforcement of the values of respect, care for others, trust, fairness, kindness and high moral standards are strengths. Pupils are maturing into very confident and sociable young people. Pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions is good, although they have relatively few planned opportunities to learn more about the diversity of modern British culture.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is sound and is well resourced. It is enriched very well by extra activities. The day-to-day care of pupils is very good. There are very effective links with parents and the local community.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage. They are satisfactory in Years 1 to 7. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is effective and promotes good progress in the nursery and Reception classes.
- Teaching and learning are good for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Language Department.

- There are weaknesses in the teaching of science and religious education.
- There is a lack of challenge for the more able pupils in some lessons.
- Pupils' behaviour is managed very well and there is a pleasant, orderly atmosphere in lessons.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory in the core subjects, and marking is often good, but the assessment of the foundation subjects needs to be more rigorous to raise standards.
- Specialist speech and language therapy is effective.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	8 (16%)	26 (51%)	13 (25%)	4 (8%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

10. In the lessons seen, the majority of lessons were good and about one in six was very good. Further evidence of the effectiveness of teaching over time was taken from pupils' previous work and from discussions with them about particular subjects. The overall findings of the inspection are that teaching and learning are good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. These judgements are not quite as positive as those of the previous inspection, when teaching was good, overall. Teaching has experienced some turbulence as a result of numerous staff changes, but it is improving with the recent appointments and as new teachers become more experienced, especially in Years 3 to 7. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and the standards they reach.
11. In the Foundation Stage, teachers provide a wide range of interesting and relevant activities. These ensure that the children settle to school routines quickly and learn efficiently. The staff nurture vital social and language skills particularly well. At this stage, the teachers start to instil the high standards of behaviour that they expect of the children. These high expectations of behaviour are continued throughout the school and are a significant strength. They lead to the settled, purposeful environment for learning in all age groups and this enables pupils to get on with their work in the right frame of mind. Pupils collaborate well in their learning.
12. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, including that for the pupils in the Language Department. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support and work that is related to their ability. The teachers and support staff involved build up a good relationship with these pupils and, by gentle encouragement, take every opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding. Pupils learn efficiently. There is successful integration of pupils from the Language Department into mainstream classes; teachers and support staff ensure that they receive the support needed to succeed in all subjects. A key strength of the teaching is the commitment to ensuring that all the pupils are confident, enthusiastic learners, who are helped to reach their full potential. Together with support staff, teachers successfully create a learning environment that is warm and caring, offering pupils a good quality curriculum with a full range of activities matched to their needs. Speech and language therapy is provided for each of these pupils as it is needed. This is carried out skilfully by a practitioner who works closely with the school's own staff and with other specialists as required. Procedures for the assessment of these pupils are good. The school maintains extensive records and uses these well to review progress, and set and modify targets for attainment. Speech and language therapists contribute helpfully to the identification and assessment of the communication and social needs of pupils.
13. Most pupils who have English as an additional language are bilingual and do not need additional help in lessons. The few who require help are supported well by their teachers and teaching assistants and build up their understanding of language effectively.

14. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in most subjects. They are good in ICT, enabling pupils to build up their skills quickly. They are at least satisfactory in most aspects of English and currently good in mathematics. In these two key subjects, indications are that the quality of teaching is improving. A high proportion of good and very good lessons was observed. The exception to this positive picture is that the more able pupils are not challenged enough in English in Year 2. As a result, they do not achieve as much as they are capable of doing. The weakest teaching is in science and religious education. In science, in Years 1 and 2, pupils do not build well enough on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Too little work has been covered and at too superficial a level. There are too few opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations and to record their work in writing, and this especially holds back the progress of the more able pupils. In religious education, in Years 1 to 6, the curriculum is planned in line with the locally agreed syllabus, but topics are not studied in sufficient depth. Pupils too rarely record their knowledge and understanding in writing and the higher attainers are not challenged enough to explore the subject in greater depth. Teaching improves in the subject in Year 7 and, as a result, pupils show a deeper and wider understanding of the topics they have covered.
15. There are satisfactory procedures for checking children's progress and the standards they attain in the nursery, and good procedures in the Reception year. The information gained is put to sound use in planning activities and supporting children's learning. In Years 1 to 7, marking is used well to help pupils know what they need to do to improve their work and to correct errors. There are some very good examples in English and mathematics lessons of teachers evaluating pupils' understanding in order to adapt the work they provide in subsequent lessons. The school has much information gained from tests and assessments in the core subjects in Years 1 to 7. This means that teachers are aware of the National Curriculum levels that their pupils have attained. However, the school is at an early stage of using this information to track pupils' progress through the school and to set individual targets consistently. For example, underachievement by some higher attainers is not being addressed effectively. Pupils' work samples are not always annotated or given a National Curriculum level, which would provide another useful measure of progress. Data is not being used as well as it could be to help the school to plan how it can raise standards. There are too few agreed systems for assessing progress in the foundation subjects, although there are examples of very good practice in some classes. In these subjects, many teachers do not have a clear overview of how well pupils are doing and the subject co-ordinators do not have enough information about standards to help them to identify where improvement is needed. Assessment is used adequately, overall, but it could be used more effectively, particularly to match work to pupils' differing needs so as to provide greater challenge for pupils capable of higher attainment.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is enriched very well by extra activities. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils with special educational needs are catered for well.
- The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good.
- The curriculum is very well extended and enriched with a range of activities, including residential trips, sports and cultural activities.
- The ICT curriculum is used effectively to support other subjects.
- Provision for able, gifted and talented pupils is not developed as well as for other pupils.
- The accommodation has been developed well for the benefit of pupils and staff.

