

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MAULDEN LOWER SCHOOL**

Malden

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109472

Headteacher: Mr M Jarvis

Reporting inspector: Mrs Helen Ranger  
OFSTED number: 22223

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 November 2001

Inspection number: 197799

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Road Maulden Bedfordshire
Postcode:	MK45 2AU
Telephone number:	01525 402286
Fax number:	01525 841890
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Hynes
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22223	Helen Ranger	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Science Art and design Equal opportunities	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
16472	Catherine Stormonth	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
11529	George Kyriacos	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Information and communication technology Physical education	How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
22220	Neil McAllister	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Maulden Lower is a first school with 162 boys and girls on its roll between the ages of four and nine. It is expanding and caters almost entirely for children who live in the village. The youngest are admitted on a part-time basis at the age of four with levels of attainment that vary from year to year but are currently above average compared with most schools. Almost all the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs is low compared with the national average; it currently stands at 14 per cent and includes four pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need. The school has experienced a number of staffing changes in recent years; the difficulties it has experienced in recruiting suitably qualified and experienced staff have been made worse by local and national shortages.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school gives its pupils an effective education as a result of skilful teaching. This enables most pupils to make good progress and to attain standards that are above average in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. While, overall the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory, there are some areas of weakness. The school gives adequate value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils in most of the age groups attain higher than average standards in English and mathematics.
- The good teaching in Year1 to Year 4 supports pupils' progress well.
- Recent improvements in how pupils' achievements are assessed, recorded and built on are rapidly promoting higher standards.
- There are effective ways of supporting pupils' social and moral development that promote maturity, very good attitudes to learning and good behaviour.
- The headteacher and his staff show high levels of care and support for the pupils.
- The arrangements for pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Attendance levels are high.
- The governing body supports the school very well through its work.
- Parents hold very positive views of the school and work with it in a close partnership.

#### **What could be improved**

- The headteacher does not provide clear enough direction for the staff and governors to enable them to work with him to raise standards.
- The school's written development plans do not communicate its current and future priorities well.
- Subject leaders do not co-ordinate improvements in their areas of responsibility well enough.
- The arrangements for staff development and performance management are not yet having enough of an impact on the standards achieved.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

When the school was last inspected in September 1997, it was found to be a good school with many strengths. Since then it has improved the standards attained by its seven-year-olds in the national tests in most years, although there was a dip in 2000. It has maintained high standards in teaching and in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance. To this extent, improvement has been satisfactory. However, there has not been enough improvement in aspects of the key areas identified for action by the previous report. The subject co-ordinators have not been enabled to develop sufficiently their roles in monitoring and supporting their areas of responsibility (although it is acknowledged that staff changes and long-term absences have made this difficult to achieve in some subjects). While there are now satisfactory programmes of work for most subjects, these do not take enough account of the needs of the mixed-age classes or show how activities will support pupils' progress through each key stage. The leadership and management of the school, while satisfactory overall, are not as strong as at the time of the last inspection.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	B	E	A	A
writing	B	D	B	B
mathematics	C	D	A	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

The school's results in the national tests for seven-year-olds have fluctuated over recent years but have generally been higher than in most schools. They were lower in 2000 owing to the higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs and to some disruption caused to pupils' learning by staff changes. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science in 2001 were, overall, in line with the national average. The school's targets for its current seven and nine-year-olds are suitably challenging and pupils are on course to achieve them. Inspection findings are that the children in the Reception classes make satisfactory progress and reach levels in their personal development and in their literacy and numeracy skills that are above those expected for their age. Their attainment is at least satisfactory in all other areas of their learning. In Years 1 and 2, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards in English and mathematics and average standards in all other subjects. The current group of pupils in Year 4 attains average standards in English, mathematics and science and this represents good progress in relation to this group's performance in the national tests when they were seven. This age group has more pupils with special needs than is typical of the school. They also attain expected levels for their age in all other subjects, except in physical education where their attainment is better than that seen in most schools.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good behaviour in the classrooms, around the school and in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils form good relationships. They respect others and take increasing responsibility as they get older.
Attendance	Very good. Rates are well above the national average.

The school functions well as a friendly and orderly community where pupils of all ages mix well. Pupils' social skills develop well. There is occasional boisterous behaviour in the playground but this is usually good-natured.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	satisfactory	good	good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The inspection took place at a time of teacher absence and staff shortages. These have led to some disruptions to the continuity of teaching and learning. Teaching is sound for children in the Reception age group. In the key areas of English and mathematics, teaching is good in Years 1 to 4 and underpins pupils' good progress in literacy and numeracy. The school provides equally well for pupils of all capabilities in most lessons (including those identified with special educational needs) although occasionally the planning for lessons does not take enough account of the full range of ages and attainments in classes. This is especially so in science in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have clear objectives for their lessons and explain tasks well. They organise their classrooms efficiently and, in Years 3 and 4, group pupils effectively by attainment for aspects of English and mathematics; this promotes good progress. Good relationships are encouraged in all age groups and pupils' behaviour is managed well. Teachers give good feedback to pupils on how well they are doing; this means that they have a good knowledge of their own learning and of how they can improve further.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The required curriculum is taught in all age groups and is supplemented well by extra activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils' needs are identified and supported well by teachers and ancillary staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for spiritual and cultural development promote pupils' personal development well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are good levels of day-to-day care and satisfactory procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress.

The school successfully maintains an interesting and varied programme of lessons for all age groups, although the long-term plans do not always help teachers to plan lessons systematically across the age groups. Provision for pupils' cultural development does not always pay enough attention to the multi-cultural and multi-faith aspects of subjects. Religious education does not have a high status in the school. There are few assessment procedures for the foundation subjects of the curriculum. The school works very well in partnership with parents, informs them well and involves them in their children's learning very effectively. There is an excellent level of parental involvement in the school that benefits its pupils greatly.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher is caring and supportive of the pupils but does not give clear enough leadership to staff and governors. The deputy headteacher and senior staff have contributed well to recent relevant initiatives to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very active, well-informed and efficient. They have very high expectations of the school and work hard to achieve these.
The school's evaluation of	The school has recently begun to use analyses of how well its pupils are

its performance	doing to set targets for future improvement. The written development plans include satisfactory initiatives but are not always clear about how these are prioritised and how they will be realised.
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The strategic use of resources	Funds are targeted to areas of improvement and their day-to-day management is efficient. However, there is too little attention to longer-term financial planning and strategies.
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The headteacher retains the confidence of staff and parents in the overall care and welfare of pupils but he does not articulate or act on his vision for the continuing development of the school well enough with staff and governors. The role of subject co-ordinators is insufficiently developed and arrangements for staff development and performance management are unsatisfactory. The school allocates sufficient staff for a school of this size but has experienced problems in covering long-term absence and filling vacancies and these are having an impact on its pupils. Practical resources for learning are adequate, except in religious education where they are too limited. The accommodation is satisfactory and all areas are fully used but the steep site and variety of buildings are not easy for young children to negotiate. The school is beginning to seek best value in its spending decisions by questioning what it does, comparing itself with other schools and trying to ensure that money is spent wisely.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children are helped to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Children like school and make good progress.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• There are high expectations of children.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The staff are approachable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> <li>• How closely the school works with parents.</li> <li>• Information about children's progress.</li> <li>• The availability of temporary staff to cover staff absence.</li> </ul>

