

INSPECTION REPORT

HOLNE CHASE COMBINED SCHOOL

Bletchley, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110290

Headteacher: Mr D Taylor

Lead inspector: Mr A Fullwood

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th November 2004

Inspection number: 267041

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First and Middle
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	338
School address:	Buckingham Road Bletchley Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	MK3 5HP
Telephone number:	01908 373640
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr B Clarkson
Date of previous inspection:	September 2002

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the Bletchley area of Milton Keynes, but draws its pupils from a wide area within the town. Children's attainment on entry to the school is average overall. There are 338 pupils on roll, taught in 13 mainly mixed-age classes, and the school is bigger than an average primary school. Currently there are more boys than girls: 176 to 162. The socio-economic indicators for the area served by the school are average. Two hundred and sixty pupils are of white ethnic origin and 41 are from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Seven pupils have English as a second language, but none are at an early stage in the acquisition of English. Forty-two pupils, approximately 12 per cent, have special educational needs, including one pupil who has a statement of special educational need; this is below the national average. The school gained an Achievement Award for its results in 2000.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21184	Mr A Fullwood	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Science; Art and Design; Physical Education.
32655	John Bostock	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
23390	Mervyn Blackband	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Information and Communication Technology; Design and Technology; Special Educational Needs; English as an Additional Language.
23300	Lily Evans	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Music; Modern Foreign Languages; Personal, Social and Health Education; Citizenship.
24528	Garth Muton	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage; Religious Education; Geography; History.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Holne Chase Combined is a satisfactory school that provides a sound education for all its pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and pupils achieve as well as they should. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English, science, music and information and communication technology (ICT) are above expectations.
- Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Year 7 achieve well.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs (SEN).
- The provision made for music is very good.
- Assessment is not consistently used to ensure that pupils of all abilities are sufficiently challenged.
- The senior management team lacks a clear focus on improving the school.
- The school promotes pupils' personal development well.
- The leadership of the headteacher is good.
- Resources for teaching and learning in ICT are very good.
- The positive partnership that the school establishes with parents helps pupils to learn.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The school has worked hard and successfully to address the key issues for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection. Standards have risen significantly at the end of Year 2, and the good standards at the end of Years 6 and 7, noted at the time of the previous inspection, have been maintained. Good progress has been made in establishing effective assessment and tracking procedures, but further work is needed to ensure that this information is used consistently to meet the needs of all pupils. Good progress has been made in promoting pupils' cultural development, which is now very good. Satisfactory progress has been made in establishing procedures for monitoring teaching and learning. The school is developing sound self-evaluation procedures and is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	B	B	B	A
mathematics	B	A	C	C
science	C	C	A	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.*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The results of national tests in 2004 at the end of Year 2 show that standards in reading and writing have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Standards were well above the national average in writing, above average in reading and average in mathematics. Overall, standards have improved above the national trend. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are above expected levels in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. Standards in ICT are above expected levels and are in line with expectations in art and design, geography, history, and religious education. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about standards in other subjects.

The results of national tests in 2004 at the end of Year 6 show that standards in science were well above the national average; standards in English were above the national average, while standards in mathematics were average. Standards in the current group of Year 6 pupils are above national expectations in English and science, and in line with expectations in mathematics. Standards are above expected levels in ICT, geography and music; pupils make good progress and achieve well in these subjects. Standards in other subjects, where there is sufficient evidence to make a secure judgement, are average, and pupils achieve satisfactorily.

Standards in Year 7 are above expected levels in English, science, ICT, art and design, geography, history and music. Pupils achieve well due to good teaching.

Pupils with SEN achieve well in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs), and they receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants.

Overall, attainment in the Foundation Stage is on track to reach the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year. Children make good progress and achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school in their communication, language and literacy skills, in their mathematical and physical development, and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Achievement in children's creative development is satisfactory. They achieve very well in their personal, social and emotional development, and the vast majority are likely to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year in this area of learning.

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good. Pupils' attendance is very good, and they are very punctual for the start of school. **The promotion of pupils' values and personal development is very good.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a sound education. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Year 7 is good. The teaching of pupils with SEN is good. Generally, teachers make satisfactory use of assessment information to plan work to match the needs of pupils of all abilities, but this is not always the case. Teachers successfully encourage and engage the pupils. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory and there are very good opportunities for curriculum enrichment through clubs, activities, visits and visitors to the school. Staffing levels and the accommodation are satisfactory, and meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Learning resources are good. The school has very good links with parents, with the community and with other schools. The school provides good care and welfare for its pupils, and satisfactory support, advice and guidance.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The governance of the school is satisfactory, and governors meet all statutory requirements. They are improving their own monitoring of the work of the school. The headteacher provides good leadership and establishes a clear educational direction for the work of the school. Management is satisfactory, but the senior management team lacks a clear focus on school improvement. Subject co-ordinators carry out their responsibilities well. The financial management of the school is good, and best value principles are applied very effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are very satisfied with the school and they are very supportive of it. The school is very popular and a significant proportion of parents have chosen it in preference to sending their children to their local school. Pupils feel well supported by teachers and teaching assistants, and they enjoy coming to school. They feel that their views are taken into account and that they have a positive role in the school's work and development.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensure that assessment information is consistently used to match work closely to the needs of pupils of all abilities.
- Ensure a clearer and more effective focus by senior managers on raising standards and promoting pupils' achievement.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and in Year 7, and satisfactory in Years 1 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good in reading and writing and in ICT at the end of Year 2.
- Standards are good in English, science, music and ICT, at the end of Years 6 and 7.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the school varies from year to year, but is average overall. Children make good progress and achieve well, due to good teaching and the good leadership of the Early Years co-ordinator. Children are on track to reach the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year in each area of learning; in their personal, social and emotional development the vast majority of pupils will exceed these goals. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	16.7 (16.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.7 (15.2)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.8 (16.0)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The results of the national tests in 2004 at the end of Year 2 were above average in reading, and well above average in writing in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools, results in reading were average and in writing they were well above average. Standards have improved significantly since the previous inspection, and pupils no longer underachieve at the end of Year 2. Inspection evidence indicates that currently pupils in Year 2 are on track to achieve above average standards in reading and writing, and that they achieve satisfactorily in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening.

3. The results of national tests in 2004 in mathematics at the end of Year 2 were average in comparison with all schools and below average in comparison with similar schools. Standards have showed a consistent upward trend since 2002, when they fell sharply. Inspection evidence indicates that standards of attainment in the current group of Year 2 pupils are average and that pupils are achieving as well as they should in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1. Recent changes made to the teaching of mathematics and the better use of assessment information to set pupils targets for improvement, are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement, but will take time to have an impact on standards. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

4. Teachers' assessments in 2004 for Year 2 pupils in science showed their attainment to be slightly below average in the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 2, but well above average in the percentage achieving the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence indicates that the current group of Year 2 pupils are attaining average standards and achieving satisfactorily. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

5. Standards in ICT are above expectations and pupils achieve well. Standards in other subjects where there is sufficient evidence to make a judgement, are in line with expectations and have been maintained since the previous inspection.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.1 (27.9)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.9 (28.4)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	30.1 (29.2)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 47 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

6. The results of national tests in 2004 in English at the end of Year 6 were above average in relation to all schools and well above average in relation to schools that achieved similar standards at the end of Year 2. The school's targets for the percentages of pupils who would achieve Level 4 were reached, and the target for those who would achieve Level 5 was exceeded. Standards have shown a consistent upward trend since the previous inspection. Generally, girls perform better than boys, but both boys and girls perform better than they do nationally. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are achieving well and that the attainment of the current group of Year 6 pupils is on track to be above national expectations. They make good progress in speaking, listening and reading, and satisfactory progress in writing, particularly when given frequent opportunities to write in a variety of formats. The good standards noted at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained.

