

INSPECTION REPORT

THURLEIGH LOWER SCHOOL

Thurleigh, Bedford

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109486

Headteacher: Mrs Ingrid Bell

Lead inspector: Mr Alan Fullwood

Dates of inspection: 11 – 12 January 2005

Inspection number: 268121

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	51
School address:	High Street Thurleigh Bedford Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK44 2DB
Telephone number:	01234 771252
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Brown
Date of previous inspection:	7 June 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the village of Thurleigh to the north of Bedford. Children's attainment on entry to the school is average overall. There are 51 full-time equivalent pupils on roll, taught in 3 mixed-age classes and the school is smaller than an average primary school. Currently there are 30 boys and 27 girls, some of whom attend part-time in the nursery. The socio-economic indicators for the area served by the school are average. Pupils are mainly of white ethnic origin but eight pupils are from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. Two pupils, approximately 4 per cent, have special educational needs. This is below the national average. The school gained the Investors in People Award in 2003 and the Healthy Schools Award in 2004.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21184	Mr Alan Fullwood	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Music Physical education
9712	Mrs Jan Barber	Lay inspector	
19852	Mr Michael Fowler	Team inspector	English as an additional language Special educational needs English Information and communication technology Religious education Geography History Personal, social, health and citizenship education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Thurleigh Lower School is an effective school that provides a good education for all its pupils. Teaching and learning are good and pupils achieve well as a result. Leadership and management are good. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards in English and mathematics are well above average at the end of Year 2.
- A significant number of pupils in the current Year 4 lack confidence in their knowledge of number facts.
- Children in the Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 3 and 4 achieve well, in Years 1 and 2 they achieve very well.
- Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs.
- Assessment information is used very well to match work closely to the needs of individual pupils and to track their progress and attainment.
- The school is effective in promoting pupils' personal development very well.
- The leadership and management of the school are good.

Improvement since the last inspection is good. Standards have risen significantly at the end of Year 2 and are improving at the end of Year 4. The school has worked successfully to overcome the key issues for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection. Very good progress has been made in establishing effective assessment and tracking procedures and this has ensured that teaching and learning is of good quality throughout the school. Good progress has also been made in improving the presentation of pupils' work. The school has developed good self-evaluation procedures including establishing regular procedures for monitoring teaching and learning. The school is well-placed to secure further improvement under the good leadership of the headteacher and senior teacher.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	E	A	A*	A*
writing	D	A	A*	A*
mathematics	C	C	A*	A*

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

Overall pupils' achievement is good and very good in Years 1 and 2. The results of national tests in 2004 at the end of Year 2 show that standards in reading, writing and mathematics have improved significantly in recent times and are very high in comparison with national averages for all schools and in comparison with similar schools. Standards have improved above the national trend since the last inspection. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Standards are also good in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE).

Standards of attainment at the end of Year 4, when pupils leave the school, are above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Standards are above expected levels in ICT, RE and art and design.

Overall, children's attainment in the Foundation Stage is on track to exceed the goals children are expected to reach by the end of the reception year in all areas of learning. Children make good progress and achieve well in relation to their average attainment on entry to the school.

Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set in their Individual Education Plans and receive good support from teachers and teaching assistants.

Overall, pupils' attitudes to school, and their behaviour, are good. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory but has improved this year. **The promotion of pupils' values and personal qualities is very good.**

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good education. The quality of teaching and learning are good overall. Across the school teaching is good and very good in Years 1 and 2. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers make very good use of assessment information to plan challenging work to match the needs of pupils of all abilities. Teaching successfully encourages and engages the pupils but activities are not always stimulating enough to motivate pupils to give of their best.

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

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The governance of the school is good and governors carry out their roles with diligence and enthusiasm and meet all statutory requirements. The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear educational direction to the work of the school and is ably assisted by the senior teacher and other staff. Subject co-ordinators carry out their responsibilities well. The financial management of the school is very good and best value principles are applied very effectively.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views of the school are good and they are very supportive of it. The school is very popular in the area and the number of pupils attending the school has increased in recent years. Pupils' views of the school are positive. They feel supported well by teachers and teaching assistants and enjoy coming to school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important thing the school should do to improve is:

- Improve pupils' knowledge of number facts in mathematics in the current Year 4.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is good throughout the school and very good in Years 1 and 2. Standards are well above national expectations in English and mathematics and above expectations in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve well.
- Standards in English and mathematics at the end of Year 2 are well above expectations.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry is average overall. Children make good progress and achieve well due to the good teaching they receive and the good leadership of the Early Years co-ordinator. Children are on track to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year in each area of learning. This is an improvement since the time of the last inspection.
2. The results of the 2004 national tests in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 were very high average in comparison with all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools based on the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Standards have shown a consistent upward trend since 2002. Inspection evidence indicates that the attainment of the current group of Year 2 pupils is on track to be well above national expectations in all aspects of English due to very good teaching, particularly with regard to the better use and availability of assessment information to closely track pupils' attainment and progress and set challenging targets for improvement. Good leadership and management are successfully addressing weakness in pupils' writing skills through a strong, whole-school focus on developing writing across the curriculum. As a result standards are very good. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. There are no pupils identified with special educational needs in these year groups. Overall, standards in English have been improved since the last inspection.
3. The results of the 2004 national tests in mathematics at the end of Year 2 were very high in comparison with all schools nationally and in comparison with similar schools. Although varying from year to year, standards have improved since the last inspection. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are on track to be well above expectations and that pupils are achieving very well in relation to their attainment on entry to Year 1 and in relation to their capabilities. Good leadership and management have led to improvements in teaching which is of good quality. The analysis of pupils' performance in national tests has led to a greater emphasis on their problem solving skills and this is having a positive impact on the standards they attain. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
4. The results of statutory teacher assessments in science in 2004 at the end of Year 2 were very high in comparison with all schools and similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are above national expectations and that pupils are achieving well. The good quality of leadership and management of the subject contributes well to the standards pupils achieve. The greater emphasis given to the development of pupils' investigative skills is having a positive effect on standards and pupils' understanding of scientific concepts. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

5. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) at the end of Year 2 are above national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection. Good teaching ensures pupils learn a range of word-processing and data-handling skills and can use programs independently. Pupils' ICT skills are used well across the curriculum and access to an interactive whiteboard ensures that by the end of Year 2 pupils understand the power of ICT in organising and presenting information.
6. Standards of attainment in religious education at the end of Year 2 are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and have improved since the last inspection. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and teaching is good. Pupils achieve satisfactorily.
7. Standards in history and geography at the end of Year 2 are good and pupils achieve well. It was not possible to make overall judgements about standards in other subjects where work was only sampled.
8. Standards in English as the end of Year 4 are very good and pupils achieve well. Pupils have very good speaking, listening and reading skills and enjoy their language work. They understand the main themes and events in stories and make good use of reference books to find relevant information. Standards in writing are good. Realistic but challenging targets are set by the teacher and pupils are making good progress towards achieving them. The progress made by the small number of pupils with special educational needs is also good. Pupils have frequent opportunities to use their developing language and literacy skills in other curriculum subjects. Good use is also made of pupils' ICT skills in drafting and redrafting their written work. Standards have improved since the last inspection.
9. Standards in mathematics by the end of Year 4 are in line with national expectations. Pupils have made good progress since September but their progress in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2 is satisfactory. More able pupils are achieving very well and attain standards well above national expectations. However, a significant number of lower attaining pupils lack confidence in mathematics. Good teaching is ensuring that these pupils will achieve well and reach the standard expected by the time they leave the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
10. Standards in science at the end of Year 4 are good and pupils achieve well. The good quality of leadership and management of the subject contributes well to the standards pupils achieve. The greater emphasis given to the development of pupils' investigative skills is having a positive effect on standards and pupils' understanding of scientific concepts. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.
11. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) at the end of Year 4 are above national expectations and have been maintained since the last inspection. Good teaching ensures pupils learn to reorder their work to write short accounts and stories. Pupils' ICT skills are used well across the curriculum.
12. Standards of attainment in religious education at the end of Year 4 are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and have improved since the last inspection. Year 4 pupils present their work neatly and understand that different religions provide believers with rules for living that are very similar. They have good attitudes to the subject and are respectful of the belief of others.
13. Standards in art and design, history and geography are good and pupils achieve well. It was not possible to make overall judgements about standards in other subjects where work was only sampled.
14. Children with special needs make good progress and this progress is monitored well. They benefit from the small classes in which they learn and from the extra support given to them. As a result, they achieve well in terms of the targets contained in their Individual Education Plans. Pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds achieve well in relation to their capabilities

and are given any necessary support they need. Consequently, their parents are pleased with their progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Other aspects of their personal development, including their moral and social development are very good. Spiritual and cultural development are good. The good quality provision in these aspects have been maintained since the last inspection. The attendance is in line with the level expected for similar schools, but there has been an improvement in the present school year to higher than average attendance.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils develop a sense of confidence and responsibility.
- Relationships are very good throughout the school.
- Attendance levels are in line with similar schools. The school has good procedures for ensuring good attendance, and this, coupled with an initiative from the governors to write to all parents encouraging good attendance, has resulted in a good improvement in the figures in this school year.
- Staff are very good role models for the pupils.

Commentary

15. Attitudes to learning are good throughout the school. Children make a good start in the nursery and reception class. They are confident, quickly settling into school routines. They establish very good relationships with each other, with adults and with visitors to the classroom. They are used to working independently and in small groups. They concentrate and complete the task in hand, asking for help when needed. In a free choice lesson, under fives listened well, did as they were asked, moved the equipment safely and made good progress in role play activities. They are continually encouraged to feel confident about what they achieve and so, by the time they leave the reception class, the vast majority achieve the goals they are expected to reach in personal, social and emotional development.
16. These positive attitudes continue as they progress up the school. The pupils become increasingly independent and self-confident, for example, when selecting suitable materials for their work. When they are asked to work in groups or pairs they do so willingly, encouraging and supporting each other positively. Pupils listen attentively to their teacher's instructions and so know what they should be doing and get on with their work independently. In most lessons pupils concentrate well and finish the tasks they are given. They are keen to answer questions and to be actively involved in lessons.
17. Both in lessons and around the school, pupils behave well. Parents are happy with the standards set by the school. Pupils respond positively to the good example set by adults in the school, who consistently use praise and encouragement in their dealings with pupils. However, when activities are not stimulating they can quickly become silly and not apply themselves well to their work. Class rules are discussed and agreed with even the youngest pupils so that the high expectations of teachers are clear. Adults work hard to support those few who find it difficult to behave and there were no exclusions last year. Pupils are invariably polite.
18. Pupils get on well with each other in the playground, where they are well supervised. There was no evidence of bullying or harassment during the inspection. Bullying is not perceived as an issue by parents, pupils or staff and incidents are dealt with promptly and effectively. 'Circle Time', when pupils have opportunities to discuss personal issues, has been used

successfully to curb any tendency to bullying. Pupils are taught to be aware of the feelings of

others and to show consideration. Older pupils look after younger ones and are sensitive to their needs and feelings.

19. Pupils respond very well to the school's effective provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The sensitively delivered assemblies, structured religious education programme, the experience of working with a variety of other pupils in groups, and the high profile given to respecting others, enable pupils to appreciate and value differences in each other's backgrounds. Relationships at all levels throughout the school are very good. The staff treat pupils with respect and this example is followed by the pupils who are sensitive to the needs of others. Pupils have a very good appreciation of what is right and wrong and reflect the fairness and caring attitudes displayed by their teachers. Teachers encourage pupils not only to express their own feelings, but also to consider and respect those of others.
20. The provision for the social development of pupils is very good. Social development is encouraged by the expectation that pupils will take responsibility for a variety of tasks within the classroom and around the school. Pupils are taught the responsibilities of living in a community. The school also helps to foster a caring attitude towards others through its support of various charities. The provision for the cultural development of pupils is good. Pupils are given information about other cultures through art and design and religious education and about English culture through history, music and English. The school organises various educational visits and visitors to provide this.
21. Many pupils take part in day-to-day routines by helping, for example, to take the register to the office and even the youngest children show independence by selecting activities, whether in lessons or at play. As they progress further through the school, opportunities are given for becoming monitors and for supervising the library. Pupils are eager to participate in the School Council, which has at least one representative from each year group. This has been instrumental in raising funds for play equipment and also in initiating the idea of a Buddy Bench in the playground where pupils can sit if they feel lonely.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.0	School data	0.2
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.