The parents of sixty-seven pupils (44 per cent) responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. Eleven parents attended the meeting with inspectors. The proportion of parents who expressed satisfaction with the school through the questionnaire and at the meeting was high. Inspectors broadly agree with parents' positive views. They feel that there is a good range of extra activities for pupils of this age. The school is successful in working with parents and in providing information about progress. The inspection team shares parents' concerns about the cover for staff absence but acknowledges that the school is working hard to ensure good quality staffing at a time of shortages in local and national recruitment.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

##### **i) Standards in the Foundation Stage<sup>1</sup>**

1. Children are admitted to the Reception classes at the age of four. Their attainment on entry varies considerably between individuals and from year to year. It is currently above average in the children's language skills, number, general knowledge and social development. The children achieve satisfactorily as a result of sound teaching and most are well on course to attain at least the levels expected in the nationally recommended Early Learning Goals for all areas of learning. Many are likely to exceed this level in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development and some aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world.

##### **ii) Standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) in Key Stages 1 and 2**

2. In the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2001, the school's results were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools in reading and mathematics and above average in writing. The performance in the teacher assessments of attainment in science was broadly average, although a lower than average proportion of pupils achieved Level 3 in this subject. These results represented a considerable improvement on the results of 2000 and were more typical of the school's results in previous years. In 2000, the group of pupils tested included a higher proportion than usual with special educational needs and the class had been subject to disruptions in teaching owing to staff changes. Their attainment in tests in reading, writing, mathematics and science was below average. There have been no substantial variations in the attainment of boys compared with girls in recent years.
3. Inspection findings are that the standards attained by the school's seven-year-olds currently are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. Standards in ICT in this age group are average. Pupils' skills in these key areas support their work well in other subjects, especially those requiring competence in literacy and numeracy. Progress through the key stage is good in English and mathematics and generally satisfactory in other subjects.
4. There are no nationally required tests for the oldest pupils in a lower school at the end of Year 4. However, the school carries out a testing programme and sets targets for this group in conjunction with the Local Education Authority. An analysis of the results in recent years shows that pupils attain at least the levels expected by the National Curriculum for nine-year-olds but that their progress is not as rapid in Key Stage 2 as in many local schools. The school has acted effectively to address this issue. Its initiatives for the improved assessment and tracking of pupils' progress and its grouping of pupils by attainment for aspects of English and mathematics lessons have been successful. Inspection findings are that the oldest pupils now attain average levels in English, mathematics and science. This represents good progress in all three subjects in relation to their results as seven-year-olds. They also attain average standards in ICT. Their skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT now soundly support their work in other subjects. The pupils in Year 3 also make good progress in this key stage and their attainment is above average. Challenging targets have been set for pupils' future attainment. They are now based soundly on

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<sup>1</sup> The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three in schools with a nursery and the last year of this stage is often described in school as the Reception year. During this period, children's learning is based on fostering, nurturing and developing their: personal, social and emotional wellbeing; skills in language and literacy; mathematics development, particularly numeracy; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development and their creative development. 'Stepping Stones' are national descriptions of the progress children are expected to make towards the 'Early Learning Goals' for all these areas of learning by the end of the Reception year.

the information gained from tests and regular assessments of individuals.

5. There was no significant evidence during the inspection of variations in the achievements made by girls compared with boys. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good, including those with Statements. These pupils receive effective support from their teachers and from learning support assistants. Several pupils have profound language difficulties but make good progress in lessons due to focused teaching and high levels of support. The pupils identified as gifted or talented make good progress and the school has embarked on a satisfactory programme to cater for their special needs.
6. Compared with the findings of the previous inspection, standards in pupils' progress have been maintained in these subjects, except in Key Stage 1 in science where standards are not as high as previously. In Key Stage 2, the standards identified by this inspection are not as high as last time compared with national averages and in relation to National Curriculum levels. However, they represent similar gains for this group of pupils when compared with their previous results and when their levels of special need are taken into account.

### **iii) Attainment in the foundation subjects and religious education in Key Stages 1 and 2**

7. By the ages of both seven and nine, attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education is in line with the standards seen in most schools. This is also the case for physical education by the end of Key Stage 1 but pupils in Year 4 attain above average standards in this subject as they did at the time of the last inspection. The school has generally maintained the standards identified then, although attainment is now not as strong in design and technology.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

8. The last inspection found that pupils' positive attitudes and high standards of behaviour were strengths of the school. This is still the case. Almost all the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire believe that their children are keen to come to school and that standards of behaviour are good. Their confidence is well-placed and this aspect is a strength of the school in all age groups. During lessons, pupils listen to their teachers, are keen to answer questions and talk confidently. They quickly settle down to work and persevere with tasks they find difficult. Pupils with special educational needs concentrate well when receiving support in lessons and try hard to achieve their targets. Most pupils have a clear idea of how they should behave during lessons because they helped to make the rules and have high expectations of themselves. Attitudes and values are usually good throughout the school. For example, during a lesson in religious education pupils spoke sensitively about how important it is to be kind to others and how Christmas gifts can take the form of more than material items. There are, however, a few occasions when a very small number of pupils take a lot of the teacher's time with demanding behaviour; the other pupils cope with this behaviour well and are able to get on with their work.
9. Pupils behave well during the school day. They like and get along well with their teachers and with other pupils and create good relationships. For example, during a wet lunch hour, pupils were in their classrooms and took part in a range of activities in which they shared, helped and generally supported each other and enjoyed what they were doing. They work well individually or collaboratively. They show that they want to learn and this creates a pleasant and positive environment in the school. At the pre-inspection parents' meeting, there was concern expressed about some poor behaviour in the playground. The inspection team found that, although some boisterous behaviour was observed, there was no malice in this or evidence of bullying, intimidation or any form of anti-social behaviour. When questioned about bullying, pupils said they felt safe in school and would report any untoward behaviour to the lunchtime supervisors who would take the necessary action; they stressed that such behaviour is rare. Recent work following the 'Heartstone Project' indicates that pupils learned a great deal about moral and social issues following their discussions of topics such as bullying and racism.