7. The results of national tests in 2004 in mathematics at the end of Year 6 were average in comparison both with all schools and with similar schools. However, the school's targets for the percentage of pupils who would achieve a Level 4 or 5 were not reached. Standards between 2000 and 2003 showed a consistent upward trend, but fell sharply in 2004. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current group of Year 6 pupils are in line with expectations. The school has quickly reacted to ensure that pupils achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English and science. The school has sought the help of local education advisors and appointed a new co-ordinator. All teachers have been observed teaching mathematics, and a number of strategies have been put in place to improve teaching and learning. However, these are at an early stage of development, and although teaching observed during the inspection was generally satisfactory, the work set was not always challenging enough to meet the needs of all pupils; this is because some staff do not make sufficient use of the assessment information available to them in their planning. Standards are not as high as at the previous inspection.

8. The results of national tests in 2004 in science at the end of Year 6 were well above average in comparison with all schools and with those schools whose pupils achieved similarly at the end of Year 2. Results in national tests have showed an upward trend since the previous inspection. Generally, boys and girls perform similarly. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 6 and Year 7 are above average and that pupils achieve well. Good leadership and management of the subject contributes well to the standards pupils achieve. Standards in ICT and music are above average, and pupils achieve well. Standards in other subjects, where is sufficient evidence to make a judgement, are in line with expectations, and pupils achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

9. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Year 7 in English, science, art and design, geography, history, ICT, and music are above expectations, and that pupils achieve well due to good teaching. Standards in mathematics, religious education and modern foreign languages are in line with expected levels. There was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement about standards in physical education. The good standards and good provision made for pupils in Year 7 has been maintained since the previous inspection.

10. The progress made by pupils with English as an additional language is good. All teachers are aware of the pupils' needs and plan their work accordingly; they provide focused and adapted activities aimed at language enrichment, such as specific questioning and worksheets with a more simple use of language. Scrutiny of pupils' records and observation of lessons show that pupils make good progress. Where pupils have little command of the language, they are given specific support from teaching assistants, and they work on language enrichment programmes provided by teachers from the local authority.

11. Pupils with SEN are fully included in all school activities. Their progress is carefully monitored through the school's developing assessment systems. Scrutiny of their IEPs and tracking of their progress in literacy, show that most pupils make good progress towards their targets. Pupils receive well-directed support in lessons from very competent teaching assistants, and they are given a high level of individual tuition. Most teachers successfully adapt classroom work to ensure that activities are set at the correct level. In the best lessons, the needs of pupils with SEN are planned for in great detail. Pupils' IEPs are written with the assistance of a commercial programme, with which assessment information that the school has gathered is used to match generically written targets. However, the targets which emerge are not always sufficiently specific to individual pupils. This lack of focus means that pupils' targets are sometimes not precise enough, and that the learning prescribed is not structured in small and achievable steps.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and their behaviour are **good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good** overall. Attendance is well above the national average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have good relationships with each other and generally behave well, helping to create a good climate for teaching and learning.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work and, as a result, they learn well.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are keen to take full advantage of the opportunities that the school provides, to take responsibility and to participate in clubs and activities.
- Pupils' attendance is consistently good and has improved further this year; it enables pupils to benefit from the opportunities the school provides.

Commentary

12. Pupils generally work and play well together. Their play times are boisterous and active, and all children in the school mix well together, playing football, chasing around or using the various resources which the school makes available. In their work, pupils help each other with tasks and co-operate well. There is no evidence of bullying or racist behaviour. There is a small incidence of pupils, mainly older ones, not always behaving appropriately; this disrupts some teaching.

13. Pupils enjoy school. They apply themselves well, are enthusiastic, keen to be involved and to contribute to their learning in lessons and other activities. They are keen to get on with their work, co-operate in joint activities and work hard individually. These positive attitudes enable them to get good results from lessons, especially when teaching is stimulating.

14. The development of pupils' knowledge about social, moral, cultural and spiritual issues is a strong feature of the school's work. They learn about their immediate school community and the local area. The school council provides a useful outlet for their ideas and opinions, and they enjoy having their views recognised. Pupils' extensive participation in the wide range of clubs and trips available develops their social skills when mixing with other children and adults. The school provides many opportunities to debate moral issues, and throughout the day pupils are reminded about rules of behaviour, fairness, and treating people with care and courtesy. They have a clear

understanding of the differences between right and wrong. The development of their ideas about a multi-cultural society are promoted very well through a programme of multi-cultural events and by visitors to the school. Assemblies are taken by representatives from different religions and this promotes pupils' spiritual growth and religious knowledge.

15. Involvement in the many sporting, music and other clubs and events is extensive. During the inspection, the choir and sections of the orchestra performed in assemblies and rehearsed for their various events. Pupils enthusiastically take part in various sports events, including football, rugby, hockey, netball and aerobics activities. Pupils are also keen to take on responsibilities as 'monitors', as well as occasionally helping in the office.

16. Pupils with SEN are fully involved in all activities. In many lessons they are 'teamed' with other more able pupils who support them in their work. Relationships between pupils are good, and more able pupils ensure that pupils with SEN share in all their classroom discussions and in playground games. Pupils who are taken out of the class for special work participate happily and co-operate well with the teaching assistants who support them.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.3	School data	0.0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

17. Attendance levels have been consistently better than the national average for several years, and so far this year they have improved further to 96.8 per cent.

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	260	1	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed - White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3	0	0
Black or Black British - African	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	3	0	0

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

18. Although there have not been any exclusions this year, there was a problem last year when one pupil was excluded for a brief time for violent behaviour over a period of time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a sound quality of education. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. Levels of staffing are satisfactory, and the accommodation and learning resources are good. Links with parents, with the community and with other schools are very good. The care and guidance for pupils are good, and the support, advice and guidance they receive are satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory, but they are good in the Foundation Stage and in Year 7. The quality of the assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and Year 7 are good.
- Teachers' encouragement and engagement of pupils is good.
- Assessment information is not always used to match work closely to the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Good use is made of homework to support learning.
- The teaching of pupils with SEN is good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 54 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	9 (17%)	19 (35%)	26 (48%)	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.

19. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory.

20. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall, and varies from satisfactory to very good. As a result, children of all abilities achieve well. Procedures for assessing children's attainment and progress, and for using this information to plan future work are very good. Teachers are very thorough and conscientious, so much so that there is a danger that they will record more information than is useful or necessary. The arrangements for introducing the children to school are good. Reporting to parents is very good. Teaching in Year 7 is good overall. Teachers successfully engage pupils and prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

21. Teachers make good use of praise in encouraging pupils and this has a positive impact on their learning and on the progress they make. There are very good relationship between teachers and pupils, and when combined with exciting and interesting tasks, these ensure that pupils apply themselves well to their work. All teachers and learning assistants insist on high standards of behaviour and pupils respond accordingly, being polite and respectful to each other and to adults. This ensures that pupils are keen to take advantage of the learning opportunities available to them and that they enjoy coming to school.