Commentary

16. There is a rich curriculum for the children in the nursery and Reception classes. Teachers provide a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities that meet children's needs effectively, both inside and outdoors. These promote good achievement. In all other age groups, as at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum caters satisfactorily for the needs and interests of all pupils. It provides a secure basis for learning with very good enrichment beyond the school day. All subjects are taught and statutory requirements are met. The key issue from the last inspection to extend the time available to teach French, has been improved satisfactorily. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Language Department. Pupils' education plans match the needs of individual pupils and the targets set are generally sufficiently specific and easy to measure.
17. The programme of work in ICT is effective and supports a wide range of other subjects. Assemblies provide a useful extension to the curriculum. The school is involved in several relevant curriculum initiatives that are having a beneficial effect on pupils' achievement, including a study of pupils' learning styles and encouragement for parental literacy.
18. The school is committed to including all pupils. It provides successfully equality of opportunity for pupils with special educational needs and pupils of all ethnic origins. However, suitable extension activities are not always provided for higher-attaining pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are identified satisfactorily. Special provision is made for them in activities such as music and sport. Opportunities are not always planned sufficiently to challenge them further within their class lessons, so that they do not always achieve the levels of which they are capable. This is an area that the school has acknowledged as a weakness and has begun to improve. Pupils with English as an additional language receive support within their classes where needed and achieve well. The school makes satisfactory provision academically for those transferring to the next stage of education and its very good provision for their personal development equips them well to cope with new challenges.
19. The school enriches the curriculum very effectively and pupils have opportunities to take part in a good range of sports activities and competitions. Visits are arranged, for example, to London theatres and visitors come into the school to work with pupils. The choir and instrumental tuition give valuable musical opportunities. Trips outside the school have a high priority, with each class from Year 2 upwards having a residential visit during the year. These provide a particularly important and effective contribution to pupils' personal and academic development.
20. The quality and quantity of accommodation and resources are good. The school has successfully managed extensive projects in recent years to provide improved teaching areas, especially for the Reception age group, Year 7 and for ICT. A range of shared rooms and small rooms is available for withdrawal of groups and practical activities, and there is plenty of storage space. The outdoor site is extensive and well used. Resources are sufficient to support the curriculum across the school. The school has sufficient teachers. There is a good range of skills and expertise among both teaching and support staff. These factors make a positive contribution to the quality of pupils' learning.

Care, guidance and support

The care and welfare of pupils and the arrangements for health and safety are very good. The school provides satisfactory support for pupils based on the monitoring of their achievement and very good advice for their personal development. There is good involvement of pupils in seeking, valuing and acting on their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care and guidance provided for pupils are key strengths of the school and help pupils feel well looked after in a highly supportive environment.
- Personal development is monitored very closely, and any issues are identified early and are 'nipped in the bud.'
- The management of health and safety is very good.
- The School Forum helps to survey pupils' views and act effectively on them.
- Academic advice, based on assessment data, is at an early stage and is not supporting the drive to raise standards.

Commentary

21. This aspect has improved further since the previous inspection. Pupils confirmed how much they valued the excellent relationships they develop with staff. They feel that they would always have someone to turn to if they have problems. The school has a fully inclusive approach to helping all those who have any personal difficulty. Highly effective monitoring of pupils' personal development enables any issues or unhappiness to be detected early. Pupils and families are helped to resolve problems and this benefits learning and improves school life.
22. The arrangements for child protection and for children in public care are outstanding, and all the requirements are met. The school goes beyond normal bounds to ensure that pupils are monitored sensitively and that their needs are paramount. Pupils with a range of medical needs are catered for very well. Ill and injured pupils are given excellent care and attention. All the risk assessments and routine checking systems for health and safety throughout the school are thorough. Pupils with special educational needs generally receive good support within the school, from teachers, non-teaching staff and pupils. Systems are in place to enable pupils to cope with difficult situations.
23. The arrangements for admitting children to the nursery are good and children are supported by parents and staff until they are happily settled. There is a high mobility rate in the school generally. When pupils are admitted to school part way through a key stage, they are assigned 'buddies' to help them master school routines quickly and effectively.
24. Pupils can channel their thoughts and ideas to Year 7 pupils who collect information for the weekly School Forum assembly. During the inspection, for example, the topics discussed were fund-raising for a nominated charity, litter issues and playground equipment. Pupils also share their thoughts in personal and social education lessons and can talk to their teachers easily and openly.
25. The assessment of academic progress is used satisfactorily to support and guide pupils' learning, but these arrangements are not developed as well as the procedures to monitor their social and moral development. The quality of information for pupils about how well they are doing in subjects could be improved to support the drive to improve standards of attainment. The exception is the assessment of pupils with special educational needs, whose progress is monitored more closely. These procedures have a positive impact on their achievements.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The links with parents are very good and the school is held in high regard. Links with the local community are very good and links with other schools are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parent participation is welcomed and actively encouraged.
- Parents find the school very approachable for dealing with any concerns about learning or their children's happiness.

- Annual school reports for non-core subjects do not report progress sufficiently.
- The school and the parents' association are very involved with the local community.
- The school works well with other local schools to benefit its pupils.

Commentary

26. The school continues to work very effectively with parents and the community to support pupils' learning, as it did at the time of the last inspection. Parental support for the wide range of school activities is very strong. Parents feel a strong sense of partnership based on mutual trust and confidence in the school across all aspects. This encourages them to support their children's learning effectively. There is good sharing of information about children's achievements and how they can be helped at home. Parents are actively involved when there are any particular behavioural, medical or other educational needs and these joint approaches work very well. The independent welfare adviser also provides a very effective link with some families, enabling their children to attend regularly and maintain continuity in their learning.
27. Newsletters, curriculum meetings and induction materials provide high quality information to keep parents fully in touch. School productions, concerts, sports and school trips also enjoy great parental support. Parents' views are sought regularly and form a part of continuous school improvement. Parents appreciate this aspect and feel that their views are valued and acted upon. Pupils' annual written reports give good information about how well pupils are doing in the core subjects, but do not give enough indications of achievements in the rest of the curriculum.
28. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved and informed at all stages of a pupil's assessment and review; contact is maintained at other times on an informal basis. Parents have access to class teachers, who have good communications with the special educational needs co-ordinator. This maintains a steady flow of information and supports well the progress that these pupils make. There are good procedures for welcoming pupils into the Language Department and helping their parents and carers to feel confident about their children's placements. Good procedures also exist for helping pupils and their parents to prepare for the next stage of their education. Pupils in the department participate effectively in the annual reviews of progress with their parents or carers.
29. The school is very much at the heart of the community. For example, there are strong links with New Bradwell Silver Band, where many members are pupils and learn how to play instruments and play at many local concerts and the large local carnival. Pupils support local charities and involve senior citizens in events. They take an active part in local occasions like maypole dancing on 'Windmill Day'. The New Bradwell Carnival is ably hosted by the School Association and is enjoyed by all the community.
30. The school works in close co-operation with other local schools within the Stantonbury Liaison Group. Good links ensure that the oldest pupils' transfers go smoothly and pupils settle quickly. The links also ensure aspects of curricular continuity for core subjects, physical education and special educational needs. The schools in the groups share good practice, resources and staff training, to benefit learning for all parties.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The contribution of the headteacher and key staff is satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and governors provide very effective leadership for pupils' personal development.

