

INSPECTION REPORT

BEAUDESERT LOWER SCHOOL

Leighton Buzzard

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number:109466

Headteacher: Mrs P Tiffen

Lead inspector: Mr T Elston

Dates of inspection: 21st - 23rd June 2005

Inspection number: 266388

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 4-9 Years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 211

School address: Appenine Way
Leighton Buzzard
Bedfordshire
Postcode: LU7 3DX

Telephone number: 01525 373019
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr S Verrier

Date of previous inspection: July 7th 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is an average size school with 211 pupils aged four to nine. Numbers have fallen steadily since 2000 when there were over 300 pupils on the school's roll. Just over eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is lower than in most schools. The school mostly takes pupils from families living in privately owned homes but there are an increasing number of pupils from deprived areas of the town. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or speak English as an additional language. Around 22 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, mostly with moderate learning difficulties, and three of these have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. These are the sorts of percentages found nationally. The attainment of children on entry to the school is broadly average, although over the past two years an increasing number of children have come into school with poor language and social skills.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20704	Terry Elston	Lead inspector	English, science, music, provision for pupils with special educational needs.
19693	Sally Hall	Lay inspector	
31192	John Stewart	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT), art and design, design and technology, physical education.
21334	Savi Ramnath	Team inspector	History, geography, religious education, provision for pupils with English as an additional language, provision for children in the Foundation Stage.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school where the good leadership, management and teaching explain why pupils achieve well. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by Year 4. The very good support and guidance make this a happy school where pupils behave very well and enjoy learning. There are very good links with parents who speak highly of the good quality of education. The funds are managed efficiently and the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- Pupils achieve well, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science
- The very good leadership of the headteacher has played an important role in raising standards
- Pupils' social development is outstanding
- The school has developed very good links with parents
- The teaching is good and pupils learn quickly
- In writing, not enough of the more able pupils attain the high standards of which they are capable by Year 4

The school has done well since the last inspection, and has rectified the main weaknesses in the curriculum, teaching and role of subject leaders. Standards are higher in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT), and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved a lot.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
Reading	E	A	D	D
Writing	E	A	B	A
Mathematics	E	B	C	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals.*

In the 2004 national tests, pupils did very well in writing but standards in reading and mathematics were below those of similar schools. This group of pupils included a higher proportion with special educational needs compared with previous years, and they achieved well to attain these standards. The upward trend in the results was above that found nationally and illustrates how well the school is improving. Standards continue to improve, and this inspection finds that **pupils' achievements are good**. Children make a good start in the Reception class; most are achieving the expected goals in all areas and are exceeding them in personal, social and emotional development, reading and number work. By Year 2, standards are average in mathematics, writing, speaking and listening, ICT and religious education. In reading, standards are well above average. Pupils maintain this good progress and achieve well by Year 4. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and average in religious education and ICT. Again, standards in reading are a significant strength. In writing, while nearly all pupils attain expected levels by Year 4, few of those more able pupils who did so well in their National Tests two years ago have made the expected progress. This is because they do not have enough opportunities to write long pieces of work to develop their skills to the full, either in English or other subjects. There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about other subjects,

although it is clear that pupils do well in physical education, especially swimming and competitive sports, and many sing and play musical instruments to a high standard. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress and benefit from good support and individual attention.

The development of pupils' personal qualities is very good. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good** and is illustrated by their deep concern for the feelings of others, very good behaviour and excellent social skills. Attendance is well above the national average, but too many pupils are brought to school late in the mornings and miss an important start to the day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good.

The teaching and learning are good, and account for pupils' good achievements by Year 4. The teaching of reading is very good throughout the school, which is why pupils do so well.

In the Reception, adults have a good knowledge of the needs of young children and provide work that is challenging and enjoyable. There is a good mix of activities directed by the teacher and those chosen by the children. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 benefit from good teaching and make good progress. The school has recently introduced an exciting way to teach reading to younger pupils and it works very well. In Years 3 and 4, teachers generally have high expectations of pupils' work and they strive hard to meet them. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well and this makes the most of their time in lessons. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is good, and they make good progress. The school has good assessment systems to show how well pupils are learning and what they need to do to improve. The curriculum is planned well and provides teachers with a good basis for their lessons. A very good range of activities after school and at lunchtime does much to enrich the curriculum. The school is well staffed by knowledgeable teachers and teaching assistants. Resources are satisfactory. Pupils are cared for well, and the very good guidance and support help them feel secure. There is a very good partnership with parents and good links with the community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are good, overall. The headteacher's leadership is very good. She has a very sharp awareness of how to raise standards of teaching and learning and is very well respected by staff and parents. The headteacher is supported well by other key staff who play an important part in the running of the school. The management is good and the school runs smoothly. The governance is good by a knowledgeable and hard working governing body.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are very positive. They are particularly pleased with their children's progress, the very caring ethos of the school and the headteacher's leadership. The pupils think the world of their school and feel that they do well.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve still further is

- Improve the achievements of more able pupils in writing

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are good, overall, and very good in reading.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading are well above average throughout the school
- Overall standards have improved significantly since the last inspection
- More able pupils in Year 4 have made slow progress since Year 2
- Improvements in the teaching of experimental work have made a big difference to standards in science
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well as a result of the good support in lessons

Commentary

Key Stage 1

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.2 (17.0)	15.7 (15.8)
Writing	15.9 (16.9)	14.6 (14.4)
Mathematics	16.0 (17.2)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

1. The analysis of pupils' national test results in 2004 shows that standards in Year 2 were below the national average in reading, average in writing and above average in mathematics. Compared with pupils from similar schools, the results were below average in reading and mathematics but well above average in writing. Although these pupils performed below the levels of the previous year's group, the high proportion of those with special educational needs meant that achievement was satisfactory, overall, and very good in writing. In the teachers' assessments for science, standards were well below average, mainly because of the shortage of pupils who attained the higher levels. The school's results are improving over time, and above the rate found nationally. Boys and girls achieved equally well, as did those from different ethnic groups and with English as an additional language.
2. Children enter the Foundation Stage at average levels of attainment, overall, but a significant number have weak language and social skills. All, including those with special educational needs, achieve well because of the good teaching and make good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most are achieving the expected goals in all areas and are exceeding them in personal, social and emotional development, early reading skills and number work.
3. Standards by Year 2 continue to improve and, overall, pupils achieve well. In English, standards are average in speaking and listening and writing, and well above average in reading as the result of the school's wholehearted approach to teaching phonics using a new, exciting programme. Standards are average in mathematics, and above average in science where the extra emphasis on experimental work has led to very good improvements in the quality of pupils' understanding. In ICT and religious education, pupils' work is at the expected levels.