22. During the last two years, the school has made good progress in establishing effective procedures for assessing the attainment of pupils and closely tracking their achievement. This was a weakness at the time of the previous inspection. However, the use made of this information to match work closely to the needs of individual pupils is inconsistent and limits the progress that some pupils make. The headteacher is aware of this and is working hard to ensure that no pupils underachieve by closely tracking progress.

23. Teachers make good use of a range of resources in lessons, particularly the interactive whiteboards that have recently been installed. When these are used well, pupils are more interested in teachers' explanations and their understanding is enhanced. The marking of pupils' work is thorough, and it often includes questions to evaluate understanding of the topics covered. Homework is set regularly and makes a good contribution to pupils' learning at home and at school.

24. Teaching and learning in English, mathematics and science is satisfactory. Lessons are well planned and good use is made of questioning to evaluate pupils' understanding. However, in a few lessons, work is not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities, and in these lessons pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Teaching and learning in ICT, geography and music are good. Lessons are effectively structured and engage pupils very well. Teaching in religious education, and in design and technology is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about teaching in history, art and design, and physical education.

25. Teachers plan thoroughly for pupils with SEN and make good provision for their work, either as part of the group or when they are taught separately by a teaching assistant. Teaching assistants are well trained and establish good relationships with pupils. Pupils respond well to the individual attention they receive, and maintain good levels of concentration and behaviour. In some lessons pupils' IEPs are insufficiently used to focus on their needs. Some teachers do not refer to the plans, and the school does not have a policy of using the plans as working documents or of deploying teaching assistants to observe and record the pupils' progress towards their targets. The school makes very limited use of behaviour plans for specific pupils.

The curriculum

26. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with **satisfactory** curricular opportunities. The opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum are **very good**. Statutory requirements with regard to religious education are met. The accommodation is **satisfactory** and learning resources are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is effective planning for provision in English and ICT.
- There is a very good range of extra curricular activities.
- Provision for personal social and health education (PSHE) is good.
- Provision for pupils with SEN is effectively managed.

Commentary

27. The main focus for the school since the previous inspection has been the improvement of standards in literacy, mathematics and science. Assessment data is now used effectively in literacy to track pupils' progress, and to identify the high and lower achievers. Progress in applying assessment data has been less successful in mathematics and science, but is satisfactory. Planning for provision in ICT has developed well, making good use of advances in technology and innovative programmes such as 'Net Detectives', which extends pupils' skills in literacy and develops their understanding of potential dangers in e-mail and texts from strangers. The exemplary development of 'reading journals' as an aid to literacy has attracted a very positive response from other schools and from the local authority. Curriculum provision for other subjects is satisfactory overall and is good in music.

28. Provision for pupils' PSHE is good. Lessons are timetabled for the subject, and teachers in other lessons help pupils to maintain high standards of behaviour and courtesy. Appropriate aspects of sex and relationships education are taught in Years 5 to 7, and these are linked to work in science. The school is preparing to undertake work which will lead to assessment for the 'Healthy Schools Award'. Policies in PSHE have been revised, and the school is developing the role of the pupils' school council.

29. Pupils are well prepared for their transfer to secondary schools. Teachers work hard to promote a secondary ethos for pupils in Year 7, and liaison between the school and a local secondary school is effective in preparing pupils for transfer. The head teacher meets regularly with colleagues from other schools and ensures that subject co-ordinators from the different schools can exchange information on pupils' abilities and on curriculum developments. Pupils attend induction days at their new school, and are visited by the head teacher and senior staff from the secondary school.

30. Provision for pupils with SEN is well managed. The pupils are fully included in all activities, and the curriculum is satisfactorily adapted to take account of their learning difficulties. Good records of their progress are maintained, and reviews of their IEPs involve appropriate written assessment for the benefit of parents and of the relevant professionals invited to the review. The school has made good use of competent teaching assistants to provide extra support to lower attaining pupils. Good progress has been made by the school in identifying and providing for pupils who are deemed gifted or talented in specific areas. A policy has been agreed by all staff, and teachers provide adapted work in classrooms to take account of the higher ability of these pupils. Pupils with identified talents in art and music have been encouraged to take part in workshops organised by the local authority. This recognition of pupils' higher ability in areas of learning has had a very positive effect on raising the self-esteem of these pupils.

31. Pupils' learning is significantly enriched by a wide range of extra curricular activities. There are very good opportunities for the pupils to take part in sport with other schools. For example, pupils are able to take part in local football tournaments and cross-country running events. Older pupils have been able to learn basic rowing and sailing skills. The school provides a wide range of cultural activities: pupils can take part in the school orchestra, a choir and various recorder groups. An 'environmental club' is popular with older pupils.

32. There is a satisfactory match of teachers and other staff to the curriculum. The school's accommodation is also satisfactory. Resources in most subjects are good, and they are very good in ICT. A well equipped computer suite and the recent installation of interactive whiteboards in classrooms has had a very positive effect on pupils' achievement.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **good** provision for the care, welfare, and health and safety of its pupils. It provides pupils with **satisfactory** support, advice and guidance, and takes **good** account of their views.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are very caring towards pupils, who consequently feel secure.
- There is rigorous provision to ensure pupils' welfare.
- The induction of pupils, and their progress through the school, are managed well.
- The school's management of health and safety arrangements ensures that pupils and staff work in a safe environment.
- The school takes account of pupils' opinions and ideas in its planning.

Commentary

33. On a day-to-day basis, staff have a caring approach to pupil's physical and emotional well being; this results in pupils trusting adults in the school and turning to them when problems arise. The school has careful arrangements, such as those for child protection, which ensure that the care and welfare of pupils is well managed. Seating and shade are provided in the play areas, supervision of breaks is well organised and various games are available for younger pupils. In lessons, any incidents are handled sensitively and appropriately.

34. Parents feel satisfied that the school takes good care of their children; pupils also appreciate this level of care. Induction of new pupils is handled sensitively. Many pupils come from outside the immediate catchment area. Whenever possible, the school arranges visits to playgroups and nurseries or homes to meet children and to learn about their capabilities. Parents and children visit the school, and there is a meeting for parents at the beginning of the year. Starting arrangements are slightly staggered to ensure that pupils are not overwhelmed. Teachers discuss pupils individually as they progress through the school, and 'hand over' to each other comprehensive details of their work and personal development. Often, teachers visit pupils in their classes and pupils visit their next classes to experience the new environment in which they will work.

35. There are good, systematic arrangements for ensuring the safety of pupils and staff. Maintenance of equipment and of the building is carried out in an efficient and timely way, and there are good processes, such as annual risk assessments, to ensure that problems are identified and dealt with. Full access for physically disabled people is not possible with current facilities, although classes could be relocated if necessary. Experienced staff lead the various trips, and they are currently reviewing and developing their risk assessment procedures.

