

INSPECTION REPORT

WARDEN HILL JUNIOR SCHOOL

Luton

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109562

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Noon

Lead inspector: Mr Jed Donnelly

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th March 2004

Inspection number: 258302

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 7 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 354

School address: Birdsfoot Lane
Luton
Bedfordshire

Postcode: LU3 2DN

Telephone number: (01582) 591 386
Fax number: (01582) 561 449

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Alan Denton

Date of previous inspection: 14th June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Warden Hill Primary School caters for pupils aged seven to 11. It is situated in Luton. The area is one of mixed social and economic conditions. This is a three-form entry school with 354 pupils on roll and is larger than the average sized primary school nationally. The school has similar numbers of boys and girls on roll. Attainment on entry to Year 3 is close to the national average. There are 36 pupils with English as an additional language. The majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds and there are significant proportions from other ethnic heritages, including Black British, Asian, African and Caribbean. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The number of pupils entering and leaving the school other than at the normal times is high. Of the pupils in Year 6 in 2003 only 56 per cent were in the school four years earlier. Twelve per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is close to the national average. There are a few pupils with statements of special educational needs.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23637	J Donnelly	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs
9092	R Elam	Lay inspector	
22113	A King	Team inspector	Science Geography History
12116	C Morgan	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology
28200	P Stevens	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Warden hill is a good school with some very good features. All pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching and learning. Standards are above average overall. The leadership and management of the school are good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' achievements are good; pupils of all abilities and gender achieve well in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' relationships with each other are very good and they demonstrate very good levels of confidence and self-esteem.
- Teaching and learning are good overall and always either good or better in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils' social and moral development is very good.
- The relationship between staff and pupils is very good.
- The commitment of staff and very high level of teamwork are strengths of the school.
- The school's promotion of racial harmony is very good.
- Creative writing and innovation in curriculum delivery are areas for improvement.

Since the previous inspection in 1999, the school has made **good** progress. Teaching and learning have improved from satisfactory to good. The headteacher and key staff have successfully addressed the minor weaknesses and issues identified in the previous report.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The pupils achieve well.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	B	B	A
mathematics	B	D	C	C
science	A	B	B	A

*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.*

Standards attained at the end of Year 6 in the 2003 national tests were above average in English and science and average in mathematics. In comparison to similar schools standards are above average overall. Standards are above average in history and geography and average in all other subjects.

Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good. The pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to their learning. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good overall.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good, and as a result pupils learn well. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is better than it is in Years 3 and 4, with more very good and excellent teaching. The best teaching is in the core subjects of English and mathematics. The quality of care and guidance given to pupils and the school's links with parents are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of key staff and governors are good. The leadership of the headteacher is very good and she is ably supported by key staff. The school development plan gives a very clear steer to the improvements needed.

The governance of the school is good. The governors, senior managers and subject leaders have a good knowledge of what works well and what needs improving and they are clearly focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning even further. Teamwork and collaboration between staff are at a very high level. The governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents feel the pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their learning. The pupils have very positive views of the school. They are particularly enthusiastic about their teachers.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of pupil's creative writing.
- Improve innovation in the curriculum.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

The achievement of pupils during their time at school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievements are good; pupils of all abilities, gender and ethnicity and those learning English as an additional language achieve well in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6.
- Standards in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics have been maintained over the past four years and in 2003 were above the national average.
- The provision that the school makes for pupils who speak English as an additional language and special educational needs is very good.

Commentary

1. Pupils' achievement is good overall. Good standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
2. At the end of Year 6 in the 2003 national tests standards were above average in English and science and average in mathematics. There was no difference between the test results of boys and girls. Pupils learning English as an additional language achieve well and in tests many attain the national average. Pupils with learning difficulties achieve very well in relation to their targets. National test results at the end of Year 6 in English and science have remained high over the past two years. The school's results have been improving at a similar rate to the national trend. Standards observed during the inspection were above average overall.
3. In comparison to similar schools standards are above average. Of the pupils in Year 6 in 2003 only 56 per cent of pupils were in the school four years earlier. This is very high mobility, and therefore, pupils do well to achieve as they do. Standards are above average in history and geography and satisfactory in all other foundation subjects.
4. Careful tracking procedures are in place and pupils' progress carefully monitored to ensure that they are not underperforming. The ethnic composition in the school is accurately reflected in the composition of English and mathematics sets. There is an awareness of the particular difficulties some pupils face and strategies are in place for developing pupils' reading comprehension skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1 (28.2)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.4 (25.8)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.8 (29.4)	28.3 (28.6)

There were 85 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and behaviour are **very good**. Attendance and punctuality are **good**. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is **very good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The great majority of pupils behave very well, have very positive attitudes to work and enjoy being at school. This shows an improvement since the last inspection.
- The level of attendance is good and above that of other primary schools.
- The school's provision for social, moral and cultural development leads to very good relationships around the school and between the different cultures.