10. Relationships in school are good. Pupils are friendly, courteous and respectful of other pupils and adults. There is respect shown by teachers to pupils and the pupils return this. Pupils often open doors and wait for adults to pass through first, and when moving around the school with their class, appointed pupils hold the door open for their classmates. They also show respect for property. For example, as a pupil came out of a classroom, she noticed that a coat had fallen on the floor. She picked up the coat, hung it back on its peg and then proceeded on her way. There are no records of any pupil being excluded from the school for many years.
11. Parents are pleased with how their children are helped to develop and become more responsible and mature. The inspection confirmed these positive views. Within school and in classrooms there are job rotas and pupils carry out their tasks willingly. They enjoy the responsibility placed on them. They respond well to the school's marking policy by showing that they have acted on the teachers' comments on their work. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and have opportunities to go on school trips and residential visits. These trips, and the links the school has with the local community, are an effective way in which pupils are able to use and develop their initiative, as well as help make them more self-reliant and socially aware.
12. Attendance continues to be very good and is well above the national average. The rate of unauthorised absence is very low and well below the national level. A high proportion of absence is attributable to holiday taking. The continuity in learning of this group of pupils is hampered when they are taken out of school for holidays. Punctuality on arrival at school is very good.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

13. The quality of teaching seen was satisfactory in Reception and good in Years 1 to 4. It enables pupils to make at least sound, and, often, good progress. This good quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. Of the 43 lessons seen, 35 per cent were good and 16 per cent were very good. The remaining 49 per cent were satisfactory and there were no unsatisfactory lessons.
14. The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Its strengths lie in the extent to which the staff plan together, the secure atmosphere that is created and the quality of relationships. Activities are interesting and the adults ensure that the children maintain a good balance between those they choose to do themselves and the 'core' activities that they are required to complete in the key skills of literacy, numeracy, science and ICT. The children's behaviour is managed well and adults lay down clear expectations of the regular routines and of good manners. As a result, the children are confident and interested in their work. They behave well and build systematically on their skills, knowledge and understanding.
15. In both key stages, teachers' subject knowledge is good. The key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT are taught at least satisfactorily and often well. In English and mathematics, the national strategies are used well in general. Most lessons in these subjects have a clear three-part structure – introductions are crisp, recapping previous work and introducing new learning, group work is matched well to pupils' attainment and the final 'plenary' shares pupils' achievements and checks understanding. In a few lessons, the initial session is too long and the plenary too short. Teachers give sound, and increasing, attention to ensuring that ICT skills are taught and applied across the curriculum.
16. Teachers' day-to-day planning is sound in both key stages. There are clear objectives for all lessons but the schemes of work that underpin this planning do not always give enough support to ensure that lessons cater for the full range of attainments and build progressively as pupils get older. Teachers plan well for the practical and investigative aspects of subjects, especially in mathematics and science. They exploit cross-curricular links effectively and this enables pupils to know how subjects connect with each other. While lesson objectives are precise and clear to teachers, they are not always shared with pupils in terms of the intended outcomes; where this does happen, pupils gain a better understanding of what they should learn and this has a positive impact on their progress. This is also the case in subjects where teachers share individual work

targets with the pupils.

17. The school has recently adopted a system of grouping pupils in Years 3 and 4 by attainment for aspects of literacy and numeracy, in its drive to raise standards. Indications are that this is successful and that pupils enjoy these lessons. They like the fact that the work is closely tailored to their needs. In some classes, teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve but this is not always the case. A few lessons lack challenge for the higher attainers or are too demanding for lower attainers; for example, in science in Key Stage 1. Recent improvements have been made to the teaching of pupils with a wide range of particular gifts or talents. Some of these have benefitted from liaison with other local schools. There are suitable plans for this initiative to be continued and extended.
18. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. Teachers make sure they are included in all activities by providing suitably modified work. A particular strength is the way that all staff encourage pupils' self esteem by involving them actively in discussions and valuing their contributions. Good use is made of learning support assistants in most lessons although, at times, they are too passive in class introductions and receive too little guidance in making the best use of these times. Pupils with Statements receive a high level of support. Their specialist learning support assistants know them well and have high expectations of what they should achieve in lessons. When engaged in one-to-one activities, they maintain a good balance of encouragement and simple rewards along with firm and consistent control. This worked particularly well in one lesson in the Reception/Year 1 class and ensured that the pupil receiving close support maintained good levels of concentration and achieved what was expected. Well-trained learning support assistants teach specific literacy skills to low-attaining and special needs pupils through the 'Tracks' programme. This purposeful and focused support promotes good progress for these pupils.
19. Teachers' explanations are clear, engage pupils' attention and encourage them to concentrate. Teachers use question and answer sessions effectively to establish pupils' understanding and to extend their thinking. In all classes, there are suitably high expectations of how pupils will behave and the classes are managed well. The quality of relationships is good and promotes a pleasant atmosphere for learning.
20. Teachers frequently assess pupils' progress and give useful verbal feedback to the pupils. However, the quality of marking varies. At best, and most often in Years 3 and 4, it gives accurate information about how well pupils have done and guidance on how they can do better. The use of homework is good. Regular practice in English and mathematics is given and benefits from being very well supported by parents at home.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?**

21. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory and the school meets all statutory requirements for teaching the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. At the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum was judged to be broad and balanced but there were weaknesses in termly planning and much work was needed on developing schemes of work to guide and support longer-term plans. Most subjects now have this guidance, although weaknesses remain in science, history and geography. A new scheme of work for history is due to be implemented this term and plans are in place to introduce a new geography scheme in the Spring Term. Science plans for Years 1 and 2 do not identify the needs of the separate age groups enough. Planning for pupils in the mixed-age classes in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory. It is based on a two-year cycle of activities in most subjects but planning in history and geography is currently ad hoc, with the result that, for example, pupils in Year 4 have covered a limited range of historical topics over the last four terms. Links are made between some subjects but there is no overall structure to ensure that units of work develop progressively over the two-year cycle and that pupils have had experience of the relevant skills and knowledge which underpin each unit. While the school's arrangements for providing religious education are broadly satisfactory, the

subject does not enjoy a high status in the curriculum.

22. Weaknesses in planning for the Foundation Stage have been addressed. The school has used national guidance to implement the new curriculum for the children in the Reception class in all the areas of learning and has taken due account of how this leads into the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1. Provision for pupils in the mixed-age Reception/Year 1 class often includes splitting the class so that the pupils in Year 1 are taught by the teacher in a smaller group and follow the same curriculum as other Year 1 pupils. This supports their learning well and they make good progress in these lessons. The younger children in this class, who are still in their Reception year, return to the Reception classroom and follow elements of the Foundation Stage curriculum with the other pupils of this age group. This arrangement satisfactorily ensures that they have access to a range of activities that are suited to their age and development.
23. A strong emphasis is placed across the school on literacy and numeracy and the impact of the national strategies in these subjects has been positive. Useful links with other subjects are increasingly being made. Provision for pupils to develop reading and writing skills in history and religious education, for example, is good. In mathematics, pupils in Years 3 and 4 work in 'setted' groups and this is generally effective in meeting the needs of different abilities within each age group. The school makes satisfactory provision for enhancing pupils' skills through the use of ICT. In literacy, for example, pupils make regular use of computers to edit and improve their written work. Lower-attaining pupils use spelling and reading software to practise their skills.
24. There is a good programme of lessons for developing pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) and this is having a positive impact on their knowledge and understanding of citizenship and the wider world. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, learn about the impact of world trade on developing countries through studies about where and how chocolate is made. Suitable attention is given to raising pupils' awareness of drugs and substance misuse and the requirements for sex education are met.
25. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Arrangements for identifying and assessing their needs are well established and the school is well placed to implement any changes arising from the introduction of the new Code of Practice<sup>2</sup>. The use of individual education plans is effective. The more recent plans are of good quality and include clear and measurable targets which are annotated and updated as necessary. The needs of pupils with formal Statements of Special Educational Need are met very well through high levels of one-to-one support in lessons. Arrangements for withdrawing individuals or small groups of pupils for short periods to receive close support are generally effective, although the school needs to review how these are timed so that pupils do not regularly miss the same part of a lesson. A few pupils with low attainment or behaviour-related difficulties are not on the register of special needs, but would be likely to benefit if they were. The school is aware of this and is considering adding to the register those who need additional support.
26. The school provides a good range of additional activities that enhances the quality of provision in many areas and for many pupils. A strong feature of this provision is the emphasis on including as many pupils as possible and ensuring equal access for all pupils, regardless of age or gender. Pupils have access to a range of musical instrument tuition; boys and girls are encouraged to take part in guitar, recorder, brass, keyboard, cello and violin lessons; pupils with a talent for music are catered for well. There is a good programme of extra-curricular clubs. This includes football, netball, 'kwik' cricket, country dancing, line dancing and maypole dancing. Many of these are provided by the parent-teacher association and run by suitably qualified parents during evenings and weekends. Tournaments are arranged and include even the youngest pupils. Teachers provide lunchtime recorder clubs for various age groups.