36. Pupils' opinions are obtained through the school council, the elected members of which are briefed during class discussions. It meets regularly, although not frequently, represents all classes and years, and is managed by a teacher. Recent discussion has included topics relevant to pupils such as safety. Responses from staff are fed back to pupils by the head teacher in assembly. There are many ad-hoc discussions between staff and pupils, which also inform the school of pupils' opinions.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Partnership arrangements with parents are **very good**, as are links with the community and other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school makes very good use of its links with the community to support pupils' learning.
- The school benefits from its involvement with other local schools.
- Good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to secondary schools ensure smooth transition to new schools.
- Parents are very appreciative of the provision which the school makes for their children

Commentary

37. The school uses its community links very well to enrich pupils' learning, as well as to support their personal development. Visitors to the school include police and fire services, representatives of religious bodies, magicians and sports coaches. A wide range of visits includes those developing knowledge and understanding of geography, the environment and nature, as well as those giving opportunities to senior pupils for sport, adventure and team building activities. The choir sings at local events, older citizens are invited to carol singing and shows, and families and friends are welcomed to the Christmas and summer fairs.

38. The school is a member of a strong partnership with the main local secondary school and other feeder schools. It benefits from regular meetings of headteachers and other senior staff, as well as providing practical support for the teaching of modern foreign languages, and extra opportunities for gifted and talented pupils.

39. Most pupils move on to the one secondary school in the cluster described above, for which transfer arrangements are thorough. The headteacher visits this school to talk to pupils; teachers from the secondary school visit to meet the new pupils and to discuss their academic and personal development and individual needs. Pupils have a 'taster' day at the senior school and they work on joint projects to take to their new schools. Comprehensive records are passed to the new schools.

40. Parents comment very favourably on the school, praising all aspects of its work with their children; they feel particularly well informed by communications about the daily life of the school and any changes to arrangements. During the inspection, several parents expressed their satisfaction with the ethos of the school, the personal and academic development of their children, and the approachability and helpfulness of staff.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the headteacher is **good**. The leadership of other key staff and the overall effectiveness of management are **satisfactory**. The governance of the school is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher establishes a clear educational direction for the work of the school.
- Performance management for staff is good.
- The systems for collecting information about pupils' progress are good.
- Strategic planning is not sufficiently focussed and cohesive.
- The use of pupil performance data is at an early stage of development.
- The role of the Senior Management Team is not developed sufficiently.

Commentary

41. The headteacher has led the school well through its development over the past few years, and has maintained its popularity and caring ethos. Inevitably the main focus for the school leaders, including the governors, has been to remedy the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher has led this effort with energy and commitment, with the result that the school has shown good overall improvement. The headteacher's personal commitment to teaching is an important factor in maintaining positive relationships within the school community and a spirit of team work.

42. Part of the strategy to bring about improvements has been to bring more rigour to performance management. All teachers and their assistants have their performance reviewed annually and performance targets are agreed. One of these targets relates to the whole-school main focus, and for teachers, another is related to pupil performance. A good, flexible system of delegating responsibility for performance management helps to promote a shared commitment to it. Improvements in teaching have been promoted by lesson observations and interviews with individual teachers, although more still needs to be done to identify areas for improvement in pupils' learning.

43. The collection of end-of-year information about pupils' performance has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This information has been used to set individual targets for pupils especially in numeracy and literacy. The headteacher has personally committed himself to the efficient use of the new monitoring systems, and has ensured that teachers are aware of those pupils whose progress appears to be faltering. However, methods for following up these initiatives to ensure that they lead to improved achievement have not been thoroughly developed.

44. The senior management team (SMT) includes team leaders from the four different parts of the school and is very helpful for the dissemination of information and ideas. For example, a new method of reading assessment, which was developed in one part of the school, became whole school policy through the forum of the SMT. The structure also provides a potentially effective means of raising achievement by the adoption of rigorous systems whereby the progress of pupils who are underachieving can be monitored over short periods of time. However, the members of the SMT do not have plans for how this might be done, apart from an intention to review the progress of pupils. The priority of dealing with the key issues of the previous inspection has also inhibited the SMT's ability to develop a long-term vision for the school and its curriculum. However, there are individuals who are succeeding well in exercising their management responsibilities, including some subject co-ordinators, who have very well thought out plans for the development of their subjects and for raising achievement within them. Some co-ordinators have been in post for a relatively short time and have not yet made such an impact. The management of induction and continuing professional development are good.

45. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. The co-ordinator has led a determined effort to improve provision in the two years since the previous inspection. The indoor accommodation is good as are resources. However, the outdoor area is in need of improvement: the large grassy area can only be used when it is dry and there is no covered area, although there are plans to provide one. The available outdoor play equipment is satisfactory, having been extended recently.

46. Provision for pupils with SEN is well organised. All staff are aware of pupils' targets for improvement. The progress of the pupils is monitored each term to provide information for a review with parents of each pupil's progress against their individual education plan. The co-ordinator for special educational needs maintains good links with the local authority's Learning Support Service and other professionals, and makes good use of them in helping to assess the needs of individual pupils.

47. The co-ordinator maintains efficient records of each pupil's progress. Reviews of IEPs are conducted efficiently and take account of the views of each adult connected with the child. The Annual Review process for pupils with statements of special educational needs is managed well and within the required timescale. Although class teachers are responsible for the identification and teaching of pupils with SEN, the co-ordinator gives the teachers a high level of informed support and is influential in helping to identify suitable learning targets.

48. Governors of the school are experienced, and they demonstrate very good support for the work of the headteacher and the school in general. Governors are proud of the school and keen to articulate its strengths. However, governors are less confident about the strategic direction of the school and do not feel equipped to challenge the school leaders when necessary. The school improvement plan, to which the governors have numerous opportunities to contribute, lacks a clear focus. The headteacher has a number of clearly thought-out ideas for the development of the school following an imminent local reorganisation of schools. However, the governors tend to be too dependent on the headteacher's leadership on this and other strategic matters. Financial management is a notable exception to this: the finance committee, supported by a very efficient finance officer, has very firm control of finances and has made sensible contingency arrangements in preparation for the significant change the school is about to experience.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	846,624.00	Balance from previous year	67,508.00
Total expenditure	864,496.00	Balance carried forward to the next	49,636.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,513.00		

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the foundation stage is **good**.

49. Children in the Reception class get a good start to their education. The Reception class is divided into two groups, each in the care of a teacher, and is characterised by very good organisation and use of time, so that children are always purposefully involved in activities. The two teachers and their teaching assistants organise their own time to maximise the support that children receive.

50. All Reception children start school in September. Assessments are carried out shortly after children start school, and these show that the attainment on entry for the current intake is average, with very few children at either the lower end of the ability range or the higher. Last year the attainment on entry was below average, but an analysis of school records and children's work shows that these children achieved well: the majority reached the goals they were expected to reach by the end of the Reception Year and some progressed further.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main Strengths and Weaknesses

- Relationships are very good.
- The expectations of all adults for pupils' personal, social and emotional development are high.