- There is a strong commitment to the education of pupils with special learning and behavioural needs.
- Development planning by senior staff, governors and subject co-ordinators does not focus effectively enough on raising academic standards.
- High staff turnover and recruitment difficulties have led to a heavy workload for senior staff.
- Staff are supported well by the arrangements for induction and training.
- Day-to-day administration is very efficient.

Commentary

31. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together. The headteacher and the Chair of Governors work very closely, with common aims that are based on the importance of providing for the personal development of both pupils and staff. The school welcomes pupils from all backgrounds. It is particularly successful in working with pupils who have found it difficult to settle to education elsewhere. Relationships at all levels are very good. This strong ethos has a very positive impact on the attitudes and behaviour of the pupils. Parents and pupils hold the school in high esteem and pay tribute to the way it is led. However, the school's managers have not succeeded in achieving high enough standards in key areas of the curriculum for the entire range of pupils. For this reason, leadership and management are not judged to be as effective, overall, as they were at the time of the last inspection.
32. The school manages pupils' academic education satisfactorily, overall. The school improvement plan rightly identifies as its top priorities the need to raise standards, especially in the key subjects of English and mathematics. Recent performance in statutory and non-statutory tests has been analysed soundly in these subjects. Computerised systems are currently underused to aid efficient processing of performance data, but the school is now developing new procedures for this. Analyses of performance have led to relevant initiatives, such as those in reading and mathematics, that are beginning to have a positive impact on standards for all pupils. The leadership and management of pupils with special educational needs by the headteacher, the special needs co-ordinator and the governors are effective and promote the good achievement of these pupils. The progress of these pupils is monitored well. The teacher in charge of The Language Department, working closely with the headteacher, provides good leadership and gives the department a positive identity and purpose. Since the last inspection, the school has further developed its good provision in this area.
33. There is not such a strong commitment to improving overall standards and, in particular, the achievement of the more able pupils. Teachers have recently identified the most able, gifted or talented members of each class and are starting to plan more explicitly for their needs. This project is still at an early stage and has so far had a limited effect on overall standards.
34. The school improvement plan lays out the main areas for action in the current year. It does not reflect as successfully the longer-term strategic plans that are widely discussed by staff and governors. For example, the local education authority is in the process of reorganising its 'three tier' system of first, middle and upper schools into primary and secondary schools. This has considerable financial and organisational implications for this school, which have been considered well by the senior staff and governors in their discussions. However, the written improvement plan does not include a summary of future action that includes this. For current projects, the details of how pupils' achievement is expected to improve and the arrangements for monitoring success are too vague to act as an efficient tool for school improvement.
35. The school has experienced a period of high staff turnover and of disruptions due to staff illness. This has been caused by factors outside the school's control, but has affected the ability of the school to move forward as it would wish. Seven newly-qualified teachers and other inexperienced staff have been appointed. While most of these appointments have led to good teaching for pupils, these teachers are not yet in a position to take any substantial responsibilities for aspects of the school. As a result, the more experienced staff and the senior managers have seen an increase in their workload. One of the effects has been to cut

back the time available for focused monitoring of subjects and of initiatives for improvement. This is an area that the school is committed to increasing again as soon as possible. The influx of new staff has pointed up the success of the arrangements for the induction and further development of staff. The newly-qualified teachers are monitored and supported well. Good systems are in place for the performance management of all categories of staff.

36. The day-to-day administration of the school is very efficient. The office and reception staff are well qualified and contribute very well to the smooth running of the school. Financial procedures are good and the school's last audit report was positive. The school achieves good value in its spending decisions. It has carried forward substantial sums in its budget in the last few years. These were built up to enable it to develop its accommodation. These large projects, such as the computer suite and the classrooms for Reception and Year 7, have now almost been completed and the money spent has improved the quality of the building to the benefit of staff and pupils.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,207,538*
Total expenditure	1,136,530
Expenditure per pupil	2,481

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	69,821
Balance carried forward to the next	140,829

**This figure excludes the funding allocated to the pupils attending The Language Department*

37. The governance of the school is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met, with the exception of a few omissions from the documents that are provided for parents. Parents are not given information about national test results or about how effective staff training has been. Most governors are active and supportive. They have a clear grasp of the school's main strengths and weaknesses, which now needs to be more focused on how they will ensure that all pupils achieve equally well.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

The good provision found at the last inspection has been maintained. Children achieve well from a well below average starting point. Standards are lifted and children are given a good start to their education.

There are many reasons why children achieve well. In the nursery, teaching is consistently good with some very good features. The environment is very rich and inviting. A strong team of adults works well together to provide a wide range of stimulating and interesting activities that meet children's needs effectively, both inside and outdoors. This good foundation is well maintained in the Reception classes, where teaching is at least satisfactory and mostly good. Teachers know their children well and regularly record their observations of their learning. In Reception, teachers set simple targets for improvement. However, there is scope to improve assessment systems to measure progress more effectively and to challenge higher-attaining children better, particularly in the Reception classes.

Good leadership and management keep the department working closely together, despite the physical distance between the nursery and Reception classes. Improvements to the Reception accommodation and outside provision are good, and have been managed effectively. The co-ordinator has a clear view of what is needed to keep the department on an upward track. This includes improvements to the way that teachers assess children's progress and how they use the information to challenge children capable of higher attainment. Staffing levels are generous so that all children, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language, are supported well.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children come on in leaps and bounds in the nursery in their personal and social skills.
- Very good relationships between adults and children create an environment where children grow in confidence and independence.