22. Attendance at 94.8% is in line with the national median for similar schools. Good procedures are in place to monitor attendance and to improve that of poor attenders who lower the average considerably. Due partly to an initiative from the governors of writing to all parents to encourage good attendance, the figure for the Christmas term is 97.12%, which is higher than average for similar schools. The unauthorised absence has decreased from 0.2% to zero. There are clear procedures for following up any absence and registers are completed in accordance with statutory requirements.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions in the last reporting year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good. The curriculum is good and is enriched by a variety of extra-curricular activities. Levels of staffing, the accommodation and learning resources are good. Links with parents and the community are good and links with other schools are very good. Pupils' care, guidance and support are very good.

Teaching and learning

Generally, teaching and learning are of consistent good quality. The quality of assessment of pupils' work is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage, in all areas of learning, is good.
- Work is matched well to the needs of different groups of pupils.
- Good use is made of assessment information to challenge pupils and to track their progress and attainment.
- The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2	18	2	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.

23. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good. The teachers provide a carefully planned programme of stimulating activities that extends and enhances children's learning. The teachers introduce literacy and numeracy lessons effectively so that reception aged pupils are ready for Year 1. The nursery nurse and teaching assistants play a valuable role in the teaching programme. Regular day-to-day assessments are used effectively to prepare appropriate work for pupils. All staff have a secure understanding of the needs of young children.
24. The quality of teaching and learning in the Years 1 and 2 is very good. A scrutiny of pupils' work so far this year indicates that they make very good progress. Teaching seen during the inspection was of consistently good quality and sometimes very good. Good use is made of a range of resources, including computers and an interactive whiteboard, to ensure that pupils are motivated well by the work they are presented with and give of their best in completing tasks.
25. The quality of teaching and learning in the Years 3 and 4 is good. As a result pupils are making good progress and achieving well. Lessons are well-planned and the teacher has high expectations of what pupils can achieve.
26. The school has made good progress in establishing very effective procedures for assessing the attainment of pupils and closely tracking their achievement. This was a weakness at the time of the last inspection. Very good use is made of assessment information to match work closely to the needs of all pupils of all backgrounds and ensure that they are successfully challenged and that the needs of the more able and those with special educational needs are met. This is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement as seen in the improving standards across the school. Teachers make regular ongoing assessments of how well pupils

have coped with their work and this is used to identify those who found the work too easy or are in need of additional support and advice.

27. Teachers make good use of praise in encouraging pupils and this impacts well on their learning and the progress they make. There are very good relationship between teachers and pupils and a consistent insistence on high standards of behaviour. Pupils respond accordingly, being polite and respectful to each other and to adults. However, after very good introductions given by teachers, the activities they provide are not always stimulating or interesting enough to ensure that pupils apply themselves as well as they might to their work. In such cases the pace of the lesson slows and pupils' progress is not as good as it could be.
28. Teachers consistently share with pupils what it is they are expected to have learned in lessons and evaluate with them how well they have achieved these objectives at the end of each session. Time is given to discuss with pupils what it is they need to do to improve their work but rarely are these comments written down in pupils' books to remind them of this advice. Homework is used satisfactorily to consolidate and extend pupils' learning at home.
29. Teaching and learning is most subjects, including English, mathematics, science, ICT and RE, are good. Particular strengths are teachers' good subject knowledge and the quality of their planning for different groups of pupils.
30. Teaching meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs well. They ensure that children are set tasks that are appropriate to their learning needs and make sure that pupils are located in suitable positions within the class. Teaching assistants are used well to support pupils, particularly when they are working independently on tasks which they find challenging. A good balance between support and the development of greater independence and integration into general class activities is carefully considered.

The curriculum

Provision for the curriculum is good. The school ensures all pupils have a good range of learning opportunities. It provides them with good opportunities to widen their experiences through extra-curricular activities and a variety of visitors to the school. The school's accommodation and resources support their learning well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Planning of the curriculum is very good and effective links are made between different subjects.
- The accommodation and resources are good and used well to support pupils' learning.
- Monitoring of the curriculum is thorough and comprehensive and leads to accurate evaluation of the curriculum.
- Development of the curriculum is well considered and effectively implemented.
- Preparation for the next stage of education is very good.
- The activities children undertake independently are limited in range and do not always challenge pupils sufficiently.

Commentary

31. The well-structured curriculum, which meets all statutory requirements, is a key factor in pupils attaining high standards and good achievement. All subjects benefits from a clear policy and a scheme for its implementation and good use is made of literacy, numeracy and Information and Communication Technology skills in all areas of the curriculum. These plans enable teaching and learning to be effective and purposeful and enable the quality of teaching to be consistently good. However the activities presented to the children to develop their independent learning are not yet as well structured and developed. The English curriculum is particularly well developed and organised and fosters high levels of motivation and involvement amongst the pupils. Teachers plan well for the differing ages and levels of attainment within the classes and this adds considerably to the quality of learning. The small

number of children with special educational needs receive good support and, as result their needs are well met. The inclusive nature of the curriculum ensures good learning opportunities for all pupils and there are clear plans for the teaching of Personal, Health and Social Education across the school.

32. There is a very thorough plan for the monitoring of the curriculum which leads to a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum and leads to good development when required. The preparation for later stages of education is very good not only within the school but also in preparation for schooling in later years. Careful plans are drawn up by teachers to ensure continuity in teaching approaches.
33. Although there is only a small number of teachers, they provide wide variety of out of school activities which include football, cricket, rugby, French, recorders and Maypole Dancing, whilst there are children who attend the Pre and After School Club. Members of the community also share their expertise with the school, while there is a good range of visits which are undertaken by the children which include the Bedford Museum and Art Gallery, a local Farm Centre and local churches.
34. The school building is well maintained and provides a good environment in which to learn. Classrooms are spacious for the number of pupils within them and the hall is well used for many aspects of the curriculum. The outside space is good and includes a well-maintained and developed playground and a large grassed area. The library is adequate and well-stocked and small banks of computers are available to each class. Resources are of good quality and are very well organised. Teachers make good use of them to support pupils' learning particularly in language work.