Commentary

5. Pupils' social development is very good. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to interact with classmates, for example, in group work, paired discussions and when carrying out tasks as class monitors. The pupils in Year 6 have a range of responsibilities around the school. The school council and the appointment of house captains enable pupils of all ages to work together. Their awareness of the wider world is enhanced by inter-school sports matches and by entertaining pensioners and hospice residents. Pupils' relationships with their peers and with adults have improved on the high level at the time of the last inspection. These contribute to the quality of work in lessons and to the progress the pupils make, for example, by giving them the confidence to ask and to answer questions.
6. Pupils' personal development is very good. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into values and beliefs in order to develop their spiritual awareness are good. In lessons seen during the inspection, Year 4 pupils became excited at the opportunity to assess different breads and Year 6 pupils showed fascination at the Fibonacci sequence of numbers. As well as providing a brief time for reflection, school assemblies help pupils to gain a sense of belonging to a whole school community and, each week, to celebrate the contributions and achievements of others. Group discussion time helps pupils to start to appreciate their own worth and to raise their self-esteem. Pupils demonstrate that they can act responsibly when carrying out tasks in the classroom, during meetings of the school council and when prefects supervise others moving round the school.
7. The provision for cultural development is good. Various subjects provide pupils with a fuller understanding of the world around them with, for example, painting and music developing aesthetic awareness. Pupils are starting to appreciate the western cultural background from work on, for example, the Greeks and Tudors in history and European artists and composers. At the same time the school helps them to appreciate the multicultural nature of British society. The school fully uses occasions such as Black History month and different festivals to celebrate diversity effectively. The study of world faiths in religious education helps pupils to appreciate others' practices and beliefs. The school is aware that it is not yet fully using the different cultures in the school and is encouraging parents to talk when appropriate about their way of life. The pupils from a varied range of different cultures mix well with each other and racial harmony is one of the strengths of the school.
8. The pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good, including those with special educational needs. Parents confirm what their children told the inspectors and what was seen during the inspection; the pupils enjoy their lessons. They listen attentively, follow instructions well and settle quickly to different tasks. They are eager to answer questions and are prepared to contribute their ideas. They have confidence in their own abilities and are eager to contribute their ideas. These positive attitudes reflect the good quality of teaching and the variety of interesting activities built into the lessons.
9. Pupils' moral development is very good. The great majority of pupils very behave well in the classroom, at play and lunchtimes. Pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and they are aware of how their behaviour affects others. They are open, well mannered, polite and welcoming to visitors with the inspectors forever being greeted with a cheery 'hello'. The school uses a variety of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour and they are generally used consistently by all the staff. Pupils and parents confirm that any bullying or aggression is rare. The school is very inclusive and works hard to accept pupils that have particular problems or who may have been excluded from other schools. Success does not always come immediately and, as shown below, has led to some fixed period exclusions.

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	251	2	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	13	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	15	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	5	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	22	3	0
Black or Black British – African	14	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	13	0	0

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

Attendance

10. The level of attendance has improved since the last inspection. Absences are mainly due to medical reasons but some families insist on taking holidays during term time. Punctuality is generally good. Pupils are rarely late in the mornings and then usually by only a few minutes. The effective procedures in the morning result in the pupils settling quickly ensuring a prompt start to the day. The school's arrangements for monitoring the registers are satisfactory.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.5	School data	0.3
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching is good and as a result pupils learn well. The curriculum and the links with parents are good. The school makes good provision for the welfare, health and safety of pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

The quality of teaching and learning is good and as a result pupils achieve well. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is better than it is in Years 3 and 4 with more very good and excellent teaching. The best teaching is in English and mathematics.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching overall in Year 6 in mathematics and science.

- Very good relationships between staff and pupils.
- Very good assessment procedures and progress in learning for pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language.
- Good assessment used effectively to meet the needs of all pupils, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Not all lessons are designed to challenge higher attaining pupils effectively.
- Not enough variety of teaching techniques in 'booster' group lessons in English to promote effective learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
3 (10%)	10 (33%)	15 (50%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	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.

11. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, with very good teaching generally in Year 6, especially in mathematics and science and some excellent teaching in mathematics. The staff have a good knowledge and understanding overall of the subjects in the National Curriculum; they plan well, with good regard to pupil's previous learning. For example, this is particularly good in mathematics 'sets' in Year 6 where the pupils' needs are well met through the support that is planned for them and which means they are learning the basic skills of numeracy effectively. Lessons are generally engaging and motivate the pupils effectively especially in science, leading to good learning; pupils apply themselves well and make good progress because they are interested. The opportunities for collaborative learning are good; the pupils are encouraged to work together and share their ideas and discuss their findings. In English, although the National Literacy Strategy is used correctly, there is too much direction for the pupils and this inhibits their opportunities to write creatively. However, in science, the lessons are planned to ensure there are good opportunities for the pupils to record their findings and observations independently. This is also true in history and geography.
12. There are high expectations for what the pupils are to learn and challenge in learning is well promoted in most lessons, although there are some exceptions, such as in a Year 3 lesson in history and also to a certain extent in science. Nevertheless, teaching methods are good overall, with a good practical approach to learning, especially in mathematics and science and also in history. For example, the pupils are encouraged to find out about topics, research these and then feed back to the rest of the group or to other classes; this type of work is sometimes set as homework. Resources are well used and prepared for lessons, although sometimes the range or amount is not sufficient to inspire the pupils' in their learning. Lessons are well paced and there are high expectations for behaviour, although sometimes in Year 3 there are not enough successful strategies to deal with more challenging behaviour.
13. Support assistants are well deployed and they help the pupils, especially to support those with special educational needs or those learning English as an additional language. There are very good levels of inclusion in the school and this is reflected in lessons where all pupils are expected to be active participants in the range of activities provided. The pupils identified as having special educational needs or learning English as an additional language make very good progress and many attain as well as their peers, because their needs are met very effectively. Lessons are planned to take account of their specific needs, for example sometimes pupils work in mixed ability groups to share their ideas, enhance their speaking and listening skills and promote good personal and social behaviour, with good respect for others. If the pupil's needs are specific or complex they receive one-to-one support to ensure they are on task, listen and understand what is expected of them.

Example of outstanding practice

An excellent mathematics lesson in a Year 6 higher ability 'set', using the computer suite in the school, resulted in excellent challenge to pupils' thinking.

The lesson to solve mathematics problems or puzzles was introduced by a very lively mental arithmetic session, where the pupils were very attentive. Planning was excellent, especially for the higher achieving pupils. The pupils responded extremely well and used their computer skills at a high level to study Internet

examples of common patterns in numbers. This meant the pupils practised dividing each number by its predecessor and then extended their work to dividing decimals. Throughout the lesson the teacher showed her excellent subject knowledge and understanding of mathematics and the excellent plenary session consolidated the learning gained.

14. Assessment procedures and how this information is used to inform future teaching and learning are good in English, mathematics and science. These are very good in assessing the progress made by pupils with special educational needs or those learning English as an additional language. The assessment procedures are appropriate in other subjects of the curriculum and there are plans to develop these further in future. Work is marked regularly; marking is good in science with good comments from staff to evaluate pupils' work and encourage them to think and question their findings. Marking is satisfactory in mathematics, with some good examples of effective support for pupils' learning in English in Year 5 and 6. Results in national tests are used well to inform and judge pupils' progress from their attainment on entry from Year 3 onwards, for example pupils' answers in science tests are analysed to assess what areas of their learning need to be developed. Individual targets are set for literacy and numeracy, which the pupils are aware of and they understand what they need to do next in their learning. There has been good progress since previous inspection, especially in teaching information and communication technology.

The curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is inclusive by being planned well to meet pupils' diverse needs.
- The curriculum enables pupils to achieve well in most subjects and promotes high standards.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- The school makes good use of opportunities to extend learning through activities and resources outside the classroom.
- There is little curriculum innovation in English.
- Some aspects of accommodation are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

15. The school plans a rich curriculum, which successfully balances establishing skills, knowledge and understanding with opportunities for investigation. This enables pupils to achieve well. For example, they carry out many experiments in science and undertake open-ended investigations into number patterns. Whole school planning provides a strong basis for teachers to meet together as teams to ensure that all classes in a year group cover the statutory curriculum. Setting of pupils for English and mathematics enables teachers to adapt the curriculum to cater for different abilities. For example, pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language use many visual and tactile resources to learn.
16. Provision for pupils with special needs is very good and meets statutory requirements.
17. Provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good. The school has a strong commitment to inclusiveness. Staff are very aware not only of the needs of bilingual pupils but of the advantages of bilingualism. The kaleidoscope of cultures and languages within the school is celebrated and members of the local community come into the school regularly. Library resources and displays reflect the linguistic and cultural diversity of the school and the wider community.
18. The curriculum is very inclusive. For example, within English and mathematics sets, teachers often provide at least three different levels of work. However, in English, lessons tend to follow a set pattern rather than responding to pupils. Consequently, some involve long periods of listening, which restrict opportunities for extended writing. There is also little drama to capture the interest of pupils who find writing difficult.
19. Pupils enjoy a wide number of opportunities to learn outside lesson time. There is a good number of clubs that cater for musical, sporting and other interests. Year groups make at least two visits to places, which extend the pupils' understanding in geography, history and science. Two very worthwhile residential courses take place in Years 5 and 6. The school welcomes many visitors such as theatre groups and a number of people to celebrate Black History Month. Year 6 has taken responsibility to organise a very enjoyable mathematics workshop for Years 2 and 3. There is a very good programme of instrumental learning provided by peripatetic teachers, which benefits a large number of pupils.
20. There is a good amount of space indoors and outdoors for learning, apart from the library. However, the building is not aesthetically pleasing and the grounds are untidy, with an accumulation of litter. Accommodation for staff is cramped and some of the resources are outdated. The pupils' toilet areas are very unpleasant and detract from the otherwise higher standards elsewhere.