Commentary

38. Children settle well into the nursery and achieve very well. Children are on course to reach the nationally expected standards by the time they start in Year 1. They make rapid progress in developing personal and social confidence because of very good teaching. Children are made to feel secure and valued in a calm, happy and very stimulating environment. They grow in confidence and respond positively to the very good care of the staff and to the good role models the adults provide. The adults' high expectations are reflected in the children's very good attitudes and good behaviour. Children show good levels of independence for their age in the way they settle to activities and, for example, in putting on aprons for painting and their coats to go outside. This very good foundation is built upon in the Reception classes where children continue to grow in confidence and develop their personal and social skills effectively. They learn to play collaboratively and to take responsibility for tidying their classrooms. A good range of activities is planned well, promoting in children a strong desire to learn.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is taken to develop children's language and communication skills effectively.
- Teachers improve children's early speaking and listening skills well.
- In Reception classes, more could be done to teach accurate letter formation.

Commentary

39. All children achieve well from a particularly low starting point. However, despite good teaching and effective learning, attainment is below the expected level by the end of the Reception year, because the children's starting point is low. Listening skills are taught as soon as children start school. These are reinforced effectively in many activities so that, by the time they enter Year 1, children listen well to one another and to adults. In the nursery, adults take every opportunity to engage children in conversation, to develop their speech and extend their vocabulary. They present good models of language themselves. They engage very effectively in children's role-play to develop language and extend ideas. They share books with children, successfully stimulating an interest and enthusiasm for reading. Teachers provide very good opportunities for the development of writing, both in tasks that are supported by adults and in imaginative role-play, such as in 'the doctor's surgery'. As a result, children learn that print conveys meaning. They 'read' their own marks on paper as they pretend to write appointments and prescriptions for patients, write cards, address envelopes and make their own books.
40. The good progress and provision are maintained in Reception. Teachers promote interest and enjoyment in books by reading stories and by encouraging children to take books home to share with their parents. A few children are already reading simple stories and many can tell a story from looking at the pictures. Teachers know their children well and set them simple targets. They provide adequate opportunities for children to write their names and to practise their early writing skills. While letter sounds are taught well, supporting the development of early reading and spelling, letter formation is not given sufficient attention. Consequently, children in the Reception classes form letters inaccurately and this has a detrimental effect on their handwriting further up the school.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is of good quality and places a strong emphasis on learning through practical activities.
- Children capable of higher attainment could be given more challenge in the Reception classes.

Commentary

41. The good quality teaching and effective learning of practical activities helps children achieve well from a low starting point. Overall, standards are below expected levels. While children are on course to reach the expected standard in the number aspect of mathematics by the end of Reception, their understanding of shape, space and measure is less secure, so that they are unlikely to achieve the expected standards in these aspects despite good teaching. Children achieve well in the nursery. They have good opportunities to explore shape, space and measures as they play with different sizes and types of containers in the sand and water. Good questioning by adults challenges their thinking and develops understanding of mathematical language, as when they use wooden bricks to measure different sized teddy

bears. Counting skills are reinforced as they count the number of bricks each teddy measures. This focused support by adults, in well-planned and stimulating activities ensures that children make a good start in their mathematical development.

42. Good teaching and learning in Reception build successfully on nursery provision. Activities help children learn comparative language such as, 'shorter', 'shortest', 'longer' and 'longest' and to order sets of objects from shortest to longest. Lessons begin with mental games and activities that develop children's number recognition and counting skills effectively. Learning is reinforced through practical activities, games and songs. However, there are missed opportunities to extend the children who are capable of higher attainment, because they are given too few opportunities to record their knowledge and understanding in written form.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching in the nursery provides children with numerous opportunities to learn about the world around them.
- Adults engage effectively with children in their role-play to demonstrate language and to extend their ideas.

Commentary

43. Teaching and learning are very good in the nursery and help to ensure that all children achieve very well. The small and large equipment, both indoors and outside, is changed daily to maintain high interest levels and to extend children's knowledge and understanding of the world around them. In a very good lesson, for example, children were encouraged to use their trowels to mix the water into the sand while the teacher questioned them very effectively about what was happening. Children noticed that the sand had changed colour and learned that it could be rolled, flattened and shaped when wet. In both nursery and Reception, imaginative role-play areas and the good intervention of adults in play activities, successfully develop children's understanding about such places as a doctor's surgery and a station, and extend their vocabulary.
44. Teaching and achievement in Reception are sound and build on standards achieved in the nursery. However, despite the overall strengths in provision, their attainment is likely to fall below the expected standard by the time they enter Year 1, because of their low starting point and limited language skills. Children are helped satisfactorily to develop early scientific skills. For example, they learn to make simple predictions about the speed and distance travelled by toy vehicles down a ramp and to consider why one travels further than another. Computers are used regularly and develop pupils' skills. While children in the nursery still need much adult help, by the end of Reception, children are using the mouse confidently to control images on the screen and to make pictures and patterns. The highest-attaining children write their names. Teaching includes a sound range of activities to cover early understanding in religious education, such as how religious festivals are celebrated. Visits and visitors, together with good accommodation and resources, strongly support this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers make effective use of the good accommodation and resources so that children achieve well.

Commentary

45. Children are on course to reach the expected standards in this area by the time they leave the Reception year and are achieving well. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers make good use of the available space outside and provide many opportunities for children to play imaginatively outdoors. Push and pull toys and tricycles help children develop awareness of space, speed and direction. The outside area for the Reception classes, which has only recently been opened, is still waiting for the climbing-frame to be erected. This currently limits children's free access to climbing and balancing activities. Teachers compensate for this by making effective use of the school's large hall for physical activities. In a good lesson seen, using large apparatus, children's skills improved quickly because all instructions about how to put out and use the apparatus, and how to land safely, were demonstrated effectively. In the nursery, there is no fixed climbing apparatus. This involves the staff in setting up temporary equipment on a daily basis which is time-consuming. Children are taught to use scissors, brushes and other tools, and their skills in manipulating small equipment are as expected for their age.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are provided with a good range of activities that enriches their learning.