Commentary

51. There are very well established routines for children to follow, for example when they arrive at school in the mornings and when it is time to pack up or move to another place. During the inspection, it was clear that, in the short time that they had been in school, children had already achieved very well in their ability to organise themselves, to listen and to follow instructions, and to treat school materials with respect. In the mornings, the majority select their own name label for registration, sort out their 'homework bag' and put away their playtime snack. When it is time to finish an activity, a short ring of the bell is all that is needed for children to busy themselves putting everything away. Children had already learnt that it is important to take turns. They all change their clothes independently and manage their own hygiene.

52. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. The whole staff place a great emphasis on developing independence, but at the same time, children feel very secure and there is always an adult on hand to help or reassure. Children are encouraged to express their feelings in a number of ways, including exploring how they feel when they are angry. There is a good balance between teacher-led activities and those about which children have to make choices and to initiate their own learning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide very focussed learning for children of different abilities.
- Achievement is good.
- Some opportunities for encouraging productive talk are missed.

Commentary

53. Teaching in this area of learning is good. A significant strength is the way in which work is closely adapted to meet the individual needs of children of different abilities. Teachers have whole group sessions when, for example, they might concentrate on some new letter sounds, and then follow this up with concentrated short sessions with smaller groups. Children learn letter sounds by associating them with actions as well as the letter. Much labelling within the classroom and teachers' use of flashcards, help build up a sight vocabulary of familiar words. In these ways children soon appreciate that print carries meaning; this is reflected in their play when, for example, they might decide to 'write' a letter. A range of opportunities to encourage writing is provided, so that, by the end of the year, the majority are beginning to convey their own thoughts in writing, with recognisable letters and words. Teachers could do more to make writing purposeful for children in the context of their play.

54. Spoken language is encouraged at all levels. In whole-group sessions, children are given time to put their thoughts into words. Teachers plan for the introduction of key vocabulary in all lessons. During the inspection, for example, children were learning positional language such as 'behind' and 'next to' by standing in different positions; in a lesson about construction, they revised the mathematical language used in describing shape. Teachers provide a range of interesting activities which encourage conversation. However, some adults do not always take opportunities to intervene to try to extend children's speaking and listening skills. From the very time that children start school, they are encouraged to appreciate books and stories by, for example, borrowing books from the class library, using 'big books' on the carpet and sharing books with older pupils. Homework is very well integrated into lessons, as children take home words and letter sounds to 'teach' their parents.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide very focussed learning for children of different abilities.
- Achievement is good.

Commentary

55. In the last two years, children's mathematical abilities when they enter school have not been as strong as in other areas of learning. However, good teaching resulted in most pupils reaching or getting very close to the Early Learning Goals for mathematical development at the end of last year. During the inspection, children were judged to be making good progress. Teachers organise whole-class sessions and group work for children of different abilities, so that children's individual

learning needs can be met. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection. Teachers use time very well, and planning is very thorough, so that these different sessions are very productive. Key vocabulary is identified and used accurately, so that, for example, children learn the term 'sphere' for a ball shape. Work in their books shows that children make good progress in counting, and in sequencing and combining numbers by counting on.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effective deployment of a part-time teacher promotes continuity.
- The interactive white boards are used effectively to promote children's learning.
- Children learn a variety of ways to record their work.

Commentary

56. The good teaching in this area of learning is well supported by a part-time teacher who teaches all the Reception children for one day each week. This arrangement is effective, and children build upon their skills and have a good range of experiences. Children observe patterns in the environment and replicate them back in the classroom, for example by building walls using large construction equipment. They are encouraged to notice changes in nature and record these, for example by drawing different stages of plant growth.

57. This area of learning is enhanced by visits and visitors, and since the previous inspection, teachers have made a special effort to invite visitors from different cultures. These visits have been followed up by providing children with dressing up clothes from different cultures. Christian and other festivals are represented in drawings and early writing. The new interactive whiteboards are already having a good impact on learning, as children use this powerful resource to practise handwriting and to make up sentences using picture cues. Learning is planned in mini-topics, which effectively varies the focus, and ensures a broad and balanced curriculum.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning of expressive movement is good.
- The use of large-scale equipment is limited by the outdoor arrangements.

Commentary

58. Children both move around the classroom and tackle modelling with malleable and construction materials with confidence. Teachers provide small-scale work, such as making a garden design or a paper doll, so that children develop their manipulative skills and the use of small tools such as scissors. In a music lesson, children moved rhythmically and in a well co-ordinated way in response to a tambourine beat and to music.

59. Teachers do the best they can with the facilities available to encourage the use of large-scale equipment and toys: children build with empty milk crates, 'paint' the sheds and walls with water, as well as developing confidence with play equipment such as bikes and slides. However, the hard

surface is very small and there is no covered area, so access is limited by the weather. The space available in the indoor playhouse is also limited, and this impedes the learning of co-ordinated movement. Despite these barriers, most children achieve the Early Learning Goals for physical development by the end of the year, as a result of good teaching.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of creative opportunities is provided.

Commentary

60. Teachers provide a variety of experiences and different media to promote children's creativity. The themes of the mini-topics help children to create narratives in their play. For example, during the inspection, learning opportunities were planned around the theme of 'favourite rhymes', so that some children played 'Little Miss Muffet' in the play house, while another was painting the same story, another was making pies for Simple Simon and a group of children designed a garden for Mary. Teachers introduce songs and sing them with the children in all sorts of lessons and situations, so that they are already building up a repertoire. Children were also observed responding very well to various stimuli, including stories, with voices and instruments. When children have opportunities to choose activities there are always creative options. The quality of teaching is good in this area, although more could be done to develop the language of creativity and to let children exercise personal preferences.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 and 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision in English is **good**; the progress seen at the previous inspection has been maintained.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers have a good knowledge of the literacy strand of the National Primary Strategy and apply its structure and approaches well to their teaching.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 3 to 7.
- Assessment is used well to focus on the standards attained by each pupil.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Some teachers do not sufficiently adapt their teaching or the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities.

Commentary

61. By the end of Year 2, pupils are likely to reach standards that are above national expectations in reading and writing. Their achievement is satisfactory in relation to their levels of attainment when they entered the school. By the end of Year 6, pupils attain well above national expectations particularly in writing. This represents good achievement. The progress is maintained into Year 7, and pupils leave the school with high standards of literacy. Owing to generally strong teaching and the effective use of assessment information, pupils make good gains in their learning, particularly in Years 3 to 7. Pupils with SEN make good progress, and the school has good structures to enhance the achievement of those pupils who speak English as an additional language.

62. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress in their listening skills, and this generally reflects the quality of teaching. Pupils listen best when they are interested in their work, for example in a Year 2 lesson in which pupils listened with great interest to a letter the teacher had written, which was linked to a story book and which used many words to express the sequence of events. The pupils' speaking skills are satisfactory. They are confident speakers and they are able to explain their work to visitors. However, their vocabulary is relatively limited. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening as they progress through the school. Teachers make good use of planned discussion and small group work, to encourage pupils' language development. Pupils benefit from specific work in poetry, which encourages their use of simile and comparisons, for example in a well structured lesson in a Year 3/4 class, in which pupils worked with partners to create imaginative descriptions of 'The Magic Box'. By Year 7, pupils are expected to take part in class and group discussions about the style and likely outcomes of their reading. They are confident in answering questions and in presenting their ideas to the class. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, helped by the sensitive use of questioning. They are encouraged to participate in class and group discussions, and teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in adapting vocabulary and the complexity of sentences to pupils' increasing level of understanding.