Care, guidance and support

The school cares very well for its pupils' welfare, health and safety. Staff provide them with very good support, advice and guidance through effective monitoring of their personal development and progress. The way the school involves pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views is very good. There has been a good improvement in this aspect since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care given to pupils ensures they feel secure so that they can do their best.
- Staff are very caring and supportive and know the pupils and their learning needs very well.
- Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with the adults who work with them.
- Pupils are able to give their views and their opinions are taken into consideration when decisions are made.

Commentary

35. The school is inclusive with many very good features in the way pupils' well-being, general care and safety are promoted in the school. Pupils are well supported by the ethos of the school and the very caring approaches of all staff. Close relationships between staff and pupils are evident and pupils are well known to teachers and all other staff. The staff provide very good role models for pupils.
36. The school provides very effective support, advice and guidance for all its pupils. This is informed by very good monitoring of their personal development, behaviour and attendance. Records of academic progress are good including those for pupils with special educational needs and enable progress to be monitored closely. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress. Individual Education Plans help pupils to meet their targets and parents and teaching assistants are involved in annual reviews. Each pupil's personal development is closely monitored. The monitoring of pupils' progress is good and

the understanding and knowledge of pupils evidenced by staff ensures that the personal development of each pupil is monitored well.

37. Procedures to promote and encourage positive behaviour and for improving regular and uninterrupted attendance are good and are followed by staff. Pupils recognise and appreciate the system of rewards and sanctions and most of them respond positively. Good procedures are adhered to in communicating with parents about any unexplained absences.
38. There is a careful approach for new pupils to make sure they settle well into school. Those entering the school are offered a home visit. This ensures that parents are involved with their children's education from the start and is a valuable opportunity to voice any concerns and for exchange of information.
39. The school is justifiably proud of its Healthy Schools Scheme Award and promotes the health of pupils by encouraging healthy snacks and physical activity at lunchtime. The range of equipment available is a credit to such a small school and even those pupils who are members of the lunchtime Computer and French Clubs play outside for the last fifteen minutes, weather permitting.
40. Procedures for ensuring child protection are good. The headteacher is the designated liaison person and is well trained and informed. Staff members have recently undergone training. As a result all staff are aware of their responsibilities and any incident is managed sensitively and efficiently. The buildings, classrooms and grounds are very well cared for and health and safety checks are regularly carried out. Swift and effective attention is given to any necessary repairs. Litter and graffiti are non-existent due to the vigilance of the caretaker and the care of their environment by the pupils. There are clearly defined procedures for fire drills, medicines and first aid treatment. Every pupil is personally handed over by a member of staff to parents or carers at the end of the school day. Good quality before and after school care is provided for pupils, as required.
41. Pupils are consulted regularly and are aware that their views matter. They help to devise the school rules and are encouraged to think of ways to improve school routines and facilities. The School Council has been instrumental in raising money to pay for small items of play equipment to improve break and lunchtime playtimes and also has an input into decisions made about the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school works effectively in partnership with parents, other schools and the community. Communications between parents and the school are good and parents think highly of the school. The school has good links with the local community. There are very good links with the other schools in the cluster and especially with the middle school to which most pupils transfer. Overall, these judgements show a good improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very supportive parent teacher association.
- There are good procedures to ensure satisfaction of parents.
- There are very good links with the middle school to ensure a smooth transition of pupils.

Commentary

42. Parents' views as expressed both before and during the inspection, and in response to the questionnaires, indicate that they are pleased with the school. The quality of information provided for parents through reports and letters is good. Topics being studied by the pupils are listed for the parents each half term. Parents appreciate the useful information about the school and its activities provided in the prospectus and the web site, both of which are updated regularly. The school emphasises the importance of working with parents and

encouraging them to participate in their children's education. Before pupils start at the school, staff members offer parents the opportunity of a home visit. This contributes to a smooth transition and helps to develop the partnership between home and school. There are two formal consultation evenings each year plus an opportunity to discuss pupils' annual reports which is offered at the end of the summer term. Parents consider staff to be approachable and welcoming and are generally confident in raising concerns informally with them. The school deals effectively with any concerns or complaints and has the confidence of all communities.

43. There is a supportive parent teacher association which raises considerable sums of money for the school. Various social events are organised and are well supported. The association contributes to the life of the school by providing entertainments for the children and by purchasing items of equipment, such as an interactive whiteboard and wooden mushrooms for the school field.
44. The school maintains its links with the local community by holding its Christmas play and other special events in the local churches. The school visits the local post office, Thurleigh Farm Centre and the Autodrome at the nearby airfield. These local links have enabled the pupils to develop a greater understanding of society and help to promote good citizenship. The community is invited to all major events organised by both the parent and teacher association and the school.
45. Visitors to the school enhance the curriculum. The local vicar and baptist lay pastor take assemblies regularly. Other visitors include the Bedfordshire Youth Theatre, Theatre of Widdershins and the Bedfordshire Youth Opera. The school visits the 306 American War Memorial each year and maintains contact with one of the former members in the United States of America. The pupils also enjoy visits further afield to museums and the Year 4 pupils have the opportunity to attend a residential visit to Kingswood Outdoor Activity Centre, where the activities include climbing, caving, fencing, archery and canoeing.
46. Effective induction procedures are carefully planned. Most pupils attend the nursery class and this ensures a smooth transition when the pupils transfer to reception as the children and teachers know each other so well. There is a close working relationship between all the schools in the Middle School Pyramid and due to effective academic and pastoral links there is a smooth transition when the Year 4 pupils transfer to Middle School. The five feeder first schools take part in a joint residential visit and various curriculum events take place.
47. Many pupils show a growing awareness of the needs of others partly due to the school's support for various charities. These include Jeans for Genes and Comic Relief. At the time of the inspection the School Council was in the process of organising a stall to raise money for the Tsunami Appeal. The collection at the Christmas Concert is given to a charity chosen by the pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management of the school are good, as is the governance of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's purposeful leadership and high aspirations have enabled the school to raise standards.
- The staff team work well together in ensuring that pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Subject co-ordinators carry out their roles well.
- The school has developed good assessment systems for ensuring work is closely matched to pupils' individual needs.
- The governors fulfil their roles well.
- Finances are used very well, ensuring that the school makes the most of its available money.