Commentary

46. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan a range of stimulating activities that develop children's creative skills effectively. As a result, children achieve well and are on course to attain the expected goals by the end of the Reception year. Children learn to use their senses to experiment and explore a range of materials and learn skills in gluing, cutting, drawing and painting. In a very good lesson in the nursery, for example, children were shown effectively how to add water to make clay more malleable and were encouraged to use their senses to describe the appearance and texture. In Reception, children were helped to use recycled materials effectively to make models of different types of transport, thus learning joining techniques. In both nursery and Reception there is a good range of opportunities for children to develop their imaginative play in the various role-play areas. Children regularly achieve well in planned music-making sessions with adults, as well as having free access to musical instruments. They currently benefit from a weekly session with a music consultant. She is building up their skills in music successfully, as well as helping them to gain a strong enjoyment for the subject.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 AND 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in most classes is now good.
- Recent reading initiatives are having a positive impact on standards.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the good teaching.
- Capable pupils are not challenged enough in Years 1 and 2.
- There is not enough attention to standards of handwriting.
- The subject action plans do not include enough detail of how standards will be improved.

Commentary

47. Since the last inspection, pupils' results in the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6 have mainly been well below the national average. However, in Year 2, the improvement in results over the past five years has been in line with national trends. The school achieved an improvement in its Year 6 results in 2002, but they fell again in 2003, partly due to weaknesses in teaching that have since been remedied.
48. Two particularly significant factors bring down the school's test performance in comparison with other schools. There are high proportions of pupils with special learning needs, and especially with language and communication difficulties, who achieve well for their capabilities but often do not reach the nationally expected levels of attainment. In addition, the very high level of pupil mobility in all age groups disrupts the smooth progress of learning for the pupils involved, and has an impact on pupils as a whole when teachers need to give their time to integrate new arrivals.
49. The findings of this inspection are that, by Year 2, Year 6 and Year 7, standards are below average, but are not as low as the recent test results indicate. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory, overall, as they were at the time of the last inspection. This includes the achievements of pupils with English as an additional language, almost all of whom are bilingual and take a full part in lessons. Achievement is improving as a result of better teaching. This was often seen in lessons taken by the newly appointed teachers and by staff who are covering classes temporarily. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well. They have individual education plans that identify key literacy targets and these are used effectively by teachers and support staff when planning and delivering lessons. In a few classes, most notably in Key Stage 1, the more able pupils are not challenged sufficiently by the activities that are set for them. As a result, they do not make enough progress for their capabilities. In Year 2, for example, too few of the pupils who are capable of reaching Level 3 show evidence in their writing books that they are on track to do so this year.
50. Pupils' listening skills are average in all age groups. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. These are effective in ensuring attention to anyone who is speaking and make a good contribution to learning. Speaking skills are below average. Pupils try hard to express their thoughts and opinions orally, but often struggle to speak in extended sentences or to find suitable vocabulary. The oldest pupils too rarely use the conventions of Standard English unless prompted. Standards in reading are below average across the school. This has been identified as a main initiative for improvement and has led to a higher focus on individual reading activities. The results of recent reading tests in several classes indicate that this initiative is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' progress. Standards in writing

are below average. Many pupils find it difficult to write at the length expected for their age group. Spelling is below average in spite of regular, well-planned lessons. Teachers in all age groups do not give enough attention to the formation of clear, even, joined handwriting and this hampers pupils' efforts to write fluently.

51. During the inspection, the quality of teaching varied between classes from very good to unsatisfactory. Evidence from pupils' work over time shows that teaching and learning are satisfactory, overall. Teachers establish a calm and purposeful atmosphere in lessons, which promotes efficient learning by pupils. They plan interesting activities. These are often focused on using good quality examples of literature or poetry, but less frequently make effective links to work in other subjects. Lesson planning identifies clear objectives and caters well for most pupils, but not consistently well for the higher attainers in all classes who could learn more efficiently at times. Teaching assistants support the classes well, particularly by helping those with special educational needs to achieve well. Most teachers give clear oral feedback to pupils and mark work well. Very good examples were seen of pupils using teachers' written comments to understand how well they have done in their work and what they need to do next to improve further. Teachers are beginning to use individual learning targets well in some classes, but this practice is not yet consistent. Teachers keep examples of pupils' writing, on which they give useful details of what pupils have achieved. They do not allocate the writing a National Curriculum level; adding this would aid the more efficient tracking of pupils' progress.
52. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The subject leaders are experienced teachers and are aware of strengths and weaknesses. Their analyses of performance and of pupils' work have led to sound initiatives for improvement, such as those in reading and marking. It has been difficult to carry out their fuller monitoring role as extensively as they would wish because of the more urgent pressures on time that have been caused by the many recent staff changes. The school improvement plan summarises necessary improvements, but does not give enough detail of how these will be achieved, how they will be reflected in pupils' attainment or how success will be judged.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

53. The application of pupils' language and literacy skills is satisfactory, although pupils' lower-than-average standards in reading and writing often contribute to below average performance in other subjects. Regular discussions in all subjects consolidate and extend pupils' speaking and listening skills. Reading and writing are practised quite widely in history, but too little written recording takes place in religious education and geography and, in some classes, in science. Recent moves to improve the identification and use of key vocabulary in units of work in all subjects are good and are beginning to have a positive impact on standards.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Native speakers provide excellent models for the pupils to imitate.
- The weekly lessons in Year 7 are too long for pupils to sustain their concentration.

Commentary

54. Pupils in Year 7 are on course to meet national expectations in the subject by the end of the school year, and their achievement is satisfactory. Standards are higher than those reported at the last inspection because more time is now allocated to the subject. However, pupils still do not achieve as well as they might because the single weekly lesson is too long and because they do not have sufficient opportunity to practise the language on the intervening days. Those pupils who listen carefully, acquire a good accent because they imitate the

inflection and gesture of the native speaker; however, a significant number do not apply themselves well and anglicise their pronunciation. A number of pupils become self-conscious when asked to imitate or express themselves in French to the rest of the class. They become much less inhibited when working in pairs, or small groups, and make better progress because they more readily try out new sentences. With prompting, pupils recall well work they have learned previously. Higher-attaining pupils adapt basic sentences for their own use and purposes; for example, '*je ne suis pas paresseux, je suis assez travailleurs*', while those of lower attainment require much support to speak the most basic sentences with confidence.