63. Pupils benefit from regular reading practise. There is an appropriate concentration in Years 1 and 2 on the gradual acquisition of reading skills, supported by good teaching of letter sounds and combinations. Books are well graded in terms of difficulty, and pupils are encouraged to take them home to read. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are independent readers. Pupils have clear targets in their reading throughout Years 3 to 6. As pupils progress through the school, they are introduced to reading material which increases their experience of and confidence with a variety of styles, and they are given many opportunities to analyse and discuss their reading. Pupils benefit from very good internet access so they are able to read and research topics. Teachers are proficient in motivating pupils to read widely and to summarise their reading in well-written reports and accounts of their research. The school has introduced an innovative and very successful use of 'reading journals'. Through very well prepared work and enthusiastic teaching, pupils are

encouraged to read a wide range of fiction books, and to maintain a journal which records their opinion of the book, and incorporates structured questions to help their understanding and enjoyment. Use of the scheme has enhanced the progress of pupils and has attracted the interest of other schools and the local authority. By Year 7, higher attaining pupils have reached a level at which they can confidently describe the themes and characters of their books, and they are able to identify the style and features used by their favourite authors.

64. Writing throughout the curriculum shows substantial progress over time. In Year 2, pupils write in short sentences with increasing accuracy in spelling and punctuation. The most capable pupils accurately use full stops and capital letters. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move through the school, and by Year 6 most use punctuation and grammar accurately. Higher attaining pupils write with fluency and confidence; this was evident from work on the writing of reports, and imaginative stories and letters, which pupils were able to write in a variety of appropriate styles. However, the over-emphasis on repetitive grammar and spelling exercises inhibits pupils' writing, and they are not given enough opportunities to write poetry or imaginative prose. When teachers do encourage pupils to write imaginatively, pupils make good progress, as was seen, for example, in impressive displayed work on alliterative poems and in the developing vocabulary skills of pupils in a Year 3/4 class writing descriptions of 'The Magic Box'. Pupils with SEN are well supported and make good progress towards the targets in their IEPs. Teaching assistants are well deployed in working with small groups and with individuals to enhance literacy skills.

65. Teaching and learning in lessons is generally satisfactory and has some good features. Lessons are well planned, and teachers make good use of the structure and curriculum of the literacy strand of the National Primary Strategy. Teachers use questions well to develop pupils' ability with spoken language, and to establish their level of knowledge and understanding. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between teachers and pupils, and the enthusiasm with which the pupils approach their work. In the best lessons, teachers maintain a brisk pace and give the pupils work which is well adapted to their ability and which challenges them. However, in some lessons teachers do not sufficiently adapt work for the different ability levels of pupils, and in these lessons some pupils are not sufficiently challenged.

66. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress has become a strength, and both the higher attaining pupils and those who are not making sufficient progress have been identified. Information from the analysis of performance data and a scrutiny of pupils' work, is used to guide teachers in the use of effective teaching approaches. While this information clearly shows the progress pupils have made, it is not used sufficiently by some teachers to focus on the achievement of each pupil within the lessons, or to guide planning. However, pupils are well aware of their targets for improvement and were seen on many occasions to refer to them as they began their work. The co-ordinator is active in monitoring standards, and she has prepared an effective self-review document, which has led to a well prepared action plan for development in the subject. Resources are good. The teaching is enhanced by a good range of books. The library is well stocked, efficiently managed and fully computerised, allowing easy access to the books available on specific topics.

Language and Literacy across the curriculum

67. The development of language and literacy skills across the curriculum is good. Pupils are encouraged to listen to others and to express opinions in all subjects, and they are encouraged to read widely and to research a variety of topics. Pupils use their writing skills effectively to report on their research and to record information, for example in history and geography. Pupils' learning in all subjects is enhanced by the progress they make in developing their literacy skills.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Year 7 benefit from teaching by specialist teachers of Spanish and German from the local specialist language school.
- Pupils in Year 7 have the opportunity for one-to-one conversation with a native French speaker.

Commentary

68. Standards are in line with national expectations by the age of 12, and pupils make satisfactory progress. In two out of the three lessons observed in Year 7, although the quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory, the behaviour of a few pupils was poor, and this detracted from the pace of the lesson. In the third lesson, pupils lacked confidence in their speaking and had too few opportunities to converse. Pupils had good opportunities to listen to spoken language, but would have benefited further from a wider range of resources, such as language videos. As it was not possible to see Years 5 and 6 French lessons, no judgements can be made about the subject in these years. In Year 7, pupils have good opportunities to choose to learn other languages, which prepares them well for secondary school. Assessment is satisfactory and linked well to modules of work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2, Year 6 and Year 7.
- Since the previous inspection, the proportion of higher attaining pupils reaching above national standards has increased substantially, and in Year 2 standards are now in line with national expectations.
- Good assessment and analysis of the areas of weakness in pupils' performance has led to measures being put in place to raise standards further, but the use of assessment information is inconsistent.
- The teaching and learning observed in lessons during the inspection was often good.
- The use of interactive white boards and the ample resources, support learning well.
- The new subject co-ordinator has a determination to raise standards and has a clear vision as to how to do so

Commentary

69. Pupils enter Year 1 at levels of attainment expected for their age, and their achievement by the end of Years 2, 6 and 7 is satisfactory. In the national tests, standards are average. Over the last four years, standards have risen steadily, but they dipped in 2003. This year there has been an increase in the percentage of pupils reaching above average levels at the end of Year 6, due to improved preparation for the national tests. However, compared to all schools and to similar schools, standards are average. There have been significant developments in provision very recently and these continue. The head teacher, with support from the local education authority advisory service, has carried out a full review of pupils' performance, clearly identifying where pupils do not perform well enough. The monitoring and tracking, and assessment of pupils' progress are good. They have led to a focus on specific areas such as problem solving and to the setting of targets to take pupils from their present National Curriculum Level to the next. This programme is not fully in place, and teachers' expertise in using assessment information for planning lessons is

satisfactory, but it is still developing. However, there are pockets of good practice. Standards at the end of Year 2 have improved since the previous inspection, but standards at the end of Year 6 are not as high.

70. Teaching and learning in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall, but there is some good and some very good teaching. Where teaching is good, it is characterised by pace, and teachers having good knowledge of the numeracy strand of the National Primary Strategy, and very good knowledge of what pupils can do and what they need to do next. Teachers use the good range of resources, including the interactive whiteboard, to involve all pupils actively and enthusiastically in their learning. For example, pupils traced 'jumps' backwards and forwards along a number line. Where teaching is weaker, lessons begin at a slow pace, without quick mental recall questions, and pupils become restless and noisy. Planning of work for pupils with special educational needs is good, and they achieve well, benefiting from good support from learning support assistants. Pupils are encouraged to buy multiplication tables CDs to support learning as part of regular homework tasks; this is a good innovation.