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<sup>2</sup> Code of Practice – this gives practical advice to schools and Local Education Authorities about their responsibilities and tasks to ensure that pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1996 Education Act.

27. The quality of links with the community is good and these provide further opportunities for pupils to take part in many worthwhile activities. Village studies support work in history and geography. Pupils have taken part in opera workshops and performances with an opera company. Players from a local rugby club have given a series of training sessions for pupils. Visits to museums include workshops that enhance work in history and visitors to the school have provided theatre, art and music workshops. Assemblies led by a local Baptist minister provide rich opportunities for pupils to learn about religious ceremonies. The school has very good links with other local schools and partner institutions. Pupils perform in musical evenings with other schools and joint residential visits to France take place. Subject co-ordinators meet with colleagues in local schools to discuss aspects of the curriculum and speak positively about the benefits of this mutual support.
28. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. The school incorporates many of these elements in its day-to-day practice and the strengths identified at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.
29. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Assemblies, religious education and PSHE lessons give pupils opportunities to reflect upon their own experiences. Circle time<sup>3</sup> is used throughout the school to give opportunities for pupils to reflect and share their feelings. Pupils in the Reception/Year 1 class, for example, discussed sensitive issues about caring for others and about helping friends when they are lonely or sad in the playground.
30. Pupils' moral development is good and underpins the consistently good behaviour evident throughout the school. Teachers and other adults provide good role models and deal consistently, without fuss, with the minor behavioural issues that occasionally occur. They constantly reinforce moral principles and use positive praise effectively to motivate pupils. A strong ethos of mutual respect is maintained. Pupils are strongly encouraged to make contributions in class discussions and these are greatly valued by teachers. Classroom codes of behaviour, written and implemented by the pupils in each class, encourage positive attitudes. The recent 'Heartstone Project' in Years 3 and 4 had a particularly beneficial impact on pupils' personal development. Sensitive issues, including bullying and racism, were discussed and pupils were given opportunities to reflect on their own responsibilities by putting themselves in the position of characters in the story they were reading.
31. Provision for pupils' social development is good. From an early age, pupils are made to feel both individual and part of the school community. They are given responsible jobs, such as library monitors, and have opportunities in lessons to work independently or in collaborative groups. The school's marking policy encourages pupils to be responsible. Teachers expect them to respond actively to the codes they use when marking written work. An important feature is the high level of inclusion of pupils with special educational needs. Their self-esteem is enhanced through being actively involved in class activities. Special assemblies allow all pupils to share and celebrate good work.
32. Arrangements for pupils' cultural development are satisfactory. Pupils are given many opportunities to recognise and value essential aspects of their own culture; for example, through celebrations of Christian festivals and annual events linked to work in history, such as Remembrance Day and Bonfire Night. Work in geography such as that about family life in a Mexican village, and the residential trips to France allow pupils to compare and contrast different cultures. The Heartstone Project prompted a pupil to describe and compare aspects of the different culture in which she had previously lived. Pupils learn about other faiths in their religious education lessons and in assemblies, although opportunities to learn about religions other than Christianity are not always exploited well around the school. There are fewer than usual

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<sup>3</sup> During Circle Time pupils discuss a wide range of personal and general issues. Teachers stress respect for all pupils' views and that pupils should feel confident that they can talk with ease and free from any form of interference or interruption from others.

opportunities in music and art to investigate wider aspects of world cultures and this is an area that would benefit from development.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

33. The school continues to be a caring community in which all individuals are valued and supported and this helps to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum. Parents are particularly pleased about how much their children enjoy school, how greater maturity and responsibility are encouraged and how approachable the school is when there are concerns. There is a well-established range of procedures to encourage good attendance, good behaviour and good work habits.

34. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Registers are consistently maintained and absences are followed up to minimise unauthorised absence levels. Despite the best efforts of the school to discourage holiday taking during term time, some parents do not heed this advice. Up to half of the pupils in some classes take term time holidays and this causes classes to be disrupted and hinders learning.
35. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are effective. Pupils are familiar with the high expectations for behaviour and they usually behave very well. A small number of pupils who find it hard to behave have special support plans and are closely monitored. Parents are involved at an early stage. Teachers provide home/school books called 'good news' or 'happy days' books and report behaviour daily to parents in a joint approach to improving behaviour that is usually successful.
36. The arrangements for child protection are good and meet all the statutory requirements. The headteacher is the 'designated person' and is planning to undergo additional training shortly to update him and the school on recent changes in legislation and local child protection systems. All pupil injuries are questioned and monitored closely. The school has fewer certified first aiders than is recommended but is planning to train at least two more members of staff to ensure adequate coverage. Routine health and safety checking systems and risk assessments are good and identify the many constraints imposed by the steep school site. Any issues are identified and rapidly addressed; this is commendable practice. Parents expressed worries about their children being rushed to eat their food to the extent that they did not eat enough. The inspection can confirm that slow eaters were given 25 minutes to eat their lunch and midday supervisors patiently coaxed pupils to eat.
37. Much of the monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal, promoted by teachers who know pupils very well and sustain very positive relationships with them. Teachers show a high level of support and commitment to pupils and are able to give them good advice for improving attitudes, social skills and encourage a good work ethic. Some pupil targets include personal development and this helps pupils focus on improvement and have a better quality school life. Children in the Reception classes have relevant targets associated with their attitudes and settling into school routines that are usefully shared with their parents. The school has recently adopted a more formal written system for monitoring pupils' personal development but this has yet to be widely used.
38. The systems for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' attainment are satisfactory. The children in the Foundation Stage are assessed on an individual basis in each main area of their learning. The results of these assessments are used well to establish the next stage in the children's learning and to set social and academic targets. The school has recently introduced a structured approach to assessment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science in both key stages and this is supporting the drive to raise standards well. Tests are carried out regularly and the outcomes used to influence teaching and planning. Pupils' progress is now being tracked in the core subjects as they move through the school; this is a fairly recent development. There is good practice in the way that individual targets are set for pupils; these are shared with the pupils and reviewed regularly. Another recent and positive innovation is the introduction of regular writing assessments in English and drawing assessments in art. These are used to identify and monitor pupils' progress and as a check that all teachers share a common understanding of the levels of the National Curriculum. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is recorded and monitored appropriately and outside agencies involved if needed.
39. In ICT and science, teachers have recently adopted checklists on which they record pupils' progress in the main skills of each subject. These are promising but it is too early to judge their effectiveness. In all remaining subjects, assessments are mainly informal and there are few agreed procedures. In these subjects, teachers are not yet using their knowledge of pupils' attainment to support their planning, to check progress against the requirements of the National Curriculum or to raise standards.



## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

40. The school's very good partnership with parents remains a considerable strength. Parents are very supportive and highly satisfied with the education provided and most other aspects of the school. Parents feel welcome and are impressed by the teaching and high expectations for their children.
41. Parents had some minor concerns about a lack of extra-curricular activities, about information on their children's progress, the homework arrangements and how closely the school works with some parents. The inspection investigated these and found that the range of activities outside lessons is good for a lower school. The arrangements for homework are also good and the quality of information about progress is very good. When parents were questioned about why they felt that the school did not work closely with them, they shared some worries about the current uncertainties in the staffing situation, particularly in the Year 1 class. The school has sent out many letters about this situation and regularly meets parents to keep them updated; its conduct in this difficult situation has been satisfactory.
42. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good. The induction arrangements for the youngest children help to forge the partnership and help pupils settle quickly and happily. Parents are provided with very good information on the Foundation Stage and on expected routines. The governors' annual report to parents is well written and meets the statutory requirements. The prospectus is being updated but the current version contains some out-of-date information. Communications have improved recently and more notice is given for activities to enable parents to plan to take part. Weekly newsletters are friendly and contain good information about news and events both in school and in Maulden. Other letters let parents know what their children are learning and are very good. Reading records are used very well and show how closely many parents work together with the school to help children read. Homework is regularly provided and helps parents to support learning at home. Parents receive very good information about their children's progress. School reports give good individualised detail on the new knowledge, skills and understanding pupils have acquired over the past year and set appropriate new targets aligned to progress. Children's weaknesses, however, are not always identified enough and advice on how these can be addressed is seldom given in these reports. The arrangements for consultation are very good, both formally and informally. Staff were seen making themselves available after school to share any more immediate issues and many parents take advantage of these opportunities. Parents of pupils with special educational needs speak very highly of the support and encouragement they have received from the headteacher and staff and feel that their children are supported well. They receive regular information about their children's progress and are closely involved in reviews and the setting of new targets.
43. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is outstanding. Several parents are governors and take an active role in school life. They help to analyse parents' surveys and gauge parents' opinions. In this way, parents are able to influence practice and have helped the school improve communications, homework arrangements and school reports. Parents come to school in large numbers whenever they are invited, for example, for parents' evenings or for church services. Many parents volunteer to help in school. Some help with reading, art and design and technology. Others help when needs arise for school trips and carry out some time-consuming tasks to support the staff. Many parents help with the very popular Saturday sports clubs that currently feature netball and football. Parents and pupils confirmed their huge enjoyment of these sporting activities and their excellent organisation. The Maulden School Association is a very busy and hardworking group that raises large sums and provides the school with a busy social life. The monies raised have funded ICT and sports equipment, helped refurbish the library, provided new benches and picnic tables, a new storage shed and many books. Parents do much to contribute to improving learning and the quality of school life.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

44. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. Some of the high

standards identified in the previous report have been maintained but some aspects have deteriorated. The headteacher receives excellent support from his deputy who has initiated or led many recent successful initiatives for improvement. Working together, the head and deputy support pupils' good progress and promote effective teaching and learning. The headteacher provides good pastoral leadership and, in this role, he is respected by the staff, parents and pupils. He has made good staff appointments which have secured a talented team that has the potential to move the school forward. Some of his plans have been constrained by a series of staff absences or changes due to illness, maternity leave or promotion. The inspection team acknowledges that these, together with local and national teacher shortages, have placed considerable pressure on the school's attempts to raise standards.

45. However, in spite of these strengths, the headteacher does not currently enjoy the confidence of all his staff and governors in his ability to act on areas of identified weakness. His vision for the school is not clear to them and they feel that initiatives for improvement are not organised well enough. They express concern that the process for planning the school's long-term development is not shared enough with all the interested parties and that too many tasks are rushed or are not completed. This aspect of leadership and management is weaker than at the time of the last inspection and has a negative impact on the school's capacity to improve.
46. The governing body is well-informed. It shows a high level of commitment to the school and is led by a very active Chair of Governors who works energetically to support the school and its pupils. The governors have very high expectations of what can be achieved. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are very willing to involve themselves in its further development. They fulfil their statutory requirements well. They hold the school to account and regularly question what it does. They increasingly use the principles of best value to compare the school with others and to ensure that they do the best for the pupils with the resources available to them.
47. The school produces a written development plan. This summarises its current and future initiatives but it is not organised well and does not state objectives clearly enough, show the overall priority of what is planned or make sufficient links to the available budget. Staff and governors express concern that they are not sufficiently involved in the preparation of the plan and this concern appears valid. Staff with areas of responsibility are not all required to produce an action plan as a contribution to the process, although several do this for their own use. At present the overall written plan is not acting as a useful tool for managing the school's development or for communicating a corporate vision. This is an area that has deteriorated since the last inspection. A 'strategic vision' group has been set up in the school to consider long-term priorities but this is not yet formally linked to the process of writing the development plan as would seem appropriate.
48. The role of the subject leaders was a key issue for improvement at the time of the previous inspection. Some effective action has been taken on this recently but this is yet to have a positive impact on raising standards. Subject leaders and others with specific responsibilities do not have detailed job descriptions as they would like. They need further training to appreciate their full role in monitoring and improving the school. There are plans for them to be released from their class commitments to do more of this but these have yet to be realised.
49. The senior team increasingly analyses the results of pupils in national and other tests. A good system of tracking individual pupil progress from Year 2 upwards and setting predictions and targets for future performance has recently been put in place; the deputy headteacher in particular has been instrumental in ensuring the success of this initiative. Satisfactory targets have been set in recent years and those planned for the future are ambitious and are supporting the improving standards, particularly in Key Stage 2. At present, the use of baseline information about the attainment and progress of the youngest children is not used as much as it could be in the overall analysis of results but the school has recognised this weakness and has plans to rectify it.
50. The school manages most aspects of educational inclusion soundly. A particular strength is the

current management of special educational needs that has improved recently and promotes the good levels of achievement made by this group of pupils. The newly appointed co-ordinator for special educational needs has a clear action plan and has high expectations of the development of this aspect. She has achieved a good overview of the school's provision in a short time and has established suitable priorities for further improvement; for example, ensuring that teachers are involved more closely in writing individual education plans for their pupils and that these include clear and measurable targets. Plans are in place to review the number of pupils on the special needs register and to include, where appropriate, other pupils who need support. The school is well placed to implement any changes as a result of the revised Code of Practice, which is due to be introduced next term. Throughout the school, boys and girls are given equal opportunities to take part in the full range of activities and their separate needs are considered. The arrangements to support gifted and talented pupils are at an early stage but are a current priority for further improvement. A relative weakness in the school's management of inclusion is the failure to ensure that the most capable pupils, especially in Key Stage 1, are consistently given activities to promote their progress in some subjects, most notably in science.