4. By Year 4, standards are above average in English, overall, but well above average in reading. In writing, while nearly all pupils attain the expected levels, few of the more able pupils have made the sort of progress expected after their excellent national test results two years ago. Standards are above average in mathematics and science and average in ICT and religious education. No judgements are made about standards in other subjects because there is insufficient evidence. These standards represent good achievement and a significant improvement on those found at the time of the last inspection.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well and make good progress towards their targets. Their reading skills progress very well as the result of good assessment of their needs and well-focussed support by teachers and teaching assistants.
6. Pupils with English as an additional language benefit from good support and make good progress, especially in their use and understanding of English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance is very good but punctuality is unsatisfactory. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's excellent provision for social development helps pupils become confident and mature
- Pupils love coming to school and absent rates are low
- Pupils are very enthusiastic about their work and other activities
- Pupils respond very well to the school's strong moral code
- Staff work hard to ensure that pupils are aware of the rich diversity of other cultures
- Too many parents are not bringing their children to school on time

Commentary

7. The school's excellent provision for pupils' social development means that they develop into independent and thoughtful members of the school community. There are some very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, and team captains, members of school council, 'playground friends' and 'reading buddies' all take their duties very seriously. Pupils say that the school is a very friendly place. Boys and girls work very well together in pairs and groups and they play very well together in the playground. Lunchtime is a very pleasant, social occasion and pupils chat and eat in a calm and friendly environment. During the inspection, pupils really enjoyed entertaining their grandparents to a special lunch and showed great pride of their skills as waiters and waitresses.
8. Attendance rates are very high when compared to similar schools. This is because the pupils like coming to school and are usually only absent if they are ill. The school's very positive ethos has a beneficial impact on attendance rates and a typical pupil's response to the pre-inspection questionnaire was, '*I like coming to school because of the nice teachers and helpers and fun lessons*'. Most pupils arrive at school promptly and settle quickly to their work. However, too many parents are not bringing their children to school on time and these pupils are missing an important start to their lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data:	4.2	School data:	0.1
National data:	5.1	National data:	0.4

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

9. Adults who work in school are skilled at developing the pupils' self esteem. They create an atmosphere where pupils are willing to contribute their ideas and persevere with challenging tasks without fear of failure or ridicule. Pupils have very good relations with staff and have confidence to ask for help if they do not understand what they have to do. They listen carefully, are eager to answer questions and work with sustained concentration. Their very good attitudes have a very positive effect on their achievements. Pupils value the very good range of extracurricular activities, and the after school clubs are well attended.
10. The school's very strong moral code works well because of the consistent and high expectation of good behaviour by adults working in the school. Pupils respond very well to the system of rewards, and sanctions are rarely needed. Pupils' behaviour during sports day was exemplary. In assemblies, pupils are asked to reflect on issues such as 'Finders Keepers' and encouraged to think about how others feel. Successes are celebrated enthusiastically through displays, in lessons and assemblies. Pupils say that isolated incidents of anti-social behaviour are dealt with well. Last year there was one fixed-term exclusion for poor behaviour.

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	170	1	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0

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

11. The school is very successful in the way it promotes mutual respect for others and the environment, and staff set very good examples by their own behaviour to pupils and each other. Through class discussions, lessons and assemblies pupils learn to value highly other's feelings, cultures and beliefs. Pupils are very polite and courteous, opening doors for adults and being helpful in the classrooms. The school has been successful in seeking out opportunities for pupils to have meaningful experiences of life in other cultures. For example, by linking with schools in Tobago, New Zealand and Germany pupils are able to correspond with pupils from other parts of the world and think about the contrasts and similarities in their lifestyles. Staff and pupils have made an Estonian pupil feel welcome by learning greetings in her home language. In religious education lessons, pupils deepen their understanding of world faiths. Pupils' own culture is successfully celebrated through aspects of the curriculum, for example by studying canal art and the Vikings.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The overall quality of education is good. The teaching is good and pupils learn quickly. The good curriculum and assessment contribute much to pupils' progress. Pupils are well cared for and benefit from very good support and guidance. The school has a very good partnership with parents

Teaching and learning

The good teaching means that pupils learn at a fast pace. Good assessment systems show pupils and teachers clearly how work can be improved.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teachers' planning is very good
- Teachers are very good at making lessons interesting
- Teachers manage behaviour very effectively
- The teaching of reading is very good
- Teachers provide too little work to challenge more able pupils in writing

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	13	5	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

- The school has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and learning further since the last inspection, and has been successful because of the very effective leadership and the resulting support that benefits all teachers. Throughout the school, the planning of lessons is of high quality and helps to explain the consistency of teaching from class to class. Relationships are very good and teachers are able to manage pupils' behaviour very well without stifling their enthusiasm.
- The teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage are good. Adults have a good knowledge of the needs of very young children who respond enthusiastically to the interesting work set for them. The staff are very good at getting children to settle quickly and learn the routines. Activities are planned carefully so that children of all abilities are able to work at their own pace. There are very good relationships between the adults and children that create a busy working atmosphere. Teachers and teaching assistants work well as a team. They plan well together and are quick to help children when they are stuck. They make good assessments of children working at set tasks but do not always note how well they cope with less structured work or how long they spend at each task. This means that not all children have a good balance of activities.
- In Years 1 and 2, teachers build well on the work that pupils have done earlier. The teachers make learning fun by using interesting methods that stimulate pupils' interest. Some very good examples of this were when:
 - pupils experimented with sound in science by making recordings of their own noises and playing them to others; and
 - the teacher got pupils to think about syllables in literacy before they wrote their own 'Haiku' poems.
- Lessons have a good mix of the teacher teaching, pupils working at their own level in groups and opportunities at the end to find out what has been learned. This works very well and ensures that all pupils learn quickly.
- The teaching of reading is a particular strength. The school's recently adopted method of teaching the sounds of words using quick fire questioning and memory games are working very well and have raised standards in reading significantly this year. These lessons are great fun and packed with learning.
- In Years 3 and 4, the teachers always make a point of sharing the lesson's aims with pupils at the start, and this is very effective. It helps pupils to focus on the task, gives them a secure knowledge of their own learning and helps teachers assess their progress at the end. Teachers provide lots of practical work, and pupils gain a great deal from conducting their own experiments in science, for example, and programming a robot device in ICT. Only on rare occasions do teachers get it wrong and spend so much time talking that pupils have little opportunity to find things out for themselves.