71. The new co-ordinator has the determination and the commitment to raise standards, and has made a good start to managing the subject. The curriculum is now satisfactory across the school, following a review of the Year 1 and 2 programme of work. There is now an appropriate focus on learning strategies and good use of resources, such as small whiteboards and abacuses, to promote active learning. The head teacher has observed teaching throughout the school and this is now being undertaken by the new co-ordinator.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. The use of mathematics across the school is satisfactory. Pupils draw and interpret graphs and charts when surveying favourite foods. Information and communication technology is used effectively to display information. Pupils begin to grasp the concept of time in Years 3 and 4 through historical number lines back to 1500 BC.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are good at end of Years 6 and 7, and pupils achieve well.
- Pupils' scientific enquiry skills are promoted well.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

73. Standards of attainment by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations. Pupils enjoy the practical enquiry approach adopted by teachers, and develop a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the different aspects of science. Pupils in Year 1 were observed classifying sounds according to how they are produced, while Year 2 pupils enjoyed a carousel of activities designing a 'fair' test to see whether the size of their home-made shakers or the materials they filled them with, affected the sound produced.

74. Standards at the end of Year 6 are good, and pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy science and have frequent opportunities to carry out investigations and to arrive at their own conclusions. Standards are also above expectations in Year 7, and pupils continue to make good progress. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of scientific facts, such as the workings of the

digestive system and the separating of substances by filtration. They achieve satisfactorily in applying their scientific enquiry skills, but have few opportunities to organise and carry out their own experiments in response to a problem set by their teachers. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants.

75. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. No lessons were observed in Year 7, so no overall judgement can be made of the quality of teaching. However, a scrutiny of pupils' work from the previous year indicates that teaching is good. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory overall and sometimes good. In the better lessons, the pace and challenge of work was good, and pupils applied themselves well and made good progress. Particular strengths of the teaching are teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the curriculum, their use of questioning to make pupils think about their work, and the good relationships they enjoy with their classes. These ensure that pupils develop good attitudes to their learning, enjoy the subject and are keen to do well. In a few lessons, assessment information was not used well to provide challenging work for pupils of different abilities and this limited their achievement. Teachers have a good rapport with pupils and generally manage their behaviour well.

76. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The two part-time co-ordinators work well together. Through the monitoring of teachers' planning and the sampling of pupils' work, the co-ordinators have a clear idea of pupils' standards of achievement and the quality of the curriculum. Pupils' attainment and progress is closely tracked through regular assessment at the end of modules of work, and through detailed analysis of national and other tests. However, teachers' use of this information to plan the next stage of pupils' learning lacks consistency. Resources for the subject are good: they are well organised and easily accessible. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources in the subject are very good.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school.
- Information and communication technology is used well throughout the curriculum.
- The subject is well led and managed.
- Assessment in the subject is underdeveloped.

Commentary

77. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection, most notably in the strength of curriculum planning and the way in which the technology is used across the curriculum to support learning. Pupils' achievements are promoted by an innovative curriculum, which is well led and managed.

78. The progress made by pupils is apparent in their use of increasingly complex skills as they get older. By Year 2, pupils have mastered simple skills such as changing fonts, and creating patterns and graphs. They also use commercial software in art to compile simple freehand images. Pupils in Years 3 to 7 build on the skills they have learned, and increasingly use them to improve and support their work. For example, some pupils in Year 4 produce striking posters using a mixture of print and graphics; pupils in Year 6 work on spreadsheets and make very good use of the internet to research their work. These Year 6 pupils have produced a multi-media presentation in geography about the local area; they can also use a graphics package to create scale drawings of their classroom. By Year 7, pupils work confidently and independently to produce graphs and charts linked to their work in mathematics.

79. The curriculum has been significantly enhanced by the very good resources now available for teaching the subject. Equipment is well maintained by a full-time technician. Teachers make effective use of interactive whiteboards to develop pupils' understanding, and they use the well-equipped computer suite effectively to encourage pupils' reading and research skills through work on the Internet. Good use is made of new programs such as 'Net Detectives'. This Internet-linked programme is effective in developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding of e-mail in real life situations, and has significantly enhanced their understanding of safety in communicating electronically with strangers. The programme has also given pupils the impetus to write and to develop their communication skills in responding to the rapid exchange of information generated by the programme, and in discussing alternative strategies with partners. This work is well supported in lessons by the local police and by a governor of the school.

80. Teaching in the subject is good. Teachers have a good command of the relevant skills and knowledge, and they plan interesting lessons and manage them well. Pupils respond very well to the subject, and they are keen to work on the computers, often concentrating for long periods without supervision, in order to solve problems and to produce a satisfactory finished piece of work. Lessons are characterised by the good relationships between staff and pupils, and by the willingness of pupils to work together. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement, and pupils are motivated to work hard to meet the challenging targets they are set. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. Teachers give a high degree of individual tuition to pupils who are experiencing problems with the work to ensure that they make satisfactory progress. Pupils enjoy their work. They are able to explain procedures and techniques, and as they move through the school, they take pride in taking increasing responsibility for their work.

81. The subject is well led and managed by a very enthusiastic co-ordinator. She adopts very good monitoring strategies for reviewing the curriculum and for ensuring the efficient use of resources. She has developed the curriculum very well by her enthusiasm for continually improving both resources and the standard of teaching. She has applied her own extensive knowledge of information and communication technology to good effect in supporting other teachers and increasing their confidence. However, assessment in the subject is at an early stage of development. Specific records of pupils' attainment and progress are just being established.

Information and Communications Technology across the curriculum

82. Where possible, information and communications technology is used extensively to support learning in every subject. Teachers are generally confident in the subject and teaching has been enhanced through the growing use of interactive whiteboards. Computer aided learning is regularly used effectively in mathematics and science, and is used well in literacy work to promote the pupils' reading and research skills.

HUMANITIES

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of visitors to the school.
- Teachers develop good relationships with pupils.
- Opportunities are missed for enlivening teaching by making links with other subjects.

Commentary

83. Since the previous inspection, the school has made a special effort to improve provision by inviting visitors from different backgrounds and cultures. These visits, which were referred to earlier, have included representatives of different religions and have raised pupils' awareness of world religions. During the inspection, a visitor talked to the whole school about Islam and a Church of England minister visited Year 7. There are also examples of pupils talking to their own class or visiting other classes to talk about their religion.

84. These experiences enrich the learning about religion. However, an examination of pupils' books shows that teachers have fairly limited ideas about how pupils can record their thoughts and knowledge: teachers are not taking advantage of the many opportunities available through art, music, dance and drama to make religious education a creative and enjoyable subject. A significant exception to this was observed during the inspection, when a teacher made her lesson with Year 3 and 4 pupils about Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem both fun and informative, by using a variety of resources and methods, including role-play.

85. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In all classes teachers enjoy good relationships with their pupils and this facilitates quiet, well-ordered discussions. Achievement is satisfactory overall, and pupils' knowledge and understanding meets the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. The subject co-ordinator has only just taken responsibility for the subject, but has made a satisfactory start to carrying out an audit. She is committed to making religious education a positive experience for pupils. Teachers assess their pupils at the end of each unit of work, but there are no systems in place to ensure consistency, progression and continuity through the school. Improvement from the time of the previous inspection has been satisfactory.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teacher's planning is aimed at making the subject relevant to pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good in Years 3 to 7.