51. The day-to-day administration of the school by the office staff is very efficient. The use of information technology is in line with that seen in most schools to support pupil record-keeping, analysis of performance, budget management and general administration. The headteacher copes satisfactorily with the bureaucratic demands on his time. He is appreciative of the support he receives from the local authority and from colleagues in the group of local schools. He has concerns about the amount of paperwork that the school is expected to complete and the many consultations to which he is expected to respond. He feels that current barriers to improvement stem from a lack of funding to enable a wider programme of monitoring to be established
52. There are satisfactory policies for financial control. The most recent audit report was satisfied with these and made only a few minor recommendations. The governing body's finance committee contains members who are very knowledgeable and who work closely with the administrative staff to monitor the budget. The school has had a deficit budget in several years recently. This appears to be as a result of increased staffing costs to ensure that classes are kept small. While the governors are keen to ensure that this is cleared and together with the Senior Management Team, have produced appropriate plans to this effect. They are concerned that the headteacher does not work closely enough with them or with the administrative staff to ensure that this is achieved.
53. The school has started to set up arrangements for performance management in line with national requirements. However, teachers report a valid concern that the timescale for this programme has already slipped. This is not supporting the school's stated aim of raising standards. While staff training is satisfactory, it is not linked sufficiently to the overall development priorities. The match of teachers' training, experience and expertise to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory and staff are deployed well. The team of learning support assistants makes a valuable contribution to the quality of education, particularly for pupils with special educational needs.
54. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the planned curriculum in almost all subjects, except religious education where they are too limited. Resources for ICT are satisfactory. There is a small library that is regularly used by classes and soundly supports the development of pupils' research skills.
55. Levels of accommodation are satisfactory and the school has developed its building well to support pupils' progress and the quality of their education overall. The site agent is efficient and ensures that the school is well maintained. There is a shortage of classroom space and one class has had to be housed in a converted dining room; this is not ideal and suffers from noise from the adjacent kitchen and disruption by pupils who need to pass through to reach other rooms. The hall has been improved with a good quality replacement floor. Office and administration space have been enhanced and a new staffroom built. The headteacher's room is unsatisfactory, being very cramped and used as a thoroughfare at times. The outdoor site is spacious but suffers from much of it being on a steep slope. In spite of this, good use has been

made of the available space to provide a reasonable area of hard-surfaced play space, a secure area for the youngest pupils to play, a grassed sports field and room for the learner swimming pool. Good quality play apparatus has been provided.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

56. To build on the school's strengths, the headteacher, staff and the governing body should:

- ensure that the headteacher works more closely with staff and governors to secure the school's continuing improvement by:
  - establishing a clear vision for the future;
  - improving communications between all parties;
  - setting ambitious but realistic targets for the school's development.

*(paragraphs 44, 50 and 52)*

- improve the effectiveness of the written development plans and how they are monitored by:
  - involving all interested parties effectively in the production of the plans at an appropriate level;
  - establishing clear priorities for the short term and longer term and detailing how these will be achieved;
  - ensuring that the budget is closely linked to priorities and monitored rigorously to clear the current deficit, as planned, as soon as possible.

*(paragraphs 47 and 52)*

- improve arrangements for staff development and performance management by:
  - ensuring that a satisfactory timescale for performance management is maintained and that the arrangements for setting and monitoring staff targets are agreed by staff and are rigorous;
  - establishing better procedures for managing personnel, especially through improved job descriptions and more effective arrangements to encourage recruitment and retention;
  - developing the role of the co-ordinators, as planned, to ensure that staff with extra responsibilities support the school's drive to raise standards.

*(paragraphs 48 and 53)*

Other issues that should be considered by the school:

- improving provision for the potential high attainers in science in Key Stage 1;  
*(paragraphs 2, 17, 21, 88, 89 and 92)*
- ensuring that the schemes of work support systematic progression in pupils' learning;  
*(paragraphs 16 and 21)*
- improving the range of multi-cultural and multi-faith opportunities for pupils;  
*(paragraphs 21, 32 and 130)*
- raising the status of religious education in the curriculum;  
*(paragraphs 21, 32 and 131)*
- ensuring that there are manageable assessment arrangements for all the foundation subjects.  
*(paragraphs 39, 98, 103, 108, 112 and 123)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	15	21	0	0	0
Percentage	0	16	35	49	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR– Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		162
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		11

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		22

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	14	24	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	11	12
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	37	35	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (79)	92 (79)	95 (74)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	35	36	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (79)	95 (74)	95 (82)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	132
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It is based on the information given to the school by parents and does not include all pupils.

### Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	22

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	161

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	
Total number of education support staff	
Total aggregate hours worked per week	
Number of pupils per FTE adult	

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	358,463
Total expenditure	364,852
Expenditure per pupil	2,134
Balance brought forward from previous year	-3,883
Balance carried forward to next year	-10,272

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	152
Number of questionnaires returned	67

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	21	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	49	45	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	51	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	42	9	0	4
The teaching is good.	60	37	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	54	9	3	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	63	31	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	54	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	33	52	13	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	46	43	3	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	48	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	46	16	0	6

*Figures may not total 100 per cent owing to rounding*

### Other issues raised by parents

- The difficulties of providing temporary staff to cover classes, especially in the current Year 1 group.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

57. Children enter the Reception classes at the age of four. They attend part-time at first, then full-time. Currently, the full-timers are in a class with the younger pupils from Year 1; they share their time between working with their teacher with the Year 1 pupils and working with learning support assistants and other teachers in the large classroom area that is used by the part-timers. Attainment on entry to Reception varies from year to year but, compared with most schools, quite a high proportion of children have well developed language, social and number skills and, in this year's intake, there are few low attainers. The children's social skills and general knowledge are good for their age.
58. Children in the Foundation Stage year achieve satisfactorily in all areas of learning. The teaching and support staff liaise well together to plan a curriculum that is appropriate in all the areas of learning. Staff combine the national recommendations for the Foundation Stage with the Key Stage 1 curriculum for the older and more able pupils. There is a good balance between carefully planned tasks when adults work closely with small groups or with individuals and freer activities that include an element of the child's own choice. All children receive their entitlement to daily outdoor play in a secure area of the playground. Each child is assessed regularly, both when starting school and on an ongoing basis thereafter. These assessments are used to plan lessons that are tailored to the needs of individuals and groups. They are not yet recorded systematically to show how children move through the 'Stepping Stones' that make up the curriculum for each area of learning.
59. There is a good amount of accommodation for this age group, considering the constraints of much of the school site. This is especially the case at this time of year when not all children have been admitted. Practical resource levels are adequate.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