Care, guidance and support

The arrangements for pupils' care, welfare and health and safety are **good** overall and support pupils' learning appropriately. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is **satisfactory**. The involvement of pupils in the school's work through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils trust the teachers and other staff and know there is always someone to whom they can turn.
- The school provides a variety of opportunities for pupils to express opinions about life in the school.
- The school has good arrangements to enable new pupils to settle in.

Commentary

21. Since the last inspection the school has made considerable improvements to the procedures to ensure the welfare of the pupils. The governors are actively involved in touring the school to identify any potential hazards. Various risk assessments are in place for many of the subject areas and for visits out. During the inspection, some excellent examples of risk assessments were seen in the lesson plans and teachers made sure that pupils understood how to work safely in lessons such as science and design and technology. The school follows the local procedures for child protection effectively and staff have received guidance on how to deal with any concerns that may arise. The arrangements for first aid are good with

many trained staff and records are kept of treatment given and letters sent to parents after minor accidents.

22. As at the time of the previous inspection, staff show good concern for the needs of the pupils and provide good role models to encourage development. Parents are pleased with the level of support in the school, seeing it as a caring community where staff are approachable if there are any problems. In particular, parents agreed that their children are well supported when they first come into the school either into Reception or if they arrive in other years. This is because of the good links with the adjoining infants school and the arrangements for the Year 3 pupils to work with Year 5 pupils so that they have a friendly face when they arrive at the start of Year 3. New pupils who arrive at other times are provided with a 'buddy' to help them settle. Pupils consider that they are supported very well by the staff and know whom they would go to if they needed help. They also consider that the teachers listen to their ideas. Pupils are enabled to influence what happens in the school by means of the school council. Innovations they have introduced are a redesign of the playground and new equipment. They also decide on different means of raising money for charities.
23. Monitoring pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics makes a satisfactory contribution to raising pupils' achievement. Each half term the teachers set targets for each group of pupils. The teachers' assessments are used to move pupils between sets and groups and to determine where there may be gaps in the pupils' understanding. However the teachers' approach to marking is not consistent across all year groups. It is good in Years 5 and 6 where the comments provide good guidance to the pupils on how to improve. It is less well used in Years 3 and 4. The monitoring of progress in the subjects other than English and mathematics generally lacks a structured approach to providing guidance to help pupils improve. The school also relies on teachers' own knowledge of the pupils' personal development as opposed to formal written records.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good** overall. Links with the local community and other schools are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- The parents' support at home and in school makes a good contribution to pupils' achievement.
- The school provides a wide range of information about what happens in school.

Commentary

24. In their high response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and at the meeting, parents showed that they are pleased with what the school provides. They say that their children like school, the staff expect their children to work hard and the children make good progress. A few parents consider they are not well informed about their children's progress and, though the arrangements are generally good, the inspectors conclude that there is some inconsistency in the annual progress reports. Some parents are concerned about the arrangements for homework, but the inspectors conclude that the school's provision is generally good.
25. The school sends home regular news and other letters about general matters and, each term, an outline of what is to be taught in each year group. In addition, separate leaflets suggest how parents can work with their children in mathematics. Teachers are on duty and readily available in the playground at the start of the day and parents are also welcome to see them after school. Parents meet the class teachers formally each term. Parents of pupils who need extra support also meet staff on many other occasions. The annual reports on progress are sent home in the summer term and the sections on English and mathematics provide a good summary of what the pupils know and can do.
26. Pupils confirm that their parents usually insist on the homework being completed. Nearly all parents either come to the consultation evenings with the teachers or meet them shortly afterwards. The Friends' Association works hard to successfully organise both fund raising and social events. Some parents help regularly in the classroom and with after school activities and many more accompany trips out. Last year the school sent out its own questionnaire to enable parents to be actively involved in helping to formulate school policies.

27. The school has satisfactory links with other schools and the community at large helping to broaden the experiences for pupils' personal, social and academic development. The pupils' sporting skills are enhanced by the competitions with other schools. The curriculum is enhanced by the range of visitors such as poets, police and different religious groups and by trips out to places in the local area and further afield, such as to museums and residential journeys for both Years 5 and 6. The links with the infants' school ensure that pupils settle in quickly when they first arrive. Contacts at the secondary level also help to smooth the transfer of pupils at the end of Year 6 as well as providing staff expertise, for example, as learning mentors. Nevertheless, curriculum co-ordinators do not normally meet to discuss continuity of the subject teaching, nor are there regular opportunities for discussions with staff in other junior or primary schools to share expertise.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are **good** with some very good features. The governance of the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Communication and teamwork within the school is very good.
- Leadership and vision by the headteacher is very good.
- The governors fulfil their roles very well.
- Spending decisions are clearly linked to academic standards and financial controls are good.
- There is insufficient evaluation of and innovation in, the curriculum.
- Very good provision for special educational needs and for pupils whose first language is not English.