18. Teachers' expectations are generally high and pupils rise to the challenges set. However, in writing, teachers do not do enough to challenge the most able pupils with tasks that would make the best of their abilities. They provide lots of very good work on story beginnings and endings and the need to use exciting words, but rarely are pupils asked to put all of these skills together to write an extended piece of writing. These opportunities are also sometimes missed in other subjects when pupils write brief accounts in science, history, geography and religious education when they could be developing their writing skills further.
19. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' difficulties and provide work that is matched well to their abilities. Teaching assistants give very good support that enables pupils to take a full part in lessons.
20. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Teachers are careful to ensure that pupils are supported in class, and use words very precisely to give them the best chance of understanding. As a result, these pupils make good progress and soon gain confidence in English.
21. The school's assessment systems are good. Regular tests give teachers accurate information on pupils' attainment and progress and provide clear targets for improvement. Teachers give pupils individual targets and these work well. They show clearly the next steps in pupils' learning and are reviewed regularly to challenge them further. Teachers use assessment information from national tests very well to rectify pupils' weaknesses. They did this successfully recently to identify shortcomings in reading and science, and the subsequent improvements in resources and teaching methods soon raised standards.

The curriculum

The school's curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils' learning. Enrichment through activities outside lessons is very good. Levels of staffing and accommodation are good. Resources for learning are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many successful curriculum initiatives that support the development of pupils' learning
- A very good range of clubs after school, activities, visits and visitors are used very well to inspire pupils and help in their learning
- Very good provision for personal and social education helps pupils to work well together
- Although improvements are being made to the quality and quantity of resources, children in the Foundation Stage have limited access to large climbing apparatus and wheeled toys

Commentary

22. The drive to produce an interesting and stimulating curriculum for pupils has been successful. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the curricular opportunities offered to pupils in areas where they were judged to be lacking. Curriculum planning has improved and teaching time in Years 3 and 4 is now in line with that found in most schools. Greater attention is now given to meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils and provision for them is good. The curriculum for ICT has improved and is now satisfactory. The outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage has greatly improved, but access to outdoor climbing apparatus and wheeled toys remain limited. Overall, the curriculum is well planned, meets all statutory requirements and offers more than is seen in many schools.
23. The curriculum is enhanced significantly by numerous visits that make learning interesting and meaningful for pupils. For example, visits such as those to the Verulamium Museum in St Albans and Victorian and Anglo Saxon Theme Days helped to make history come alive for pupils. Visitors, including those from the community and friends of the school make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. A visiting artist during 'Creative Arts Week' inspired pupils to produce very good quality work. The school provides very well for pupils to learn outside the school day. These, together with the inter-school sporting and musical events, not only enrich the curriculum but also contribute significantly to pupils' personal and social development. The parents' view is that the school provides a very wide range of activities that their children find interesting and enjoyable.
24. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. There is a very well organised programme of work for all classes and the subject is given full recognition as part of the curriculum. In a very good initiative, the school has recently started using skilled teaching assistants to help pupils overcome their emotional difficulties by reading stories to them and discussing the feelings of the characters.
25. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Children are identified at an early stage and individual targets well planned. Pupils benefit from good support in lessons from skilled teaching assistants that ensures that they have every opportunity to learn. The arrangements for pupils with statements of their special educational needs are good and ensure that they do well.
26. There are very good arrangements to help children when they start school and they settle quickly into the routines. Pupils are prepared very well for transfer to the middle school and links are well established. The good exchange of information and visits helps to ensure that pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them as they start the next stage of education.

27. The school is well staffed with skilled teachers, and teaching assistants make an important contribution to pupils' learning. The accommodation is good overall. The school building is safe, attractive and adequate for teaching the curriculum. The imaginative development of the school grounds, including the allotment and 'sensory garden', provide very good opportunities for learning outside the classroom. They add much to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for pupils' health, safety, care and welfare is good. Provision for support, advice and guidance is very good. Involvement of pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff show high levels of care and concern for the pupils' welfare and emotional well being
- There is insufficient monitoring of health and safety procedures
- The school provides very good support for pupils' personal and academic development
- The arrangements for the induction of new children are very good
- The school values highly the views of pupils

Commentary

28. The ethos of mutual respect is evident in all school life. Pupils form very trusting relationships with adults working in the school and this means that they have confidence to tackle challenging tasks and ask for help when they are worried. Teachers and support staff know the pupils well and are very supportive of pupils who are experiencing difficulties.
29. The school promotes healthy living well through providing fruit at breaks, encouraging pupils to drink water throughout the day and ensuring that they are protected from strong sunlight. By taking part in many events organised by the public services, pupils are encouraged to think about keeping themselves safe and learn about the importance of the police and fire brigade.
30. Staff generally ensure that pupils work in a safe and secure environment, but the school has been slow to conduct formal risk assessments of the premises and practical activities. The headteacher has had relevant training in child protection and carries out her duties effectively. Staff have a good awareness of the school's child protection policy. Arrangements for first aid are good and pupils are looked after well. One part time member of staff is qualified in first aid and other members of staff have received basic training. Staff write detailed records of treatments and parents are kept well informed.
31. Teachers track the progress of the pupils' personal development very well, celebrate their achievements enthusiastically and make helpful comments in their annual reports. Staff do much to encourage pupils in their lessons and give them clear advice about what they need to do to improve their work. Parents value the very good arrangements that help their children settle into school quickly.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Teachers and teaching assistants have a thorough knowledge of pupils' difficulties, and monitor the progress towards their targets carefully.
33. Staff listen carefully to pupils' opinions and take good notice of their views. The members of the school council are keen to improve school life and have recently raise funds to buy a buddy bench which helps pupils find someone to play with.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents is very good. The links with the community and other schools are good.