Commentary

48. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and provides good leadership that has established a clear educational direction for the work of the school. A careful and thorough analysis of the work of the school has ensured that all staff work closely together to identify key areas that require attention, such as the need to improve pupils' skills of problem solving in mathematics. By taking responsibility for assessment, the headteacher has ensured that assessment information is being used effectively to match work to the needs of the pupils. As a result, pupils' standards of attainment are good.
49. The small staff team work well together and there is a strong sense of shared values. They ensure that pupils receive the benefit of good teaching and learning for all abilities, provided within a full and relevant curriculum. The happy, involved and hardworking atmosphere of the school is directly attributable to the headteacher and the team she has put in place. Subject co-ordinators fulfil their roles well and there is an established timetable in place for monitoring subjects.
50. The school improvement plan is a good, clear document. The current plan addresses all priorities in detail, ready to move the school forward in the next academic year. There is also a five-year strategic plan for the future development of the school. Staff make a careful analysis of the results of tests at all levels in order to track individual pupils' progress and introduce appropriate measures to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential. These systems are already having a clear effect on pupils' achievement.
51. The governing body gives good support to the headteacher and staff and are fully involved in monitoring the work of the school. They are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the action necessary to make improvement. Governors have a clear view of their role in evaluating the work of the school for themselves and are aware of the school's recent performances in national tests. All governors visit the school on a regular basis to monitor their subjects. They attend lessons and meet with co-ordinators. Good systems are in place for the performance management of staff and they are clear about their role in setting targets for the headteacher. The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	217,923	Balance from previous year	22,152
Total expenditure	217,265	Balance carried forward to the next	22,810
Expenditure per pupil	4,345		

52. The governors, supported by a very efficient finance officer, have a firm control of finances and this ensures that funds are directed towards supporting the targets in the school development plan and providing value for money. End-of-year balances being carried forward to the next financial year have been higher than usual over the past two years in order that improvements could be made to the Foundation Stage accommodation last year and to improve toilet facilities and school lighting in the current year. The planned carry over into the next financial year will be halved as a result.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision is good. All children make good progress in the six nationally agreed areas of learning for young children and most exceed the expected levels in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical, physical and creative development, by the end of the Foundation Stage. Achievement in all areas of learning is good. Good leadership and management ensure that children's progress is monitored well and good records are kept and used to inform future planning and to keep parents in touch with how well their children are doing. The good quality of teaching and improved management of the children ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well. The nursery nurse and teaching assistants play a significant role in the teaching programme.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are welcoming and friendly and relationships are very good.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing children's confidence and concentration.
- Children adapt well to school routines.

Commentary

53. Overall, children exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception year. A significant number of children show good concentration and persevere in self-selected tasks. Relationships are very good and most children soon settle into the school's routines. Staff are welcoming and friendly – there is always a smile to encourage the children. Nursery children concentrate for increasing lengths of time and develop greater levels of independence in dressing and personal hygiene. They are guided and supported well and they gradually develop an understanding of what is right and what is wrong. Children become increasingly confident in asking for help when they need it, and become more responsible as they help to clear away after activities or get ready for outside play. When children are of reception class age, they adapt confidently to the brisker pace of lessons and become more independent. Their developing self-esteem and improved levels of attention help them to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate.
54. Teaching is good. All adults encourage pupils to develop independence in a secure and safe environment. Good use is made of praise and encouragement to ensure that children begin to make decisions, work with others and persevere in the wide range of activities provided.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well and standards are above expectations by the end of the reception year.
- Staff take every opportunity to develop children's language.
- Letter sounds and shapes are taught and learnt regularly.

Commentary

55. Good teaching and good progress ensure that most children achieve the levels expected by the end of the reception year. A significant number of children are on track to exceed these goals. Throughout the Foundation Stage, adults provide a wide range of opportunities for children to talk, communicate and extend their vocabulary. Children are encouraged to develop language through discussions, stories, writing and role-play. Adults listen to children patiently and help them to express their ideas. By the time they are of reception age, most children have gained enough confidence to contribute effectively in mathematics and literacy sessions. The good quality of teaching and learning contributes well to the children's good progress in reading; the nursery nurse and teaching assistants are actively involved in teaching the children. Staff and children enjoy books and reading. Skills are fostered through enthusiastic story telling and learning letter sounds; and children gradually learn to handle books carefully.
56. Good teaching of letter sounds and shapes begins as soon as children start in the Foundation Stage and parents are encouraged to read with their children. Adults develop children's awareness of print by labelling objects and displays, pointing to the text as they read stories and rhymes and teaching the shapes and sounds of letters of the alphabet. Later, teachers introduce elements of the literacy hour in a gradual way so that children recognise links between reading and writing as they explore texts together and look for repeated words and patterns of letters. By the end of the reception year, most children are working at Level 1 of the National Curriculum. All children read stories successfully by referring to the pictures, and more able children read simple books with repetitive texts. Adults provide regular opportunities to practise their writing in both adult focused and self-chosen activities. As a result most children write their names and everyday words, forming their letters correctly. They begin to write short stories and recount what they have done.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematical language is taught and reinforced well.
- Children achieve well.
- Staff engage well with children to promote mathematical learning throughout the day.

Commentary

57. Numeracy lessons are introduced effectively in the Foundation Stage class. Children make good progress and achieve well and most will exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of the reception year. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children develop mathematical language and ideas through everyday experiences. They learn about numbers and how to recognize them. Through a wide range of sorting, matching and counting activities, children develop a growing vocabulary to express number, shape, size and colour. Their understanding of sequence and order grows as children work out the total of two die. As nursery children play with sand and water, they are encouraged to talk about 'more' and 'less', 'full' and 'empty'. The nursery nurse and teaching assistants work with children to get them to count and share as they sort out drinks and food. The staff promote children's mathematical development in outdoor activities too; for example, when children build walls to form a building.
58. The early stages of the numeracy element of the Primary Strategy are gradually introduced. The teacher begins these sessions with brisk games and questions that keep children focused and maintain their interest, such as adding 'one more' or 'one less' to a given number. As a result, children build effectively on what they already know. The children then have time to

play with the equipment or work in groups with adults to consolidate their learning. These sessions are organised well and children enjoy them because of the encouraging and supportive approach of the staff. More able children add numbers together to twenty. By the end of the Foundation Stage, more able children count confidently to 20, and a few children recognise even larger numbers. Most children name common two-dimensional shapes.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Activities are relevant to children's everyday lives.
- The curriculum is well enhanced with interesting activities and visits.
- Children are encouraged to explore independently and to make choices.