Commentary

28. Both the headteacher and governors have worked hard and been successful in addressing the issues from the previous inspection and in managing quite significant demographic changes in the school's intake in recent years. The leadership by the headteacher is very good. The leadership style of the headteacher has been described as 'subtle but compelling' and she has certainly been effective in welding together a team of like minded and committed teachers who share her vision of a successful multi-ethnic school. The headteacher puts great stress on the importance of consultation; as a result communication issues at the time of the last inspection have been effectively dealt with. All staff now work together as a mutually supportive team.
29. Since her appointment, the headteacher has made regular appointments of good classroom practitioners who have then been nurtured and encouraged into management roles. An effective balance between the needs of the school and the professional development needs of individual staff has resulted in a deputy head and curriculum co-ordinators who are strong and effective leaders and managers who set a good example by the quality of their own teaching. There is a constant striving for improvement and most teachers are reflective and keen to refine their practice.
30. The school was a pilot school for the National Numeracy Project so work in numeracy developed fairly quickly. However, the evaluation and modification of the National Literacy Strategy is proceeding at a slower pace and is holding back the development of pupils' advanced reading and writing skills. Equally, the movement away from strict adherence to government guidelines in other subjects is slower. The school has yet to grasp opportunities for innovative development of other subject schemes of work and attendant assessment procedures although the school is currently involved in a project to develop awareness of the different ways in which pupils learn.
31. A quick response to change has occurred in the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and for the growing numbers of pupils whose first language is not English. Many of the latter come into the school at a fairly late stage of their primary education and the school has established effective systems for assessing and managing their needs.
32. The management of provision for pupils whose first language is not English is very good. The co-ordinator is committed and knowledgeable. The provision is constantly adapted in the light of demographic changes, which are altering the intake of the school. The co-ordinator is responsive in devising initiatives

designed to raise staff consciousness of ways in which they can adapt their teaching. She is active in monitoring the effectiveness of support.

33. Resulting budgetary demands, such as the need to employ more support staff, are carefully evaluated. The school has gained an 'Investors in People' award which reflects the importance it places on all members of staff. Extending performance management to all staff has been effective in maximizing the potential of other members of the school community. However, despite recent spending on the building, the school premises and grounds are poorly maintained and cared for. This gives an adverse impression to a school, which in all other respects is striving for excellence.
34. The governors are effective, not only in their support for the school and the expertise they bring to their role, but also in the way they challenge and question. They maintain a very visible presence in the school and work constantly with the senior management team to maintain a focus on achievement. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are keen to help it move forward. The governors are closely involved in monitoring the budget and with strategic planning through the school development plan. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The current school development plan is a very useful document, with clear overarching priorities maintaining a joint emphasis on the learning environment and on raising achievement. The governors have a clear perception of the way major spending decisions, such as the creation of the library and ICT suite, should have an impact on standards. They ensure that the school complies fully with statutory requirements.
35. The school has developed whole school procedures for the analysis of performance data and this is the stimulus for intervention programmes. Both the teachers and governors are well aware of how the school is performing in relation to other local schools and to the national picture. There is a clear commitment to continued improvement. The school provides good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	851,706
Total expenditure	907,832
Expenditure per pupil	2,654

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	12,000
Balance carried forward to the next	14,000

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- Assessment data is used well to target specific groups of pupils.
- There is good teaching of basic skills.
- There has been too little modification of the National Literacy Strategy.
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to consolidate their writing skills and to develop their higher order reading skills.

Commentary

36. All pupils achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English. In the 2003 national tests standards attained were above average and above average in comparison to similar schools. Pupils throughout the school have good speaking and listening skills. They are articulate, have a good general knowledge and contribute well to classroom discussions. The teaching of basic skills has improved since the last inspection and pupils' spelling, sentence structure, punctuation and handwriting are now good. These factors form a good basis for pupils' achievement and evidence from the inspection indicates that standards are above average overall.
37. However, the extent to which this good grounding is built on is more limited; in both reading and writing pupils' more advanced skills are not sufficiently developed. While pupils have a very secure understanding of what they need to do to achieve the higher level in national tests, the analysis of work indicates that they are given too few opportunities to write independently and to transfer their good basic skills and vocabulary into extended pieces of writing. Equally, although pupils of all abilities read fluently and use a wide range of strategies to tackle unfamiliar text, they lack a wide knowledge of a range of authors and are unfamiliar with different literary genres. They are keen readers and enthusiastic about the books they read for pleasure at home but are not motivated by the group readers, which the school provides. There is a focus in literacy lessons on using extracts from children's literature for close textual analysis but very little on reading whole books by major children's authors or in comparing and contrasting different writers.
38. There is an appropriate focus on developing pupils' writing and the school takes a very structured approach to this. A dedicated weekly writing session is systematically prepared for in preceding lessons where pupils look at the key elements in considerable detail. As a result, it has been very successful in establishing the essential foundations for pupils to write for a variety of purposes. Although the school has identified writing as an area for development, this very structured approach limits the amount of time pupils actually spend writing and is an inhibiting factor on pupils' creativity and self-expression.
39. The school has been slower than some in evaluating and modifying the structure of the National Literacy Strategy. The incorporation of guided reading into the literacy hour limits the opportunities for in depth exploration and appreciation of a wide range of children's literature. In Year 3, in particular, the close adherence to the fragmented structure of the original literacy hour format results in lessons not having a clear focus, with follow up activities which are not related to the main learning objective. For example, pupils were engaged in 'guided' reading without adult supervision and no pupil had time to write at any length.
40. Although the school provides additional support for pupils through 'booster groups', the content of these lessons is largely an extension of work done in class rather than a more tangential approach, which explores different ways of developing and enhancing pupils' writing. The school's setting procedures for English are effective in ensuring that pupils work in smaller groups and can receive more individual attention. The content of the curriculum for all sets is very similar and there is little qualitative difference in the tasks for higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. The school is diligent in evaluating the potential of pupils whose first language is not English and they are represented across the ability range. As a result they make very good progress.