Main strengths

- Families feel welcome in school and staff encourage them to support their children's learning
- The school provides parents with good information about how their children are getting on
- The school makes good use of visits and visitors to bring topics to life

- Valuable links with the middle school help prepare pupils for the next stage of their education

Commentary

34. The school works hard to reach out to parents and encourages them to become involved in the life of the school. Nearly all parents feel that teachers are very approachable and are able to discuss any concerns with them at the end of the school day. In a very good initiative, grandparents are invited to special lunches each term and they are able to see how their grandchildren learn. As a result, some have volunteered to help in school. The school has good arrangements to take note of parents' views, and conducts useful surveys to see how they feel about issues such as termly parents' meetings. The active Friends Association works hard to raise funds and organise social events. Parents speak very highly of the school and feel strongly that it has improved a lot over the last two years.
35. Pupils' annual reports to parents are good, and include useful information about how well they are doing and details about how they can improve their work. Parents' meetings are very well attended and give them very good opportunities to discuss how their children are progressing. Monthly newsletters provide parents with relevant and timely information about future events and do much to celebrate pupils' work. Parents value the curriculum sessions and the information about what their children will be studying each term. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are helpful documents and contain all the required information.
36. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about their progress. They are fully aware of the school's action in relation to their children and how they can help at home.
37. The school's good links with the community enrich the curriculum and have a positive impact on pupils' personal development and academic achievement. For example, pupils enjoyed visits to a museum that taught them much about life in Roman Britain. Visitors such as fire officers bring aspects of the wider world into the classroom and help pupils understand the roles of different members of their community.
38. Through close links with the local middle school, staff ensure that the transfer from one stage of education to the next is as smooth as possible. For example, pupils take part in joint sporting, musical and design technology activities that help them become familiar with their new school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management are good, overall, and the headteacher provides very good leadership for the school. Key staff provide good support for the headteacher, share her vision and manage aspects of the school well. Governance is good.

Main strengths

- The headteacher's very good leadership has been a prime factor in the school's significant improvement
- The school makes good use of performance data to enable it to track pupils' progress
- Senior staff provide good support for the headteacher and manage their areas well
- Governors make a good contribution to the effectiveness of the school as they know its strengths and weaknesses well

Commentary

39. The headteacher leads the school very well and has been the driving force behind its improvement over recent years. The school has been particularly successful in improving

the curriculum, especially by linking subjects more effectively to make pupils' learning more exciting, and this has helped to raise standards significantly. The headteacher has created a very positive ethos in the school where everyone tries to do their best. An effective team of senior staff, who play an active part in making important decisions, provides the headteacher with good support.

40. The leadership has a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the strategic planning shows a clear view of how to make improvements. Good examples of how the leadership has raised standards this year are in:
- reading, where new teaching methods have improved pupils' achievements standards significantly;
 - science, where the extra work on investigational work has increased dramatically the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels by Year 2; and
 - ICT, where additional training and better resources have rectified some significant weaknesses.
41. The governors are very supportive of the school and have an ambition to make this 'the best school in the area'. They have very good knowledge of the school and how it could be improved. They fulfil their statutory duties well and have a good knowledge of the staff through their links with subjects. They have a good feel for standards in the school through their thorough knowledge of performance data. This is enhanced by regular presentations from the headteacher and subject leaders on standards and achievement in their areas. Governors offer a good level of challenge to the school. For example, the finance committee asks for justification on budget details and they use their knowledge of standards well to identify the need to improve areas of concern. Consequently, they were very involved in the decision to focus on improving reading and, more recently, writing. Governors are involved in planning for improvement from an early stage as they review the previous targets and the progress made towards them. They have identified a priority to attract new parents to the school and have a good action plan to achieve this.
42. Leadership and management provided by subject leaders is satisfactory, overall, but variable. As the school is very aware of the quality of leadership in each area, it is providing good training to support and help subject leaders develop their roles and, as a result, they are improving. Key stage teams, including teaching assistants, are effective in planning and evaluating the curriculum to suit the needs of pupils. Their knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning in their areas is satisfactory, and benefits from useful analysis of the work in pupils' books, but they have few opportunities to observe teaching and learning in their areas.
43. The school is well managed. It places high priority on evaluating its performance and that of the pupils, and makes good use of the information to bring about improvement. Target setting is firmly in place and shows pupils and teachers where improvements are needed. Teachers have clear job descriptions and delegation of responsibilities. There are effective systems to review teachers' performance and targets are linked closely to staff development and training. The school is managed very efficiently on a day-to-day basis because of the good support that all staff, including non-teaching staff, give to the headteacher. The school provides good opportunities for trainee teachers to practice their skills.
44. Financial management of the school is good. The school has good systems to get value from its spending, notably by:
- gaining revenue from letting the school out;
 - using students and graduate teachers to give staff time for planning and preparation; and
 - sharing training sessions with other schools.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	627957
Total expenditure	619261
Expenditure per pupil	2934

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	3344
Balance carried forward to the next	12040

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

45. The quality of provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good and prepares them well for work in the National Curriculum. Children enter the Foundation Stage in the autumn term following their fourth birthday on a part-time basis, and stay full-time at the start of their second term. Over time, children's attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. However, the skills of the current group of children were below average when they started. Approximately one-third of the children have been identified as needing additional support because they do not have the language and social skills typical for their age, and some have limited play experience. All, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most are achieving the expected goals in all areas and are exceeding them in personal, social and emotional development, early reading skills and early number work.
46. Arrangements for both starting school and for children moving on to Year 1 are very good. The school develops good links with parents through a comprehensive programme of meetings and home visits.
47. Assessment of children's progress is conscientiously undertaken in great detail, comprising photographs, examples of work and detailed observation notes written by all staff. Staff know the children extremely well and keep detailed records of children's progress and skills when working at tasks set by the teacher. However, they do not maintain a record of activities that children have taken part in or explored on their own in order to ensure that all children have a suitable balance of activities and that they have equal access to the experiences that the school offers.
48. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator is well informed and has a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and how young children learn.