Commentary

86. A significant characteristic of the teaching and learning of geography is the effort made by teachers to make the subject relevant. During the inspection, Years 3 and 4 were using the garden area, which can be seen from their classroom window, to develop geographical vocabulary and discuss changes to the environment. Year 5 and 6 were studying the impact of a simulated proposal for a by-pass in Bletchley. Year 7 were analysing the connections between themselves and other parts of the world, showing how they are dependent on others for consumable products and materials.

87. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2. However, evidence from pupils' books and work on display suggest that standards reached by pupils in Year 2 are in line with expectations. Lessons observed in Years 3 to 7 had good pace and teachers used good resources to enhance their teaching, so that pupils' achievement was good. Overall, achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, with pupils reaching expected standards. In Year 7, pupils' productivity increases dramatically and they achieve well, reaching standards above expectations. Homework is used very effectively with these older pupils to promote their knowledge and understanding.

88. The above average standards in Years 2 and 6 reported at the time of the previous inspection have not been maintained, mainly due to differences in the ability levels of different groups of pupils, and more pupils with special educational needs. However, the quality of teaching has been maintained, and the school has developed international links with other schools using e-mail. The management of the subject is satisfactory, as is the overall improvement from the previous inspection.

89. It was not possible to observe any **history** lessons during the inspection, so no judgements are made about either the quality of teaching or the quality of overall provision. However, an examination of pupils' work in their books and on display, indicates that standards achieved by Year 2 pupils meet national expectations. Overall, pupils achieve well, so that by the time they reach the end of Year 6 and when they leave the school at the end of year 7, standards are above expectations. A significant feature in Years 5 and 6 is the opportunity that pupils have to interpret contemporary documents from different periods. In Year 7, pupils work very hard and produce many pieces of work, notably reports of the outcomes of their individual research. The subject co-ordinator makes a good contribution to the provision in history by modifying the scheme of work to take advantage of local resources, providing good teaching resources, supporting colleagues with their teaching plans and, occasionally, by supporting them in lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

90. **Art and design** was not a main focus of the inspection, but two lessons were observed. Additionally, pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils and staff. From this evidence, standards are in line with expectations in Years 1 to 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily; standards are above expectations in Year, 7 and pupils' achievement is good. The analysis of pupils' work throughout the school shows that a wide range of techniques and media are used, such as architectural drawings of building like the Taj Mahal, charcoal and paint drawings of Roman pots, and pen and ink portraits. The co-ordinator manages the subject well and monitors standards through graded collections of pupils' work, and through assessed pieces of work across the school. There are good resources to support teaching and learning.

91. No lessons were observed in **physical education**. However, discussions with pupils and staff, and short observations of pupils working indicate that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. In discussion, pupils felt they had many opportunities to take part in sports lessons, clubs and inter-school fixtures. They enjoyed the subject and thought that the school's sports facilities were good and well used. This was evident from class timetables and the impressive list of after-school activities. The school has good indoor and outdoor sports facilities and resources. There are good opportunities for pupils to learn to swim and the vast majority of pupils achieve well in swimming.

Design and technology

The provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils encounter a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils achieve well when working with fabric.

Commentary

92. From the observation of lessons, and a scrutiny of teacher's planning and pupils' work, standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2, 6 and 7. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Photographic evidence shows good achievement by the pupils in working with fabric. In Year 2, pupils made colourful coats for Joseph

in a topic linking well with religious education, and some pupils in Year 4 had demonstrated good progress in sewing images of Ancient Greek letters. By Year 6, pupils can cut out and sew slippers. In an interesting lesson in year 7, the pupils were introduced to the marketing and social implications of packaging and logos. Pupils in all years take part in food technology lessons, often linked to work in other subjects, such as in tasting exotic foods to enhance awareness of different countries and cultures.

93. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. In satisfactory lessons the pupils work with interest and respond well to practical activities. The pace of lessons is sometimes slowed because lessons last too long and time is not well used. In these lessons the level of challenge for higher ability pupils is too low, in part because the range of activities is limited to drawing, and this detracts from their overall achievement. In the best lessons, pupils are fully involved in the design process and take pride in making a finished article to a high standard. In a good lesson in a Year 3/4 class, which linked successfully to work in mathematics, pupils learned how to measure accurately the dimensions of a box, and they made good gains in their understanding of square corners and diagonals. As the lesson progressed, the pupils were able to realise their designs, through cutting and folding, and were pleased with their efforts.

94. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has monitored the curriculum and teachers' planning to ensure that the curriculum is satisfactory, and has instituted a system of assessment, based upon pupils' self-assessment. The co-ordinator monitors classroom practice, and often works with class teachers to support and promote pupils' learning.

Music

The provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils have very good opportunities to develop their musical skills through lessons, school events and working with professional musicians.
- There are good opportunities to play and listen to music from different cultures.

Commentary

95. Standards and achievement by the end of Year 2 are good, and by the end of Years 6 and 7 they are very good. Since the previous inspection there has been good improvement in the provision for pupils in Years 1 and 2, both in the planned work and in developing the expertise of teachers: the quality of teaching is now good. The range of resources and opportunities for music from different cultures has been widened to include gospel singing, African drumming, samba and jazz. Music from different cultures features well in assemblies, such as those for Eid. The co-ordinator offers musical opportunities every lunchtime, and a professional composer and musician takes orchestra practices each week. During the inspection, orchestra practice featured pupils confident enough to improvise jazz melodies. Groups of pupils have won awards in local festivals, and juniors sing in up to four-part arrangements, while Years 1 and 2 manage two parts. The quality of singing in assemblies is of a high standard and there are many opportunities for pupils to perform. For example, in an assembly for the whole school, two pupils played the piano accompaniment while the choir led the singing.

96. In the lessons and video recordings observed, activities are exciting and challenging. Where taught by non-specialist teachers, learning is effective and pupils handle instruments with very good control, showing how much they enjoy music. The interactive whiteboard is used effectively to provide a 'virtual keyboard' in Years 5 and 6. Pupils tackle musical composition with a confidence that builds upon early experience of using percussion in Years 1 and 2 to express moods and to

beat rhythms. Many pupils play instruments and have individual lessons in Years 3 to 7, and this helps them to support their peers in small group activities within lessons. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership, and music contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education and citizenship

97. Only two lessons were observed in Years 4 to 6. The provision from Year 1 to 6 is good. Statutory requirements are met for citizenship in Year 7, and for sex and drugs education. In a Year 3/4 class, by the use of sticky glitter, pupils learned very effectively how germs are passed by hand, and this led to valuable discussion about cleanliness. Year 6 pupils engaged in highly realistic Internet role-play as they worked in detective teams on real-life scenarios, learning to understand complex issues about personal safety. With the community policeman supporting them, pupils learned important lessons to prepare them well for adult life. Personal and social development is also addressed in circle time, through religious education, geography, assemblies and in the school council. Pupils are encouraged to use their initiative; for example, they were organising a talent show to raise money for charity. There are many opportunities for personal development, through sports, music, environmental, knitting and indoor clubs; visits are made, such as a day spent in France, and visitors come to the school, such as the Hindu teacher from the multicultural centre, who talked about family life in relation to culture and beliefs.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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