41. The quality of teaching is good overall. Very good relationships underpin learning in lessons and pupils are encouraged to work collaboratively. Teachers' questioning is effective in assessing what pupils know and understand and good opportunities are provided for discussion. A very good marking sheet in Years 5 and 6 provides pupils with a detailed evaluation of their work and indicates what they need to do to improve. Lessons and resources are carefully prepared and most lessons proceed at a brisk pace.
42. The management of English is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and committed and sets a good example through the quality of her own teaching. She has undertaken some monitoring of teaching and learning across the school but this is an area for development. Resources are satisfactory overall, but there is a lack of sets of good quality children's literature.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

43. Pupils have regular opportunities for independent extended writing in other areas of the curriculum. School visits such as the Year 5 visit to York, provide a stimulus for report writing. However, the potential of using material from history, geography and science topics as a focus for work in the literacy hour has yet to be developed. Pupils bring a good general knowledge and wide vocabulary to discussions in other curriculum areas.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' attainment is above average.
- The pupils achieve well.
- Leadership and management of the subject are good.
- The quality of teaching and learning are good.
- Support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to achieve well.
- The quality of the curriculum is good.
- Systems for assessment and their use are good.

Commentary

44. The pupils achieve well, which is a good improvement since the last inspection. In the 2003 national tests standards overall were above average. Most pupils add and subtract decimals to thousandths. They understand equivalence of decimals, fractions and percentages and apply them to money and measures. Pupils calculate angles in relation to two-dimensional shapes. The more able handle advanced work on symmetry. The broad curriculum provides a good foundation for raising attainment. This includes a wide variety of opportunities to carry out investigations. In Year 4, for example, pupils have designed gardens calculating areas and costs. Those in Year 6 have extended their learning through exploring the patterns in nature that are associated with the Fibonacci series.
45. Good teaching creates very positive attitudes in pupils so that they learn through hard work. Some lessons are either very good or excellent. The school organises pupils into sets according to their ability in order to meet their different needs. This benefits all pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs, or for whom English is a second language, achieve well in sets with small numbers. This is partly because learning assistants work with very small groups within the set. For example, they assist pupils in interpreting questions. In addition, there are further arrangements both to develop pupils' understanding and to boost their confidence where necessary. For example, a small group of able pupils in Year 6 tackled high level work by discussing different forms of average. The interest generated by teachers enables pupils to learn increasingly independently and to collaborate well with one another. This is particularly evident in lessons where pupils use computers both to develop mathematical skills such as using a protractor and to learn about real applications of mathematics using the Internet.
46. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is a very good role model. She generates enthusiasm and teamwork in teachers and pupils. She thoroughly plans and monitors the subject's

development but does not have enough release from the classroom to influence teaching. Teachers make good use of systematic assessment of pupils' attainments to plan learning.

Mathematics across the curriculum

47. There are missed opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening by encouraging them not only to answer questions using sentences but also to explain their mental methods. However, pupils' science occasionally involves mathematics as when investigating soils. Teachers make good use of computers to teach new skills.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Above average standards in science by the time the pupils leave Year 6.
- Good teaching overall and the pupils achieve well.
- Good independent recording of scientific investigations.
- Pupils have secure knowledge and understanding in science.