Commentary

59. Teaching and learning are of good quality because staff are secure in their knowledge of the curriculum for young children. Activities are stimulating and appropriate for the different age groups. By the end of Foundation Stage, most children will exceed the expected goals in this area of learning. Staff provide interesting activities such as hanging out bird food in the school grounds or visiting the post office in the village to make children aware of their surroundings. Nursery aged children learn to use simple computer programs and learn to develop independence in playing games and exploring adventure programs. Through stories, pictures and celebration of festivals, such as Divali and the Chinese New Year, children gain an increasing understanding of different cultures and ways of life. Good levels of adult support ensure they acquire an increasing vocabulary to express their ideas and explain clearly what they know. The work planned prepares children effectively for subjects in the National Curriculum, such as science, design and technology, geography, history and ICT.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good range of outdoor equipment.
- Staff ensure that new skills are taught effectively.
- Children enjoy physical activity.

Commentary

60. Children throughout the Foundation Stage learn to run, jump, ride, climb and balance with increasing confidence. They play well together in the playground and when in the school hall respond well to instructions. Most children move around with an awareness of space and are controlled and purposeful. Good teaching ensures that children have opportunities to practise throwing balls and using bats, with adults to encourage them with these activities. They have many opportunities to improve their manipulative skills as they model with dough, use simple craft equipment, construct models from reclaimed materials, play with model vehicles and build using construction kits. Children write letters and record messages. Regular opportunities for drawing and painting help children to develop increased levels of pencil and brush control, and scissors are used regularly in craft activities. The quality of teaching is good throughout and staff ensure that all children learn at a good rate and achieve well.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are given time to explore materials and make choices.
- Children are encouraged to use their imagination.
- Staff plan activities well.

Commentary

61. Staff give children time to explore the use of materials. Children swirl and dab paint and mix colours. They paint figures, vehicles and buildings. Early experimentation with a good variety of materials, including paint, crayons and pens, leads to children feeling confident in making choices from a wide range of materials. This develops their independence and provides valuable opportunities for them to use their initiative and imagination. Children roll, squeeze and shape malleable materials such as dough to develop skills and techniques for model making, such as creating picture frames. In music, children learn to sing a repertoire of simple songs and sing tunefully. By the time they leave the reception year, children sing confidently and handle musical instruments appropriately.
62. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff organise activities well and children are given opportunities to explore their feelings and develop their imagination. Planning is good and artwork is displayed attractively raising children's self-esteem and confidence.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is very well managed and a priority of the school.
- Assessment information is well used to inform teachers' planning.
- Children achieve well in all parts of the school and standards are very good.
- Language skills are developed well in all areas of the curriculum.
- Handwriting skills are less well developed in some classes.

Commentary

63. Pupils' attainment in English is good throughout the school and very good in Years 1 and 2 and hence standards have shown a consistent upward trend in recent years. By the end of Year 2 the standards reached are now well above the national average in reading and writing in national assessments. This represents a marked improvement since the time of the last inspection. Pupils in all parts of the school enjoy their language work and respond well to the lessons which are very well planned using a variety of teaching strategies. The progress made by the small number of pupils with special educational needs is also good. The targets set for pupils throughout the school show similarly high levels are expected in the years ahead.
64. Pupils' reading is very good throughout the school and standards well above average in all classes. Pupils in Year 2 enjoy reading immensely and do so with accuracy and fluency. They extract meaning from the text and adopt appropriate strategies, when they are challenged by the text. They have a very good understanding of phonics and use this understanding well. In Year 4 pupils can understand significant themes and events within a

story and can seek their own information from dictionaries and a thesaurus. Pupils enjoy group reading activities and take part with great enthusiasm and individual children read to others with confidence, as when they were reading direct speech from a text as part of a story. They also respond enthusiastically when taking part in paired reading activities in which one child takes the role of tutor for the other.

65. In all lessons and in all school activities the pupils exhibit very good listening skills and are enthusiastic when listening to the contributions of teachers or other children. In discussions and group work pupils in Year 2 allow all their peers to contribute and are able to consider alternatives. When called upon to perform any spoken task the pupils do so with confidence and enthusiasm and they read aloud very well. Older pupils in Year 4 talk and listen with assurance in a range of situations, understand the main points of a discussion and show they are listening by making appropriate responses to questions.
66. The standards pupils reach in writing are very good in Years 1, 2 and 3 and good in Year 4. The targets set for pupils in Year 4 are challenging and realistic if a little lower than those set for pupils in other parts of the school and they are making good progress towards them. In Year 1, pupils are able to blend phonemes in spelling whilst in Year 2 they can write lively sentences with sound punctuation using capital letters and full stops. They use good descriptive words when describing features and sequence sentences well as when they are writing instructions. Pupils understand alliteration and build up their own sentences using the same initial vowel sounds. Their story writing is very good. Pupils in Year 4 can convey a variety of information in their writing and add good detail. Spelling is mainly accurate and they use good punctuation including speech marks. The endings to their stories are well-written and appropriate vocabulary used. Pupils relate adverbs and adjectives well and are confident in the examples they generate. In Year 4 spelling is accurate for high frequency words and children prepare good written definitions of words. They understand fully the use of speech marks and produce interesting shape poems which include good use of their imagination. In other activities they use good powerful verbs, such as 'scuttled' and 'chortled' and they understand the differences between fact and fiction in their work as well as including appropriate clauses in their sentences. Pupils' progress in writing is consistently good throughout the school.
67. Subject leadership is very good and this is having a direct impact upon the development of much higher standards in the school. This is particularly noticeable in the phonic approaches used in all classes and in the very good lesson planning which embraces a very wide range of approaches including the developing use of interactive whiteboards. Discussions at the end of lessons are used well to consolidate pupils' learning and opportunities to catch up are given to pupils when needed. The very small number of pupils with special educational needs is supported well and their progress is good. Careful consideration has been given to the integration of language activities across the curriculum and this now enhances pupils' progress as their confidence is further developed. The significance of speaking and listening skills is well appreciated by teachers. Clear targets are set for all pupils following regular and accurate assessments of their progress. A range of extra-curricular activities is arranged and they add to pupils' motivation, as when a theatre group visit the school, or they undertake a drama workshop or listen to an African storyteller. The subject leader carefully analyses the information collected about pupils' progress and there is regular and systematic monitoring of teaching. The subject is well resourced and the accommodation is adequate to support learning. The library is small but well resourced. All these factors are playing a significant part in the noteworthy raising of standards in recent years.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