Personal, social and emotional development

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

Main strengths

- There is a very strong focus on the development of children's personal and social skills
- Children show good independence and ability to make choices
- Very good relationships among staff and children create a secure and happy environment in which children respond positively and enjoy learning

Commentary

49. Teaching is very good and, as a result, children are eager to learn, behave very well and meet the high expectations of the adults who care for them. Children of different levels of attainment achieve very well because this area of learning is central to school's work. Personal and social development is given high priority by staff within all areas of learning so that by the end of the Foundation Stage nearly all children are likely to exceed expectations. Staff work hard to ensure that children are encouraged and supported so that they gain confidence and develop good learning habits. As a result, most children are confident and talk happily to visitors about their activities. They respond well when obeying instructions, try hard with the activities offered and are developing good levels of concentration. A notable strength is the very good quality of relationships between adults and children, which enables the children to 'have a go' with their learning, explore new experiences and resources and gain in independence. Children make decisions confidently when asked to choose which activities to attempt and are learning to monitor their choices.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in communication, language and literacy is good.

Main strengths

- Good teaching helps children to achieve well
- Staff recognise the importance of focusing on speaking and listening skills
- Expectations are very high and this is leading to children's good progress, especially in early reading skills

Commentary

50. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff place a high emphasis on the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills across all the different areas of learning. Praise is well used and questions are used skilfully to encourage all children to contribute what they know. The good ratio of adults to children means that staff teach in small groups so that children can talk in detail about their ideas and experiences and develop their vocabulary well. Overall, most children are fluent, articulate speakers who listen well for extended periods and make appropriate responses to questions. They talk at length in well-formed sentences using an expanding range of words to express and explain their ideas. For example, children walked through mud and excitedly suggested 'goosey', 'cold' and 'damp', to describe what they have felt.
51. Adults make very effective use of a new strategy to teach the sounds of letters and, as a result, many children are beginning to use this knowledge well for their early reading skills. All adults introduce books well, and children enjoy looking at them. They understand how books are organised, handle them carefully, turn the pages in the right direction and take them home to share with adults. More able children recognise many familiar words, show understanding of the characters in stories and answer questions confidently about the focus text '*We're going on a bear hunt*'.
52. Staff provide satisfactory opportunities for children to develop early writing skills, such as, writing 'prescriptions' in the imaginative play area and recounting the fruits that '*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*' ate. Older and more able children write simple sentences with recognisable letters. They spell words, such as 'mum', 'dog' and 'get' with accuracy and use capital letters and full stops correctly. Nonetheless, there are too few planned opportunities for all children to practise their early writing skills for different purposes, either independently or supervised by an adult. The physical skill of forming letters accurately is not promoted rigorously enough during the early attempts, and adults do not always check that letters are being accurately formed.

Mathematical development

Provision for children's mathematical development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have good number skills
- Sessions led by adults are well planned and focused
- Opportunities to extend mathematical development are sometimes missed

Commentary

53. Teaching is good, and results in good learning so that children are on course to exceed the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage, particularly in early number work. Adults use routine activities well in helping children to understand how the number system works. For example, at the start of the day staff involve children in counting the number of school dinners and packed lunches. Basic number skills are taught very well. Challenging vocabulary, such as, 'equation' and 'numeral' are carefully introduced and many older

children achieve well when filling in the missing numbers in sums such as $3 + ? = 4$; $? = 3+3$ and $? - 4 = 6$ using strategies that are reinforced daily. Most younger children recognise familiar flat shapes and are beginning to understand mathematical language, such as 'smallest' and 'largest' when putting pictures in sequence. Older and more able children not only identify solid shapes correctly but also know some of the properties of a cone, square and cylinder. Staff make good use of numbers songs and rhymes and of computer games to stimulate children's enjoyment in learning to count and match and to add and takeaway. They also make use of the outdoor areas and, through a wide range of practical, well-organised activities, children develop good mathematical skills in measuring, matching numbers and making patterns. However, opportunities are sometimes missed during children's chosen activities to help them to extend their mathematical development. This is partly because short-term plans for these activities do not always make clear what skills the children will acquire and this means that the adults' intervention is not always sufficiently well focused.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children become increasingly confident in using computers
- Staff prepare a good range of practical activities that encourage children's observational and investigative skills
- At times, adults lose track of what children have been doing

Commentary

54. Teaching is good, and most children are on course to achieve the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. They learn to observe and explore carefully the changes that take place in animals as they grow and talk knowledgeably about how frogs grow from tadpoles. Children's learning benefits greatly from the effective way that teachers plan tasks that cover many areas of learning. For example, in one good session children used their senses very well to explore the taste of pineapple, mango and passion fruit. They were given lots of encouragement to use interesting words to describe what they noticed and they came up with phrases such as, '*the pineapple is spiky and green on top and brown and yellow on the bottom*'. Children begin to understand the needs of living things when planting bulbs, and they monitor the growth of sunflower seeds carefully. The majority display good levels of independence in their designing and making activities. They select suitable resources from a wide range, which they cut and glue with confidence to create three-dimensional shapes and models.
55. Staff are good at teaching computer skills, and children show good control of the mouse when working on a variety of programs. More able children show confidence when loading their own programs and achieve well when using word processors to write simple sentences. A good range of work is done about festivals, such as Divali and Holi and children are beginning to learn about the different smells and taste of Indian food. Support staff are well deployed. They listen carefully to what children have to say and, through careful questioning, extend their learning. However, on some occasions this support is less effective because there are too many activities available for children to have the time to talk about their work. In addition, monitoring is not sufficiently rigorous to ensure that all children experience fully the planned activities.