Commentary

48. The standards in science by the time the pupils leave Year 6 are above average. All pupils, including those who are learning English as an additional language and those who have been identified as having special educational needs, achieve well. Standards have been sustained since the previous inspection when standards were also judged as above average. In the 2003 national tests standards were above average and in comparison to similar schools above average overall. The pupils come into the school with attainment that is about average. There is a high degree of mobility in the school population, with pupils being admitted at various times, some transferring from other schools, but the majority arriving in school with limited English and little previous experience of schooling. There is no significant difference in the standards in science between boys and girls.
49. There is good quality teaching and learning overall in science, with some very good teaching in Year 6, which means the pupils, make good and sometimes very good progress and achieve well. Very good teaching is very well matched to the range of needs in the class, with very clear objectives for what the pupils are to learn and a very good approach, which means they are treated as equals and behave in a very mature and responsible way. Good teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge and understanding of science, which is imparted, clearly to the pupils' with well-planned lessons. There is a good degree of organisation, the staff use the resources available to them well, are well-prepared and manage the pupils and any support staff well. However, a Year 3 lesson in science whilst satisfactory did not challenge the pupils sufficiently and did not set a good pace, or a good range of practical work for the pupils. Nevertheless, there are generally high expectations for behaviour and also the standards the pupils can achieve and assessment is used well to inform what the pupils are to do next and what they are to learn in follow-up lessons. Sometimes notes are not always made of the pupils' responses and learning in science. Although there is some use of ICT in science, for example there is a digital microscope, which can be used, these types of activities are not always planned in lessons.
50. There are good opportunities provided for the pupils to independently record their scientific observations from their investigative work. The pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding in science, due to the good practical approach to their learning, which the staff provides. There is now a good emphasis on applying previously learned scientific knowledge and understanding, to create 'fair testing' and to develop the pupils' ideas. This is based on the co-ordinator's in-depth analysis of responses to questions in national tests. Co-ordination, leadership and management of science are good, with a clear view of the standards the pupils achieve. There is a cohesive approach to planning within year groups, which ensures good continuity of learning and the planning for all year groups is monitored to ensure progression. Some teaching has been observed and pupils' work analysed, but this is not judged against National Curriculum levels as yet and these are areas of monitoring of science, that are yet to be developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have been maintained and are average at the end of Year 6.
- Improved development in planning and organisation has enabled teachers to develop the full breadth of pupils' ICT skills and understanding.
- Achievement is good overall.
- Good teaching, new equipment and improved facilities have enhanced the overall development of ICT.
- Some teachers have had insufficient training in ICT, particularly in the use of new software to support subject areas.

Commentary

51. Standards of attainment of pupils throughout the school are in line with national averages, as they were at the last inspection. The pupils achieve well. The good management and organisation of the subject have improved the provision since the last inspection and ensured support and guidance has been given to colleagues to enable them to gain confidence and improve their skills.
52. A good policy and scheme of work addresses the National Curriculum requirements and provides a good framework for teachers to work from. The new computer suite is now used well. Interactive whiteboards have been ordered and extra staff training has been planned. In addition, each classroom is equipped with a relatively new computer and a range of relevant software.
53. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well and make good progress towards targets in their individual education plans because of structured support and careful planning to meet individual needs.
54. Pupils in Year 3 use a paint program to support their work in literacy. Their mouse skills are good and higher attaining pupils use the keyboard to write sentences about their work. Teaching encourages discussion and pair work so that pupils are able to explain clearly the functions of different parts of the program and their advantages. Pupils' work shows they can use simple editing techniques in word processing programs, for example cut and paste and they use the mouse skilfully to put words in the right order and to assemble sentences. Higher attaining pupils produce simple, beautifully presented stories, making very good use of different fonts, sizes and colour.
55. At the end of Year 6, pupils have developed and extended their learning and achievement is good overall. They have a good understanding about which everyday items incorporate a microchip and about how ICT can be used to improve our everyday lives. Other pupils interrogate databases using search and sort facilities and they recognise the powerful advantages of using ICT to find, select and organise information quickly and accurately. All pupils enjoy ICT and older pupils are enthusiastic users of the Internet and web sites to support their work.
56. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned. They build securely on what pupils already know and the learning objectives are shared with pupils. As a result, pupils are well motivated and keen to learn and their behaviour is good. Lessons in the computer suite are generally well organised and managed and, consequently, resources are well used. There is a well-planned curriculum and, therefore, pupils are being progressively taught skills.
57. The co-ordinator manages the subject effectively and is aware of the areas of strength and weakness in the subject. The development plan for ICT is clear and highly appropriate. The range of software available to support work across the curriculum is satisfactory and developing. The school is aware that more training is needed in ICT for staff particularly as new resources become available, for example the interactive whiteboards and broadband.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

58. The use of ICT in subject areas is developing well and teachers use ICT to support their learning in mathematics, for example in databases and producing graphs, in art and design in the exploration of art

packages, in design and technology in simple modelling and designing sandwiches and in English in the presentation of work. The school recognises that more needs to be done in mapping ICT across the curriculum, developing cross-curricular links and in developing teachers' web site knowledge. The new interactive whiteboards, once training has been completed, will be a very useful resource to the development of ICT across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

59. Only a few lessons were observed in **history** and **geography** so, as sampled subjects, no judgement can be made about provision. From discussions with pupils and samples of their work the standards in both subjects are judged as good overall at the end of Year 6. The pupils achieve well, including those who are learning English as an additional language and those who have been identified as having special educational needs. The pupils are encouraged to record their observations independently and to use skills in research and making comparisons to draw conclusions. The curriculum for **history** is well balanced with a good range of topics for example on the Romans, Egyptians and Greeks, combined with studies of more recent history in the fifties, sixties and seventies, a study of World War II and also of the Victorians. The **geography** plans cover the environment, weather and climates and making comparative studies for example, between Luton and York. The older pupils study river routes, for instance tracking the River Lea from Luton until it reaches the Thames. There is good use of the local area to support this work; some topics such as the study of York lend themselves to reinforcing work in both subjects. The pupils' work is usually well-presented, has good coverage and detail and links effectively with work in science, literacy and numeracy, using charts graphs etc. to record findings for example, about the water cycle. Both subjects are managed effectively, some monitoring of planning and pupils' work has been undertaken, but observation of teaching is not developed fully as yet. Resources are adequate, but some, for example for map work in geography are in need of updating and renewal.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are learning about religions but opportunities for reflection are sometimes missed.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning.
- Inconsistency in some teachers' subject knowledge. The assessment procedures for the subject are underdeveloped.