55. Interviews with pupils and an examination of their work indicate that the quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. However, one unsatisfactory lesson was observed in the course of the inspection. This resulted from pupils' loss of concentration because explanations were too long and because the activities chosen did not sustain pupils' interest. However, the teacher provides an excellent model for pupils to imitate, and work is mostly well planned and prepared. Much of the teaching is conducted in French and gives pupils regular valuable opportunities to hear the language spoken well. Pupils' concentration is much better at the beginning of the lesson; this allows teaching to proceed at a good pace, and pupils have sufficient opportunity to speak, listen and write. Although more time is allocated for teaching the subject than at the last inspection, it is not well distributed through the weekly timetable, and the single lesson does not give pupils frequent enough practice in repeating and building up the skills they need.
56. In the course of their work, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of French culture that culminates in a week-long visit to Normandy or Brittany. This enhances the relevance of their learning because they practise their language skills and investigate aspects of life in France. The visit also supports well pupils' studies in geography and history.
57. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, an experienced teacher with very good knowledge of her subject, has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to develop the subject further. However, she has little support from external agencies and has to work hard to ensure that the subject maintains the right level of priority in the school's curriculum. Another native speaker also introduces French to younger pupils across the school, including those in the nursery. This is a good initiative that encourages speaking through games and rhymes so that the language is acquired confidently and without inhibition. The challenge for the school is to develop this work further.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching was good in the lessons seen during the inspection and pupils achieved well.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics.
- The very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs depresses standards at the top of the school.

Commentary

58. When they enter the school, pupils' attainment is below average for their age. By Year 2, attainment is below the national average with pupils achieving satisfactorily. Attainment is below the national average by Years 6 and 7. This is partly because of a very high proportion of pupils with significant special educational needs (over 30 per cent in Year 6). A high proportion of pupils also join the school at a late stage, which affects the continuity of their learning and the standards they attain. In Key Stages 2 and 3, achievement over time has been satisfactory in relation to pupils' capabilities, but was good in the lessons seen. It has been hindered in the past by staffing difficulties, but these have been resolved. Pupils at

present achieve well throughout the upper part of the school. At the time of the last inspection, pupils in Years 2, 6 and 7 achieved satisfactorily, but test results were well below average. The current picture shows improving achievement in most year groups.

59. Pupils in Years 3 to 7 are organised into 'sets' for their mathematics lessons because of the wide range of ability. In the lessons seen, they were achieving well. By Year 6, for example, they convert fractions to decimals and percentages and undertake interesting investigations. By Year 7, they are able to undertake calculations using 'long' division and multiplication.
60. Based on all sources of evidence, including pupils' previous work and test results, the teaching of mathematics is satisfactory. However, in the majority of lessons seen, it was good across the school, reflecting the positive impact of staff changes and initiatives for improvement. Recent problems with teaching have been largely overcome and the teachers deliver the subject well. They have good subject knowledge and the National Numeracy Strategy is well integrated into their teaching. They know their pupils well and plan work to suit them. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and use appropriate strategies to help them learn. Although work is generally planned to fit with the pupils' attainment, further opportunities to challenge the higher-attaining pupils are missed. The best lessons are well paced and interesting. Pupils have the chance to explain and demonstrate their mathematical strategies to the rest of the class. In a minority of lessons, the pace is slower; more time is spent on maintaining discipline and pupils' interest levels drop. Where classroom assistants or other helpers are used, they are well briefed. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress in line with the other children in their classes. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively and achieve well. Opportunities to let pupils apply mathematics to real-life situations and undertake investigations are used well. When time permits, teachers provide opportunities for pupils to practise and use ICT within mathematics lessons and this promotes their skills well in both subjects.
61. Because of the good quality of the teaching at the time of the inspection, pupils were learning well in most of the lessons seen. Their attitudes to mathematics are good, overall, across the school. They enjoy lessons and sustain concentration well. Good behaviour is generally maintained throughout the lessons. A minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties find listening and sitting still difficult in some lessons. These pupils were generally well managed by their teachers. Pupils are all included in lessons and none gets preferential treatment.
62. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinators have good subject knowledge and have the vision to take the subject forward. Because they have only undertaken the role for a short time, they have yet to have a major impact. They have both received training in subject management and have had some opportunities to monitor lessons, teachers' planning and pupils' work. As a result, they are becoming well equipped to improve provision. The use of target-setting and the tracking of pupil performance have been introduced. They are at an early stage of development and have rightly been identified as priorities for further improvement in the drive to raise standards.

Mathematics across the curriculum

63. There is satisfactory use of mathematics within other curriculum areas, particularly ICT, design technology and geography. In one effective ICT lesson, pupils were planning a party and working out a budget. They were using a spreadsheet to try out different combinations of purchases to see how they could best provide for their needs. In other lessons, they collect data, draw graphs and answer questions about them. They collect and handle mathematical data in science and geography, although there are too few opportunities to record this work in their books. Within design technology, they learn to measure and cut accurately.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2.
- Attainment and achievement are improving well in Year 7.
- Insufficient use is made of pupils' test results and of monitoring to improve standards.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good.

Commentary

64. In recent years, the difficulties in recruiting teachers and frequent staff changes have affected the continuity of pupils' learning and have had an adverse effect on the consistency of their achievement. The high levels of pupil mobility and of special educational needs also have a negative impact on the standards attained.
65. Over the last three years, pupils' standards as shown in the national tests at the end of Year 6 have been very low when compared with other schools. Standards are currently below average, overall, by both Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' written work is well below average in Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 7, however, are achieving well as a result of improved teaching and are on course to reach average standards by the end of the year.
66. Inspection evidence, including discussion with pupils, highlighted their interest and potential to increase their knowledge, understanding and skills in science. A group of Year 6 pupils described how they had enjoyed the challenge to create and fit a burglar alarm to their class storeroom. Pupils' attitudes to learning in lessons are very positive.
67. Teaching and learning are currently satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and are good in Year 7, reflecting the success of recent staff changes in raising standards. There was limited lesson evidence about the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2. However, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with Year 2 pupils indicate that it is unsatisfactory, as a significant proportion of pupils make limited progress and underachieve. Books show that too little work has been covered and at too superficial a level. Year 2 pupils reported very few opportunities to carry out investigations. Teaching is not consistent across the school. Where it is best, teachers' intervene at appropriate times to check pupils' understanding, and work is appropriate for the full ability range. Pupils with special educational needs generally make sound progress due to the support provided. Where teaching is not satisfactory, the information gained from assessments is not well used to plan activities precisely enough for pupils of different abilities. This means that a number of pupils lose interest and concentration, because the programmes they follow do not provide sufficient challenge. As a result, higher-attaining pupils in particular do not do as well as they could by the end of Year 2, and in some lessons in Years 3 to 6.
68. Leadership and management of science are unsatisfactory. Currently, there are no opportunities for the subject leader to support teaching and learning by observing the lessons taught by other staff, including the large number of newly qualified teachers. The science development plan does not acknowledge and address the low standards at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Information from the end-of-module or annual tests is not being used effectively to set individual targets or influence the way science is taught. Pupils' portfolios containing examples of their science work from year to year, are not sufficiently assessed in terms of National Curriculum levels and context. There is little use of ICT in science and links with literacy and numeracy need further development. Improvement since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good improvement in staff expertise to keep pace with the rapid developments in the subject.
- Pupils achieve well and enjoy the subject.
- ICT is used well in most other subjects.
- Procedures for assessing progress in the subject have not yet been established.
- ICT is not used to support pupils' specific special educational needs.