Creative and physical development

Provision creative development is good and it is satisfactory for physical development.

Main strength and weakness

- The classroom and outside areas have been imaginatively developed and children have continuous access to it
- There are insufficient resources in the larger outdoor play area

Commentary

56. Teaching and learning are good in both areas. Staff plan a wide range of imaginatively organised activities that not only extend children’s creative and physical development but also their learning across the whole curriculum. Particularly good use is made of the outdoor environment to plan activities that are inviting to children so that they have good opportunities to exercise their imagination. Many mix paints to produce a range of attractive colours to paint the different fruits that the caterpillar ate in the story ‘*The Very Hungry Caterpillar*’. They draw and colour pictures with varying degrees of accuracy and detail, as demonstrated in their self-portraits and attractive sunflower pictures. Imaginative play is satisfactorily fostered through activities in the play area where children undertake different roles with confidence in the ‘The Jungle’. Since the last inspection, the school has made good efforts to develop the outdoor play area. In the outdoor area, clear routines have been established and staff use lots of praise and encouragement to give children the confidence to join in activities. Most children show good control and co-ordination when using wheeled vehicles and when indoors they use a range of tools with increasing skill and accuracy. Planning is good overall, but the purposes behind some activities are not always clearly stated in planning or made clear to children. As a result, adults do not always do enough to extend children’s learning and the effectiveness of the sessions is diluted.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision for English is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of reading is very good and pupils achieve very well by Year 4
- The school analyses the quality of teaching and learning rigorously and has a good understanding of how to remedy any weaknesses
- Leadership and management of the subject are good
- More able pupils rarely achieve well enough in their writing by Year 4

Commentary

57. By Year 2, standards are average in speaking and listening and writing and well above average in reading. By Year 4, standards are above average in speaking and listening and writing and well above average in reading. This represents good achievement. Standards have risen since the last inspection as a result of:

- whole school approaches to developing reading skills using new and imaginative teaching methods;
- better opportunities for pupils to read to adults each day;
- improved resources to help pupils develop their comprehension skills; and
- a greater focus on pupils using imaginative words in their writing.

58. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress because they are supported well by skilled teachers and teaching assistants.

59. The teaching and learning are good. Teachers have a thorough knowledge of the Literacy Strategy and how pupils learn best. They are very good at giving clear explanations as to why certain words would be better than others to make the meaning of a sentence clear.

The point of lessons is made very clear, and the summing-up session at the end is not only an opportunity for the teacher to assess how much the pupils have learnt but also a chance to extend their learning still further, ready for the next lesson. Teachers place great emphasis on developing pupils' language skills and, by Year 2, most speak clearly and confidently because they know their efforts will be valued. Teachers make very good use of pupils talking in pairs so that they get used to taking it in turns to speak and listen. In Years 3 and 4, teachers give pupils lots of encouragement to speak to the whole class and this helps give them confidence.

60. In reading, nearly all pupils by Year 2 read simple books with fluency, expression and very good understanding. Teachers are very encouraging and pupils feel confident about reading to the class or as a class. They are starting to make accurate predictions about what may happen next and give good opinions of the author's style. The introduction of a quick-fire way of teaching word building skills In Years 1 and 2 has made a big difference to standards; it has helped pupils enjoy reading more and has given those with reading difficulties a lot more confidence. Year 4 pupils are given very challenging texts to read and they do so quickly and very accurately. Many are skilled at scanning articles for information.

61. In writing by Year 2, pupils enjoy using their imagination and showed good skills when composing poems about butterflies and spiders. Teachers give them interesting work that makes them want to write. They work hard at giving pupils the technical skills of punctuation and spelling but many forget when it comes to writing a story or factual account. Their handwriting is fluent and neat but few write consistently in a joined style. By Year 4, pupils use very interesting words and try hard to make their stories interesting. Their poems are exciting and full of images that give the reader a real feel for the subject. For example, one pupil wrote a poem about a storm coming that was full of atmosphere:

*Close the curtains
Turn up the heat
Severe storm looming
Twisting through the valley*

62. Teachers give pupils too few opportunities, however, to write extended pieces of work that would develop their stamina as writers and give them experience of building up the suspense in a story. This helps to explain why few pupils who attained high standards in writing in their Year 2 national tests have progressed as well as they could have by Year 4.
63. Leadership and management are good. Last year, the school produced a very detailed action plan with initiatives that have already proved successful in raising standards in reading. The same process is now beginning with writing. Assessment procedures are good, and teachers have a thorough knowledge of what pupils are achieving in order to plan further work. Through the very careful monitoring of pupils' progress, teachers set challenging targets so that pupils know clearly what they have to do to improve. Teaching and planning have been carefully evaluated and this has contributed to the rise in standards.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. Teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop their language and literacy skills in other subjects. In science, pupils record their findings effectively, either as concise notes or in tables, but rarely do they write full accounts of their experiments. In religious education, pupils in Year 3 produced a very good information booklet about the different parts of a church. In history and geography, pupils research their topics well using books and the Internet and have written imaginative accounts of, for example, what life is like in India and what it must feel like to discover important historical relics as an archaeologist. These are exceptions, though, and rarely do teachers ask pupils to write around a topic or produce extended accounts of what they have learned.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is good.

Main strengths

- Good teaching enables pupils to achieve well by Year 4
- Leadership and management are good and have resulted in good improvement since the last inspection
- Very good relationships mean that pupils display very good attitudes to their work

Commentary

65. Standards are average by Year 2 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 and 4 and standards are above those expected. Standards are higher by Year 4 than at the time of the last inspection because the teaching is better and assessment systems are used more effectively to improve pupils' work. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported effectively by teachers and teaching assistants and achieve well.