60. Children are on course at least to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. The secure environment created by the staff benefits the children. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Adults establish clear expectations of behaviour. They use registration periods and snack times in particular to show children how they are expected to sit quietly when this is appropriate or listen to others. The children respond well and confidently. They are polite to adults and children, sit well when required and take turns. Their behaviour is good due to the climate of respect that is created by the adults and to the interesting activities on offer. They concentrate well for their age. In the mixed-age class, the two year groups get on well together. A high proportion of the children are already able to work independently in the class or to work in a group with others as appropriate.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

61. Most children are likely to exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Many speak clearly in sentences and initiate or join in conversations. They enjoy listening to stories and most are attentive when adults speak to them. They handle books well. While few read simple texts independently, they follow and join in stories. They take on roles from well-known stories and a group was seen reproducing the story of the 'Little Yellow Chicken' by quoting the text of the book and modifying their voices in line with the characters. The children can identify the initial sounds in words and start to link these to the letters that make the sound. Most write their names independently, although a few reverse letters or form them poorly. They copy an adult model of writing and a few try to write simple sentences on their own. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in this area of learning and are sometimes good. Teachers and support staff ensure that pupils are given at least a daily focused literacy activity and many other activities include a strong language input by adults. The children develop

confidence, enjoy their work and behave well. Due consideration is given to the needs of the children in the mixed-age class – they join in the elements of the class lessons that are suited to them but are moved into smaller groups for targeted help with learning support staff when this is appropriate.

### **Mathematical development**

62. Most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals and a significant minority is likely to exceed them, as a result of sound teaching and learning in this area of their experience. They recognise the numerals to nine and match these to objects when counting. They count accurately and in order. They carry out simple addition and subtraction problems using real objects. They begin to use the correct names for common two-dimensional shapes. They have experienced simple data handling, for example, when compiling a graph of eye colours as part of their work on the human body.
63. The teachers plan well-structured activities that build soundly on the children's previous achievements. They ensure that children have many opportunities for practical learning using relevant apparatus. The children show enjoyment and enthusiasm in their work.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

64. Most children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception class and many may well exceed them. In their early science activities, they show interest and curiosity. They investigate objects, such as when they identified a range of smells in work about their senses. They ask sensible questions about the world around them and a few already remember terminology such as 'investigation' which they use correctly. They use simple computer programs and show good mouse control, for example when dragging and dropping Teddy's clothes on the screen to dress him or when using a 'painting' program to draw a picture. Their early history and geography skills develop satisfactorily and they comment on the past and present in their own lives and the area in which they live. They are introduced to a satisfactory range of cultural experiences but the multi-cultural aspects of the curriculum are not developed strongly. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teacher and support staff ensure that, irrespective of the children's own choices, they all have regular experiences in scientific areas and in ICT.

### **Physical development**

65. Attainment in children's physical development is satisfactory and on course to attain the Early Learning Goals. For example, in a movement lesson in the hall, they moved freely and confidently, experimenting with a variety of steps, hops and jumps in various directions. While teaching is sound and such lessons give the chance to use a large space, at this stage in the year the morning group is almost too small use the hall effectively. The children do not have to develop the control needed to work in a larger group and are not stimulated by the achievements of others. A lesson seen with this group was satisfactory but did not exploit the opportunity for the children to comment on the effects of the exercise on their bodies. Good use is made of the outdoor area to give daily opportunities for play with games equipment and wheeled toys.
66. Children control their movement well in the classroom. Most can dress and undress themselves with minimal adult help. They explore a range of materials such as dough, sand and water and use simple tools like scissors, brushes and pencils satisfactorily.

### **Creative development**

67. Children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in this area of their development by the end of the Reception year. They experiment with paint and papers and produce a range of small and large scale collages. They sing a range of songs from memory and, in a lesson seen with the mixed-age class, they successfully kept a steady beat when accompanying a tune. They play

imaginatively in the home corner and the sand tray. They have lively ideas for their play and most talk to others to plan what they will do in play situations or to express their intentions to others.

68. Teaching and learning are sound. Staff offer a wide range of experiences in the Reception class area and in the Reception/Year 1 classroom to support the children's development. The activities based in the Reception class, to which all have access, are varied frequently and staff ensure that the children's choices include at least some creative experiences.

## ENGLISH

69. Standards for seven-year-olds are above average. Standards for nine-year-olds are average but the school is well placed to achieve higher standards with its oldest pupils in reading and writing in future years. Pupils currently in Year 4 are achieving broadly average standards but the levels attained by the pupils now in Year 3 are higher than those expected for their age. Indications are that teaching has improved substantially and is contributing to the good progress now being made in Years 3 and 4. Pupils begin in Year 1 with a good grasp of language and literacy skills and make good progress through Key Stage 1 due to a well-structured curriculum and good teaching of reading and writing. Progress is good for pupils with special educational needs in both key stages.
70. Results of statutory reading and writing tests for seven-year-olds have varied year on year but have generally been above average and this is consistent with inspection findings for the pupils who are now in Year 2. In 2001, results in reading were well above average and results in writing were above average. This followed a dramatic fall in results in 2000 that reflected a cohort with a much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs. This group of pupils, now in Year 4, had also suffered significant disruption due to staffing problems. They are now making good progress and on track to achieve at least average levels by the end of the year. Results of the optional tests taken in Year 4 in 2001 were a little below the local authority averages but broadly average compared with schools nationally.
71. The use of the National Literacy Strategy is well established and is used flexibly throughout the school to enhance pupils' literacy skills. The school extends pupils' vocabulary and their reading and writing skills by linking literacy lessons with some subjects, for example, science and history but this is under-developed in other subjects such as geography. Weekly extended writing lessons, for 'setted' groups of pupils in Years 3 and 4, are having a positive impact on the teaching and learning of creative writing skills.
72. Speaking and listening skills are generally good throughout the school although relatively few pupils achieve the higher levels in statutory assessments in Year 2. Pupils in Year 2 speak confidently and clearly with appropriate detail and an increasingly wide vocabulary. While pupils in Year 4 demonstrate careful listening and make relevant responses in discussions, many speak very quietly and lack confidence. Staff provide good role models and value pupils' contributions in discussions but more opportunities could be found to extend the higher-attaining pupils' speaking skills; for example, through questioning each other's ideas and opinions and speaking more formally to an audience.
73. Pupils in Year 2 develop a good range of strategies for reading unfamiliar words. This aspect is taught well in literacy lessons. The short oral 'starter' in a Year 2 lesson was particularly effective in consolidating pupils' knowledge of simple sound patterns. Most pupils were able to identify each vowel sound in simple words and the higher attainers were able to describe the effect of an 'e' added to the end of the word. Pupils use the title, cover illustration and 'blurb' effectively to describe what a book is likely to be about. Pupils in Year 4 talk confidently about the plot and characters in the books they are reading and use the context of the story effectively to help them read and understand unfamiliar words. They show a sound understanding of differences between fiction and non-fiction books and make effective use of a thesaurus to find 'better' words. They use the contents page to help them find information in reference books but are less confident in making use of the index. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading and make good progress throughout the school. Parents contribute positively by listening regularly to their children reading and making perceptive comments in the home/school reading diaries. Books are changed regularly but some higher and average attainers in both key stages would benefit from moving