Commentary

69. The last inspection found that standards in ICT, by Years 2, 6 and 7 were in line with national expectations. This inspection also found attainment to be at least in line with national expectations in each key stage, and that some aspects are above average. This represents satisfactory progress in improving the subject and in keeping pace with national and world-wide developments. Pupils of all ages achieve well for their capabilities, including the many with special educational needs.
70. A broad Programme of Study is in place, which is having a positive impact on learning across the school. A new projector has been installed in the ICT suite and this is being used effectively. It allows full classes to be taught more easily because teachers' demonstrations can be easily seen on the large screen. There are computers in all classrooms as well as in the computer suite. These enable pupils to practise skills between lessons and also to use them effectively to support their learning in other subjects. However, because the school is large, there are few opportunities for teachers to use the computer suite to teach other subjects.
71. Teaching is good and children learn well because the good teaching ensures that they progress as fast as they can. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, know the programs they are teaching and use good teaching strategies. In weaker lessons, the pace is slower and the pupils are not as well engaged in their activities. All pupils are included well in lessons. Children with special educational needs achieve well because they are well supported by adults and the activities planned for each class. However, there were no planned opportunities observed using programs designed to cater for individuals' particular needs. Those with English as an additional language, and bilingual pupils, achieve well in the subject.
72. The subject is led and managed soundly. However, a heavy administrative load limits the amount of time the co-ordinator has for the role and to lead further improvement. There is no formal assessment system for the subject, so that teachers do not have a clear overview of standards. Some lessons have been monitored and there is a portfolio of work from across the school, but this is not yet used to show pupils' levels of attainment or to act as a tool in the subject's further development. Teachers have had access to up-to-date training in the subject and this has helped to raise confidence levels and skills. The subject leader gives useful advice and support to colleagues and helps to keep the school abreast of new developments. The school is adequately resourced in this area and has enough software to deliver the curriculum. However, some computers are becoming old and of limited use.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

73. Teachers use ICT well in most subjects. It is used to support lessons such as literacy, numeracy, history, geography and art, although its use in science is too limited. Pupils particularly use computers to display their finished work and to handle data. They search the Internet to find information for use in a range of subjects.

HUMANITIES

74. Neither geography nor history was a focus for inspection, and therefore no judgements are made on their overall provision.
75. An analysis of work and discussion with pupils indicates that attainment in **geography** across the school is likely to be similar to that expected nationally. Although writing is not used well to support learning, pupils demonstrate much fuller knowledge and understanding when they talk about their work. Pupils' levels of achievement are satisfactory, and are similar to those described at the last inspection. Between Years 3 and 7, there is much superficial descriptive writing, but fewer attempts at geographical explanation. The content of the written work of pupils of different ability is very similar. Expectations for higher-attaining pupils are often too low, and pupils have little opportunity to write independently about what they know and understand, nor to build progressively on their geographical skills through their writing. Too few lessons were seen to form an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, but pupils' work indicates that many lessons are heavily teacher-directed, and that older pupils have little opportunity to investigate or take charge of their own learning. Visits are used well to enable pupils to compare their home environment with contrasting localities. Subject leadership is good. The well-qualified co-ordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and shortcomings in the subject, and is well placed to lead further improvements.
76. There was too little evidence to form a judgement on attainment in **history** by the end of Year 2, but evidence suggests that standards are similar to those expected nationally in Year 6 and Year 7. An examination of pupils' work indicates that achievement is likely to be satisfactory in Years 3 to 5, but good among older pupils because expectations are higher. Across the school, pupils' achievements are distinctly better when they are allowed to write independently at length. For example, pupils in Year 4 wrote with greater complexity and liveliness when they were required to describe a Pictish attack than when they were relating the bare facts of an Anglo-Saxon incursion, while those in Year 7 write graphically and in great detail as citizens caught up in the Norman invasion. Some of the work offered in Years 3 to 5 is too superficial to enable pupils to make substantial progress, because teachers try ambitiously to cover themes that are too wide or general for pupils to acquire any real depth of understanding. As with geography, relevant visits to sites of historical interest are used well to reinforce learning. However, expectations for the quality and depth of work to be completed are not always as high as they could be, and teachers do not insist on the standards of presentation and finish of which the pupils are capable. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory, but more could be done to ensure that the practices leading to higher achievement among older pupils are adopted more uniformly across the school.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils do not build progressively on their knowledge and understanding because the curriculum is not taught in sufficient depth.
- Achievement in Year 7 is good, because pupils are given enough time to reflect on and explore religious and spiritual experience.

- There are too few opportunities for independent learning, especially for higher-attaining pupils.