66. The teaching and learning are good, overall. In Years 1 and 2, teachers provide lots of work to give pupils confidence in the basic skills of number and nearly all by Year 2 work out simple calculations quickly in their head. Teachers have high expectations and give plenty of work to challenge more able pupils who explain their methods maturely. Sometimes, however, teachers ask too much of pupils and they start the group work not entirely clear about what they should be doing. Pupils achieve well in Year 1 because of the fast pace of teaching and accurate pitching of tasks to match pupils' abilities. For example, in a very good lesson about money, the teacher moved swiftly through the mental starter session when pupils had to add numbers quickly in their head. Once the teacher was sure all had got the idea, she had them solving complex mental addition problems using money and working out change given when buying chocolate bars. This was good achievement and pupils flew through the work.
67. In Years 3 and 4, teachers build well on the foundations laid earlier and by Year 4 most pupils have a quick recall of number facts and recognise equivalent fractions. They use frequency tables competently to collect and organise data and draw graphs. They have a good knowledge of the properties of common two and three-dimensional shapes and find perimeters and areas of regular shapes. Lower attaining pupils are still gaining confidence in using number bonds and recognising simple number sequences. Teachers are very good at using questions to make pupils think hard and this deepens their understanding of the subject. In the most effective lessons, pupils discuss answers with partners and are then challenged to explain their methods; this works very well and gets pupils to think more deeply about the work they do. However, teachers do not provide sufficient problem solving activities and achievement in this area is not as good as in others.
68. The subject is well led and managed. There is a clear vision and ambition to improve pupils' achievement, especially that of higher attaining pupils. The school has good systems to know how well pupils are doing and regularly monitors the quality of the work in their books. It makes good use of performance data in order to identify priorities for improvement and match tasks to pupils' needs. The school is aware of its strengths and weaknesses and has rightly identified the use of ICT as an area for improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

69. Opportunities for pupils to use and develop their mathematical skills in other subjects are satisfactory. In science, pupils measure accurately when comparing growth of plants and draw bar charts to show forces needed to pull objects along different surfaces. Pupils use their knowledge of angles in Year 4 to program a computer 'turtle' to move position and draw shapes on the screen. Pupils used their measuring skills well in design technology when making model chairs, and in physical education they count repetitions for their group tasks.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All groups of pupils achieve well
- The good teaching and learning means that pupils learn quickly
- The good leadership and management ensures that the subject keeps improving

Commentary

70. Standards in science are above average by Year 2 and Year 4 and pupils achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress because they are set work at the right level for their abilities and benefit from good support in lessons. Standards are higher than in the last inspection,

mainly because of the school's action to improve the teaching of experimental skills and the enhanced opportunities given for pupils to discuss their work with the teacher and each other.

71. The teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Pupils make a brisk start in Years 1 and 2 where the good teaching gives them a secure understanding of how plants grow, how animals rely on their senses and the characteristics of different materials. Teachers are good at making learning fun and letting pupils find things out for themselves. In one lesson, for example, the teacher had pupils exploring sound. They listened carefully to recorded sounds of things like a telephone, drum and saw and they had to say what made the noise. This was great fun and prepared them well for producing their own sounds and recording them for others to hear. By the end, all pupils had made good progress in using and understanding their senses and hardly knew they had been working.
72. In Years 3 and 4, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to carry out experiments and they develop a good awareness of how to make a test fair and predict the likely outcomes. Particular strengths include:
 - work on friction where pupils achieved very well when they looked at which surfaces worked best when pushing cars down a slope; and
 - experiments that proved clearly which materials worked best at keeping things warm.
73. Teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour mean that they cover a lot of work in lessons. They make very good use of practical activities to make science come alive for pupils, and the Year 4 lesson looking at animals' habitats in the school grounds taught them much about the creatures living on their doorstep. Teachers set the scene for the lesson well by informing pupils of the lesson's objectives, thereby making it easy to assess pupils' progress towards these goals at the end. Teachers are good at making pupils think by using challenging questions that expect them to recall previous learning. This creates a good link between old learning and new, and helps pupils' overall scientific understanding.
74. The leadership and management are good. The school has looked carefully at what teachers need to do to raise standards and the action has been successful. Assessment systems are good and show clearly how well pupils have learned a topic.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory.

Main strengths

- Pupils enjoy working on computers and show very good attitudes to their work
- There is a clear vision for improving the achievement of pupils and the use of ICT in other subjects
- There has been good improvement since the last inspection

Commentary

75. Standards by Year 2 and Year 4 are in line with national expectations and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Standards have improved since the last inspection as the result of teachers' better subject knowledge and enhanced resources. Pupils in Year 1 show good mouse control when drawing pictures and they have used word processing programs effectively to write poems about dinosaurs. They are confident when using a sound recorder. Year 2 pupils showed good skills when downloading photographs from a link school in South Africa and have used computers effectively to write about themselves. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well, and gain much from using word processors to improve their writing and tape recorders to practise their speaking.

76. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers are confident in their own knowledge and are quick to help pupils who are stuck. Teachers and pupils have very good relationships and these, along with high expectations, mean that pupils behave very well in lessons. They work very well together in pairs and really enjoy working on computers. Teachers are good at making learning fun, and pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed using digital cameras to take photographs of local animal habitats. They learn a lot from using emails to contact schools in other countries and look forward eagerly to the replies. One characteristic of the best teaching is that teachers fully involve pupils in the lesson, and show respect for their answers. For example, in one Year 4 lesson the teacher asked the pupils to help her to program the instructions for the 'turtle' to move in different directions to construct a square. All pupils were keen to answer and they learned a lot by listening to other's contributions. Their success was helped because the skills were introduced progressively so that pupils completed a simple task accurately before being offered further challenges. However, in another lesson, pupils were not able to achieve in line with their potential because tasks were too difficult and they had insufficient opportunity to work or think independently. Good support from teaching assistants enables pupils to extend their learning, as was observed when pupils were guided through printing photographs from their own digital camera observations.