Commentary

60. Standards of attainment seen during the inspection were in line with the expected levels for pupils at the end of Year 6. Analysis of work indicates that pupils' achievement is satisfactory throughout the school and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The locally agreed syllabus is used well and religious education is taught regularly. The units of work for teaching have meant that there are good opportunities for pupils to learn about and reflect upon a variety of religions systemically.
61. Teaching in the few lessons observed is satisfactory overall. In a good lesson observed, the teachers' sound subject knowledge and good questioning skills were effective in ensuring most pupils reflected on their feelings. They said that they felt happy when nice things were said about them and that nasty things made them "feel sad inside". Work scrutiny indicates that this level of teacher subject knowledge is not always the case and where it is lower it affects the consistent teaching and learning in this subject, especially for younger pupils. Some pupils' language skills across the school limit their ability to discuss subjects beyond responding to simple questioning and limits their ability to express their inner thoughts and feelings. The emphasis in teachers' planning on writing has limited the opportunities for teachers to teach key vocabulary and for pupils to extend speaking and listening skills by expressing themselves more in lessons. Pupil attitudes to learning are good. They are keen to listen and work well either in collaboration with others or independently.
62. An interview of a representative number of pupils took place as well as a scrutiny of their work. Pupils show they have a sound knowledge of the Bible and of Christian beliefs about Jesus and what he taught.

They have a good knowledge and understanding of Christian practices and of what is to be found in a church. Pupils' awareness of other faiths and practices is satisfactory, but they fully understand symbolism in religion. However, they rarely ask questions and have little understanding of the relevance of religion to people's lives.

63. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory in the light of the school priorities in English, mathematics and science. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
64. The school fulfils its legal requirements for collective worship.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

65. These subjects were sampled so no judgements about provision can be made.
66. There is too little evidence to make secure judgements about standards in **music**. It was only possible to observe one lesson in Year 6. However, singing and instrumental performances were inspected in assemblies. It is evident that music is a vital part of school life. Pupils thoroughly enjoy opportunities to sing and the quality of performance is above average, being strong, very rhythmic and well in tune. There was no evidence, however, of singing in more than one part. Very many pupils take advantage of the broad opportunities to learn orchestral instruments. They perform confidently in front of an audience and some achieve well for their age, including talented trumpeters and drummers. The curriculum is well thought out and the co-ordinator has worked with staff to provide activities that can be taught by non-specialists. The school welcomes musicians of a high calibre to perform to pupils, such as players and dancers of Irish music. This teaches them a great deal about other cultures.
67. In **art and design** only one lesson was observed during the inspection but scrutiny of planning, the school's portfolio of displays and work around the school would suggest that attainment is at least average across the school. The co-ordinator has done a great deal in recent years to raise the profile of art in the school and art is used well to support learning in other areas of the curriculum. The scheme of work is an amalgam of good ideas from a variety of sources and ensures that specific skills are built on as pupils move through the school. All aspects of the curriculum are covered, including textiles, three-dimensional work and painting. Teachers are confident in teaching the subject and pupils are enthusiastic.
68. Only one lesson was observed in **design and technology** but it is clear from teachers' planning that all aspects of the curriculum are covered. There are good cross curricular links with other subjects. For example Year 3 pupils designed and constructed Roman chariots in connection with their history topic. Information and communication technology is beginning to be incorporated into design and technology projects. For example Year 5 pupils designed, made and powered controllable wheeled vehicles. There is good evidence that pupils evaluate and modify their work in the light of specific design criteria.
69. Only one lesson was observed in **physical education**. Standards in this games lesson in Year 6 were average and pupils achieved satisfactorily. Pupils worked in groups co-operatively to develop a variety of sequences and follow given skills training. Pupils evaluate each other's work and make suggestions for improvement. Pupils work with enthusiasm as a result of the teacher's high expectations. The school has a vigorous programme of swimming in Years 3-6 and competitive sport and after-school clubs. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

70. The programme for personal, social and health education satisfies the requirements of the National Curriculum. It properly covers sex and drugs education. It also includes discussions about various aspects of citizenship. Pupils' awareness of the need to work and play well together develops through such vehicles as the school council. Moreover, pupils take on a number of responsibilities such as being reading buddies to infants. Citizenship in the wider community develops through listening to people in a variety of jobs and organising ways to support charities.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

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