Commentary

77. Attainment is below that expected by the locally agreed syllabus for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6, although it is in line with expectations by Year 7. This is a decline from the position at the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be satisfactory. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory, except in Year 7, where it is good.
78. In Year 2, pupils display a fragmentary knowledge of a few Bible stories. They know those of Noah and Joseph, but have little idea of why Jesus is thought to be a special person and display limited knowledge of events in his life, including Christmas or Easter. They understand little of the purposes or activities of places of worship, or of the fact that certain festivals and beliefs are special to different people for different reasons. This is because the curriculum is not taught in enough depth or with sufficient coherence for pupils to build progressively on their knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Year 6 display similar gaps in knowledge and understanding. While they learn about the lives of such figures as Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Teresa, they know little of the beliefs that inspired them. Their knowledge of Bible stories, and other religious beliefs and practices, is equally limited. Pupils rarely work independently, and there is too little difference in the attainments of the least capable and most capable pupils.
79. By contrast, pupils in Year 7 often achieve well because they explore the nature of belief and values, and in doing so come to an appreciation of how people form religious views. For example, they compare Jewish art with symbols used in Islam, making perceptive comments on the feelings and beliefs that religious art tries to convey. Pupils in this age group frequently work independently, and are well motivated because the work is closely linked to other areas of the curriculum.
80. Teaching is unsatisfactory, overall, because the content of lessons is too superficial to ensure that pupils explore stories, customs and beliefs in sufficient depth. An analysis of work reveals that tasks are often too heavily directed by the teacher, pupils have too few opportunities to express the knowledge and understanding they have acquired, and higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged to explore stories and beliefs in greater depth. However, there is some good teaching in Year 7. In a good lesson seen, pupils discussed ideas in pairs and were given sufficient time to express and record their views. The result was perceptive, sensitive work that pupils were encouraged to share with others.
81. Subject leadership is currently satisfactory. The newly appointed co-ordinators are aware of the low standards and shortcomings of the present curriculum. Their immediate task is to become familiar with the local education authority's new syllabus and to prepare a Programme of Work. Their enthusiasm and understanding suggest that the subject is well placed to improve. While pupils occasionally celebrate festivals in church, the church is rarely used to enhance pupils' understanding of Christianity, and there are few contacts with representatives of other religions or places of worship to broaden pupils' experiences.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

82. This curriculum area was not a main focus for the inspection. It is therefore not possible to form overall judgements about provision. Pupils' work was sampled in all subjects. In **design and technology** and **physical education**, one lesson was seen in each subject. In **art and design**, pupils' sketch-books were examined in Years 3 to 7, as well as the work on display throughout the school. Discussions took place with Year 6 pupils about their work in art and in design and technology. In **music**, two lessons were seen and further evidence was gained from the musical elements of assemblies. All subject co-ordinators were interviewed.
83. In **art and design** and **design and technology**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 successfully develop skills in observational drawing using a range of materials, for example, in working with paint,

pastels and charcoal. Year 2 pupils achieve some good results in designing and making glove puppets from felt and other fabric. They draw plans for their designs and make lists of the materials to be used. They are taught to evaluate their work and make suggestions for improvement. In the present Year 6, pupils have had satisfactory experience of a range of materials and techniques in both subjects. Their teaching has enabled them to demonstrate a sound understanding of primary and secondary colours, knowing how they can be mixed to create other colours. Pupils are familiar with the work of artists such as Vincent Van Gogh. They have had opportunities to evaluate manufactured products such as biscuits, musical instruments and training shoes. Samples of work from pupils in Year 7 indicate that they have appraised the work of artists such as Picasso and produced drawings of themselves in the style of famous artists. They have designed a carrying device for harvest gifts. When evaluating products, such as a patched pencil case, they are taught to consider features such as fitness for purpose including strength, materials and appearance.

84. In the one lesson seen in **physical education**, the teaching of hockey skills was satisfactory. The teacher rightly emphasised aspects of safety throughout the lesson and demonstrated techniques effectively. However, too much time was spent outside on explanations and demonstrations and insufficient time was left for pupils to practise and improve their own skills. The curriculum for physical education is suitably broad, with an appropriate emphasis on ensuring that pupils are taught to swim before they leave the school. Almost all pupils succeeded in gaining their 25 metres certificates by the end of Year 6 in 2003. A good range of regular extra-curricular sporting activities and clubs enriches the physical education curriculum effectively. These include football, netball and basketball, as well as coaching days for cricket and tennis. The school's extensive programme of residential visits ensures that pupils experience much more than the usual range of outdoor and adventurous activities. These promote their physical and social development very well.
85. In **music**, only two lessons were seen and it is not possible to make a judgement on attainment across the school. In these lessons, attainment was in line with expected levels and the teaching was good. By Year 6, most children sing well, they read aspects of music notation and create their own compositions. By Year 7, they recognise many orchestral instruments and know about some musical structures. Pupils enjoyed their lessons and behaved well. Pupils from across the school perform in the choir and a reasonable number take the opportunity to learn instruments, including recorders, drums and brass instruments. These extra activities are rightly given a high priority by the school. They give pupils with an interest or aptitude for music good quality opportunities to extend their learning outside their class lessons. The school band plays for assemblies and local festivals. The subject is well managed by a capable co-ordinator who has very good subject knowledge.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

86. **Personal, social and health education** and **citizenship** are taught to all year groups as a combined subject. Not enough evidence was available from the small number of lessons and general discussions seen to judge the quality of teaching and learning and, therefore, of overall provision. Pupils' written work in the subject was examined. In the only full lesson seen, teaching and pupils' achievement were satisfactory.
87. The school has a sound programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education, which is closely linked to other lessons and also considered in assemblies. The school's new Programmes of Work ensure progression in learning in a wide range of relevant topics. These enable pupils to build on their skills and knowledge as they move through the school. Pupils develop an understanding of the physical, emotional, moral and social issues in certain types of behaviour, together with an awareness of their rights and responsibilities. They learn how to be safe in a range of circumstances. They also learn about how fortunate they often are and what actions they can take to relieve suffering elsewhere in the world. For example, at Christmas, the school collected gifts for children in Eastern Europe.

88. The school's very good programme of residential opportunities for pupils of all ages and its very good links with the community enhance this curriculum area. They help to bring together elements of lessons and other activities that enable pupils to develop good relationships and make the most of their skills and knowledge. Governors have agreed that suitable aspects of sex and relationships education will be taught to Years 6 and 7.
89. Leadership and management are good and the subject leader has developed a new and relevant programme for citizenship in Year 7 that meets the requirements for that age group. Plans to develop the subject further include a bid to achieve a 'Healthy Schools Award', and these demonstrate the school's continuing commitment to aiding pupils' overall personal development.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).