68. Careful planning by teachers ensures that all pupils develop their language skills across all areas of the curriculum and when studying in many areas of the curriculum. This can be seen in history where they are able to describe what life was like in a castle or in science when they write reports of their experiments.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in Years 1 and 2.
- Good use is made of support staff to help pupils with difficulties.
- Pupils' attainment and progress is closely monitored.

Commentary

69. Standards in the current group of Year 2 pupils are well above national expectations and pupils are achieving very well. Very good teaching ensures that pupils think about how they arrived at their answers and explain their calculations clearly. Brisk mental arithmetic sessions ensure that most pupils have good recall of numbers facts to 20, subtract numbers to 100 and are confident in adding numbers to 1000. Most pupils are gaining confidence in learning and using multiplication tables
70. Standards in Year 4 are in line with expectations for pupils of this age. More able pupils achieve very well and are working well above expectations for their age. However, a significant number of lower attaining pupils lack confidence in their knowledge of number facts and this is being addressed by their current teacher through challenging activities which pupils enjoy and work hard at to improve their performance. As a result pupils are making good progress and achieving well but their progress in relation to their attainment at the end of Year 2 is satisfactory. Standards in Year 3 are well above expectations and most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of mathematics.
71. Teachers make good use of the numeracy aspect of the Primary Strategy in planning lessons and adapting work to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. As a result pupils cover the National Curriculum well and make good progress in all aspects of mathematics. They are supported well by teaching assistants and the extra time and effort they are given ensure that work is adapted to meet their needs and explanations are repeated for their benefit.
72. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator makes good use of test results to analyse where pupils are experiencing difficulties and this has led to a greater emphasis on problem solving which is evident in a scrutiny of pupils' work this year. Half-termly assessments are made of pupils' progress and attainment but this information is not yet used to set targets for individual pupils. Resources are good and used well to support pupils' learning. Pupils' ICT skills are used well in analyzing data and constructing charts and graphs. The good provision in mathematics, noted at the time of the last inspection, has been maintained and standards at the end of Year 2 have improved.

Mathematics across the curriculum

73. Good use is made of pupils' mathematics skills in other areas of the curriculum, such as in science where they measure temperature and area.

SCIENCE

Provision in science, as at the time of the last inspection, is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good emphasis on pupils learning through practical investigations.
- Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject.
- The subject is led and managed well.

Commentary

74. The results of teacher assessments in science at the end of Year 2 in 2004 were very high in comparison to national averages both in the percentage of pupils achieving Level 2 or above or the higher Level 3. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in the current Year 2 are above expectations and that pupils are making good progress and achieving well. Standards by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 are good and pupils' achievement is also good.
75. Pupils have a good attitude towards science and are well behaved during lessons. There is a strong emphasis on practical investigations and teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. As a result achievement is good and standards of written work scrutinised in books are good due to the teaching pupils are receiving.
76. The teaching of science is good overall. Teachers demonstrate a clear understanding of basic scientific principles in the lessons observed and a scrutiny of work so far this year. Detailed planning based on national guidelines ensures pupils progressively develop knowledge of scientific facts and an understanding of scientific concepts, such as what a force is. Pupils comment and discuss their results showing an understanding of the need for a fair test in science. End-of-module assessments ensure that pupils' progress and attainment is closely tracked and that work is adapted well to their individual needs.
77. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, samples pupils' work and observes her colleagues' teaching. Effective use is made of the good resources available.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Subject co-ordination is good and provides an effective support to teaching.
- Pupils respond well and work enthusiastically.
- ICT is used well in many other subject areas.
- There is only a limited number of computers available which delays progress.

Commentary

78. The good provision for ICT enables pupils to make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and sustain this good progress in Years 3 and 4. New developments in provision have taken place recently and an interactive whiteboard is available to Year 1 and 2 pupils. It provides a stimulating range of approaches to be used in teaching and pupils respond well in all subject areas in which this is used. The accommodation within the school is limited and hence there are only a limited number of computers available to pupils when they are required to work independently and this causes a delay in their progress on occasions.

79. However, the pupils do develop good competencies in all year groups. In Year 1 and 2 they are able to use a range of ICT tools to create art work based upon the style of Mondrian. They can produce straight lines of varying thickness and flood-fill the areas generated, before saving and retrieving their work efficiently. In Years 3 and 4 pupils develop the ability to send and receive e-mails and are aware of the meaning of terminology, such as 'address' and 'address book'. Additional work seen shows that they can use word processing packages well and cut and paste material which is used in a piece of text as well as changing the text size as required. Pupils present good word processing skills when they write short accounts of the story of Romulus and Remus.
80. The co-ordination of ICT is very good and is bringing about a series of improvements as part of a well-considered development plan. The co-ordinator gives valued support to other teachers and is responsible for increasing their confidence. Overall the quality of teaching is good.
81. Children are well motivated by ICT activities and approach all tasks with enthusiasm. They work well co-operatively and are eager to develop new skills. Consequently progress has been good since the last inspection and although expectations are higher than they were six years ago, the good standards noted at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

82. ICT is used well across the curriculum and supports pupil learning well in subject areas such as religious education where teachers use the interactive whiteboard to develop a lesson on new beginnings or an art and design lesson using straight lines to develop pictures in the style of Mondrian. Computers are available in all classrooms and are used effectively and efficiently, such as when children in the reception class work on number bonds with great enthusiasm or older children use word processing to enhance presentation.