77. The subject is well led and managed. There is a very enthusiastic commitment to improve the skills of teachers in order to raise pupils' achievement. Teachers share ideas informally and have benefited from good training to improve their skills. Pupils' progress is recorded systematically and their levels of attainment are assessed carefully at the end of each unit of work. These records help the school to match work to pupils' needs and to know how well the pupils are doing. Since the last inspection, the scheme of work has been improved and now covers National Curriculum requirements.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

78. The school makes satisfactory use of ICT in other subjects, but is looking at ways to improve this area. In English, pupils in Years 1 and 2 write stories and letters on the computer and in Year 3 pupils have used the Internet to find out about Roald Dahl's books and produce newspaper pages of their stories. In mathematics, the main emphasis is on data handling and graphical representation, although Year 2 pupils have reinforced their learning of number using computer program. In science, pupils have used CD ROMs for research and Year 4 pupils used spreadsheets to record temperature changes in their experiments.

HUMANITIES

79. No lessons were observed in **geography** and **history** and there is insufficient evidence to make judgements on provision, standards or teaching. These subjects were sampled and evidence gained from looking at work done over the year, teachers' records and photographs and talking to pupils. In both subjects it is clear that the wide range of visits and visitors play an important part in making the subject interesting and relevant.
80. In **history**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a reasonable grasp of major events and famous people from the past. They gained a good understanding of how historical objects are useful sources of information about aspects of life in the past through an exciting Victorian Theme Day. They enjoyed dressing up in clothes from that period and learned much about what school life was like. By Year 4, pupils are good at researching for information using books and the Internet and this helped them achieve well in their projects about Tudor times. They show a good knowledge of life in an Anglo-Saxon village, and enjoyed dressing in Anglo Saxon clothes to get a real feel for the period. Pupils' best work is when they are encouraged to write at length about their findings, as when they wrote as archaeologists discovering Anglo Saxon relics, but much of the work is based on the completion of photocopied worksheets, and this restricts their achievement.
81. In **geography**, pupils by Year 2 have a good understanding of the main features of their local area and made good links with mathematics when recording the different types of vehicles that go past the school. They have used keys effectively to explain features of Leighton Buzzard on a map. In Year 4, pupils have a sound knowledge of life in India and made good use of books, atlases and the Internet to find information. They show a good understanding of how life in an Indian village differs from that in their own locality. As in history, there is little extended writing that would enhance their skills further.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject plays an important part in pupils' increasing understanding of other cultures
- Opportunities for pupils to make connections between religions and how these may have an impact on their own lives are limited
- There are good links with literacy and the development of writing skills
- The subject is well led and managed

Commentary

82. Pupils attain standards broadly in line with expectations of the Local Agreed Syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 4, thereby maintaining the standard seen at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, achieve satisfactorily. In Year 2, pupils know that Jesus is a special person for Christians and that the book telling stories about his life and work is called the Bible. Many retell familiar Bible stories, such as those about Moses with accuracy, and know that the Torah is of special importance to the Jewish faith. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have a good awareness of major world religions and write knowledgeably about the customs and practices of Judaism, such as the relevance of the festival of 'Yon Kippur' and the rules that govern what Jews eat. This gives them a good awareness of how people from different cultures live and worship. Pupils make satisfactory use of their literacy skills, and used them well in one topic when describing the different parts and functions of the church.
83. The teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers are beginning to make effective use of computers to help pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 4 carried out good research into the River Ganges using the Internet. Earlier work indicates that pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about the way in which beliefs affect the way people live their own lives. The school is aware that this is an area for further development and is already exploring ways to tackle the issue.
84. The teaching and learning were good in the one lesson seen in the Year 1 class. The lesson was well prepared and drama was well used to enliven the teaching of the story of Moses. As a result, pupils were engrossed and made good progress. Skilful questioning extended pupils' oral skills as well as increased their understanding of why Moses is important to Jews as a leader.
85. The good leadership and management ensures that local guidance is adapted well to interest pupils and provide teachers with a good basis for their planning of lessons. New systems of assessment have just been started but have not yet had time to raise standards further. Throughout the school, teachers mark pupils' work regularly. However, comments do not always provide guidance to pupils as to what they need to improve further. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. No lessons were seen in art and design, design and technology or music and only one was observed in physical education. These subjects were sampled and evidence was gained from talking to pupils about their work, looking at their books and observing them singing in assembly and taking part in the school sports day.
87. In **art and design**, pupils of all ages produced some good work during the Creative Arts Week. Their sculptures using natural materials showed a good understanding of how to use materials to create exciting pictures and their weaving at part of the topic on Native American crafts was of a high quality.
88. In **design and technology**, Year 3 pupils clearly enjoyed making different sandwiches and their evaluations of their work were honest and perceptive. In Year 4, pupils have designed and made attractive model chairs using a wide range of materials. They measured carefully and showed great pride in the finished work.
89. In **music**, pupils sing very well in assemblies with a good sense of rhythm. Many pupils are learning to play instruments and perform to a high standard. Their concerts attract many parents and family members who speak highly of the quality of music. The choir has a very good reputation in the area and pupils enjoyed singing in the 'Festival of Voices' at Wembley this year. The school has worked hard at making music enjoyable for pupils, and

the implementation of a new scheme of work is doing much to give pupils lots of practical experience of composing and making music.

90. In **physical education**, the school does well in competitive sports and has enjoyed considerable success this year in football and hockey tournaments. Standards in football are greatly enhanced by the coaching provided by a local professional footballer and the very good opportunities for practice after school. In the one lesson seen, the teacher paid very good attention to the basic skills of throwing and catching. Pupils listened carefully to the teacher and showed that they had made good progress when they started the game and hurled the ball in from considerable distances. Standards in swimming are above average, and all Year 4 pupils swim at least the distance expected of pupils in Year 6. Sports day was a joy to watch. The event was impeccably organised with the whole school taking part in a multitude of activities. Pupils tried their hardest and played with great sportsmanship. Parents were justifiably very proud of the way their children competed and behaved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

91. The school sees pupils' personal development as an important part of its work. Aspects of personal development are covered in personal, social and health education lessons, across other subjects and during 'circle time' discussions where specific issues of importance to pupils are explored. The impact of timetable lessons, enrichment activities and the school's very good ethos ensure that pupils make very good progress in their personal development, learn about health and know how to function as responsible members of society. Members of the community, such as from the church and health service contribute well to aspects of pupils' personal, social and health education.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
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	2
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	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
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).