HUMANITIES

83. It was not possible to see any lessons in history or geography and therefore no secure judgements can be made about provision in these subjects.
84. In **geography** pupils' work was scrutinised and discussions were held with pupils and staff. From this evidence indications are that standards are very good, such as when Year 3 pupils understand the meaning and significance of the equator and prime meridian as important lines of latitude and longitude. They understand and use co-ordinates and grid references with accuracy. In Year 4 these areas of understanding are further developed and pupils exhibit a high level of understanding of maps, routes and the appropriate use of atlases as a source of detailed information. Pupils make very good progress. Work in the subject is systematically monitored and regular lesson observations take place that are shared with staff and governors.
85. In **history**, a scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff indicate that standards are good as exemplified by the work of Year 4 pupils when they learn about writing through the ages ranging from very early cave paintings, cuneiform, hieroglyphics and the Greek alphabet, Arabic writing and the writing used by the Romans. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 study the development of castles through the ages and consider what life was like before electricity. In parts of this work good use was made of the interactive whiteboard and the various approaches, such as internet and video connection it affords. This motivates pupils well and as a result they show a good understanding of the order of events, factual knowledge and why people in the past acted in the way that they did. Older pupils tentatively explain the consequences of the main events and changes in various times in the past and their achievement is good.
86. Co-ordination of geography and history is good. Regular and thorough monitoring of the subject is carried out by the co-ordinator and members of the governing body, and work is

regularly reviewed. Links are created effectively with study in other curriculum areas and visits to locations such as the John Bunyan and Bedford museums and this enhances pupil learning well. Good displays are evident around the school.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and includes a variety of approaches.
- Pupils respond well to lessons and listen well to the experiences and influences upon others.
- The subject is well managed, resourced, monitored and evaluated.

Commentary

87. The quality of provision in religious education is good and based firmly upon the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers are secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subject and they are well supported by the subject co-ordinator. Governors are also involved in monitoring subject progression and the quality of teaching quality is good.
88. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 4 are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils respond well as during a lesson in Year 1 and 2 when they were studying new life. They are able to understand the main strands within a story about the creation and understand the symbolic significance of an egg as a source of new life. Pupils explain their understanding of religious beliefs they have previously studied and respond very well and sensitively to the experiences of others. In lessons pupils listen very well and are confident in spoken responses as when a pupil explained the beliefs that are inherent in his own religion to the rest of the class.
89. Pupils' achievement is good due to the careful planning of teaching and the good use of a variety of resources. Year 1 and 2 pupils study topics such as Divali, patterns of light, Holi and Festivals of Colour and the significance of Christmas Day in the Christian calendar and birthday celebrations.
90. Year 3 and 4 pupils have been studying the significance of choices and are able to define various ways of thinking and understand appropriate values, intentions, contemplation and the need for rules. They present their written work well and take a pride in what they are doing. Careful use is made of the expertise brought to the school by a range of visitors and a number of relevant visits are undertaken.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

91. Too few lessons were observed in each of the following subjects: art and design, design and technology and physical education, to make a firm judgment about provision. Inspectors talked with subject co-ordinators and pupils, and looked at displays and examples of work.
92. Although few lessons were observed in **art and design**, a scrutiny of pupils' work on display throughout the school, indicates that standards at the end of Year 4 are above expectations. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards at the end of Year 2. There are good examples of pupils' work in portraits using a variety of mediums, such as wax resist, paint and observational drawings. Pupils copy the styles of Klee and Mondrian and their work is displayed well throughout the school. The subject is well co-ordinated and resources are satisfactory.
93. In **design and technology**, a scrutiny of the co-ordinator's file, which contains samples of pupils' previously completed work, indicates that standards are in line with expected levels

across the school. The National Curriculum demands are fully met through carefully planned topics for Year 1 to 4. Pupils are given frequent opportunities to design, make and evaluate artifacts, such as wheeled vehicles in Years 1 and 2 and photograph frames in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' work shows that a wide range of materials is made available to them. Monitoring of the subject is thorough through the monitoring of teachers' planning, sampling pupils' work and observing lessons. Resources for the subject are good.

94. No lessons were observed in **physical education**. However, discussions with pupils and staff indicate that all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered. Pupils enjoy the subject and the adventure play equipment available at playtimes. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for such a small school. Monitoring of the subject takes place on a regular basis and includes monitoring teachers' planning and observing lessons. The governor with responsibility for physical education also visits to observe lessons and discuss provision for the subject with the co-ordinator.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards at the end of Years 2 and 4 are in line with national expectations.
- Resources for the subject are good.

Commentary

95. Standards in music are in line with national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 4 and pupils achieve satisfactorily. Pupils develop good pitch and clear diction in singing a range of songs from memory and pupils in Year 4 are able keep their own part when performing two-part rounds. Year 2 pupils are gaining in confidence as they play tuned percussion instruments to accompany their singing although many do not follow instructions of the 'conductor' to stop playing when she is giving instructions. Most pupils are learning to keep a steady beat. Year 4 pupils sing tunefully and know whether the pitch is high or low.
96. Teaching observed during the inspection was of satisfactory or good quality and ensured that pupils made effective progress in their learning. The teacher's planning is good and detailed records are kept of individual pupils' progress and achievement. The specialist music teacher has a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and provides a good range of challenging activities for pupils to take part in. However, pupils' attitudes to the subject are variable and a minority of pupils slow the pace of lessons due to silly behaviour, such as playing instruments when the teacher is giving instructions or throwing beaters rather than placing them when the teacher asks them to put them on the cloth. Good use is made of praise to encourage all pupils to take an active part in lessons.
97. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator monitors planning and carries out informal observations of her colleagues. Resources for the subject are good. There is a good range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and some instruments from other cultures. All pupils are given the opportunity to learn to play the recorder.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

98. Too few lessons were observed to make a firm judgment about provision as this subject was only sampled. Inspectors talked with the subject co-ordinator and pupils,
99. The good programme for teaching **personal, social, health and citizenship education** has been maintained and continues to be effective. There is a clear two-year plan which links to other subject areas and the work is also delivered to pupils by use of 'circle time' when pupils have opportunities to discuss any personal problems and issues such as relationships. The school has also gained accreditation for the Healthy Schools Award. In a lesson seen there was some very good teaching when reception and nursery children were engaged in parachute activities designed to develop speaking and listening skills and social skills in young pupils.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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