- more rapidly through the banded levels of reading books. In a few cases, pupils were reading books that were too easy and were beginning to lose interest. Teachers' records consist of lists of books read with little evidence of diagnostic assessment of progress.
74. In Year 2, pupils' narrative writing is structured well into basic sentences and makes sense, although there are wide variations in the accurate use of full stops and capitals. Higher-attaining pupils write complex sentences using connectives; for example, when writing instructions for playground games. They write recipes with sequential lists of instructions and the higher attainers use bullet points correctly. Pupils in Year 4 write imaginative poems in different styles. They write descriptive pieces, for example about journeys, showing good basic grammatical structure, although punctuation is inconsistent and sometimes forgotten. Pupils use brief and carefully chosen phrases for captions to go with pictures of Roman homes. They produce play scripts and show good understanding of how to add the necessary prompts for guiding the reader. Pupils make increasing use of ICT to draft, edit and present their written work.
75. Results of national spelling tests for seven-year-olds have been broadly average over the last three years. Many pupils in Year 2 spell familiar words such as the days of the week and the months confidently and accurately. Spelling in general written work is usually accurate and is of a good standard in Year 3 and 4. Pupils are well trained in using visual methods of learning to spell unfamiliar words and follow established routines for dealing with spellings when engaged in written tasks. Good links are made with 'phonic' reading strategies in Years 1 and 2, although limited use is made of ICT to provide spelling practice. The 'Tracks' programme for low attainers and for pupils with special educational needs provides carefully targeted teaching of spelling and gives valuable practice. Handwriting is taught systematically and effectively and most pupils achieve a clear joined style by Year 4. Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 4. Pupils' written work is generally neat, accurate and well presented.
76. Teaching is good in both key stages. Some very good teaching was observed in Years 1 and 2. Teachers have a secure subject knowledge and a generally good grasp of the required skills for teaching literacy. Lessons are planned well with clear objectives and are well organised over each week to enable a suitable balance of focused teaching and independent activities. Teachers share the intended learning outcomes with pupils and their explanations are clear; this promotes positive attitudes to the work. Lessons move at a good pace and support staff are usually deployed well to support groups or individuals. In a few lessons, support staff are given too little guidance in making the best use of their time in introductory sessions with the whole class; this limits their effectiveness in supporting pupils' learning. Teachers give good ongoing feedback to pupils about their work in lessons and probe their understanding through challenging questions. Good use is made of 'plenary' sessions to review and evaluate what has been learned at the end of lessons.
77. Written activities in literacy lessons in Years 3 and 4 are matched well to pupils' needs but there is an over-emphasis on the completion of prepared exercises. This contrasts strongly with the wide range of opportunities for imaginative writing in the weekly extended writing lessons. Closer links between these lessons would be beneficial. A significant feature of the good teaching of writing is the consistent attention given to the marking of pupils' work and the great care in assessing their writing against specific criteria. Teachers add useful comments to pupils' work to identify what they have done well and where they need to improve; they make good use of a simple recording system to show what pupils can do. Pupils are given targets to improve their writing and these are regularly updated and changed when appropriate. Pupils respond well to these and are proud when they achieve them.
78. Effective leadership underpins the good features of the school's provision. The co-ordinator has a good overview of teaching in both key stages and has observed most teachers in literacy lessons. The introduction and continued development of the literacy strategy have been led well and recent improvements in assessment, target-setting and the tracking of pupils' progress are having a significant impact on standards of writing. Measures of progress provide important and useful information about relative gains between Year 2 and Year 4 but there are no evaluations or analyses of pupils' attainment at the end of Year 4, most notably in reading. There are no clear procedures for tracking pupils' progress through Years 1 and 2.

79. The overall good standards identified at the time of the previous inspection have been maintained. The effective adoption of strategies for teaching literacy has led to further improvements in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2. Extended writing lessons in Years 3 and 4 are providing a suitable level of challenge and promoting good progress for pupils throughout the ability range.

## **MATHEMATICS**

80. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 are above average and in Year 4 standards are average. In the 2001 national tests, pupils in Year 2 were well above average when compared to national figures and to similar schools. Over the past few years the results attained by Key Stage 1 pupils have been generally above average and the trend over time has been one of improvement. There was a dip in the 2000 results, owing to a higher than usual proportion who had special educational needs and to disruptions in staffing. Pupils of all levels of attainment currently make good progress in this subject, including those with special educational needs.
81. By Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of the place value to 100. They recognise and use number sequences confidently irrespective, for example, of the direction in which they are counting. Their rapid recall of number facts is good and the majority can solve problems using numbers beyond 100. They are not as secure about using different strategies for checking the accuracy of their work because this aspect is not emphasised sufficiently by teachers. They can describe some of the features of two and three-dimensional shapes, are becoming more confident at measuring and use standard and non-standard measures for example when drawing a line to a specific length or solving the problem of which item is heaviest. They can collect data and create tally charts turning them into pictograms and draw block graphs.
82. In Key Stage 2, Year 4 pupils are working at the level expected for their age. The optional tests taken in Year 3 by these pupils and other assessments indicate broadly average standards. This means that their attainment is lower than in the rest of the school where standards are above average. The education of this group was disrupted earlier in their schooling by staff changes and there is a higher number of pupils with special needs than in the rest of the school. These pupils are now making good progress as a result of the school's action to raise standards. The arrangements for grouping the pupils in Years 3 and 4 by attainment for numeracy lessons have contributed well to this. Pupils in Year 4 can count in multiples of 4, 6 and 8 in both directions as well as adding and subtracting numbers greater than 100 in their books. They use a range of methods for adding and subtracting and are developing their mental techniques for finding a half and a quarter for numbers greater than twenty. For example, when finding half of an even number they partition the tens and units to arrive at the correct answer. Data is generally handled well when interpreting tables and using the information to draw bar charts using symbols that represent more than one item. They are exploring two and three-dimensional shapes at a suitable level and are plotting points on a grid to develop their understanding of co-ordinates. Pupils in Year 3 are making good progress and achieve standards that are above those expected for their age.
83. At the start of this academic year the school has introduced new measures and initiatives to ensure that all pupils make good progress. Key Stage 1 tests developed by the Local Education Authority (LEA) are being administered each term and the outcomes are recorded and used as a means of identifying progress and areas for development. In Key Stage 2, support to help lower attainers has been introduced. All pupils will take a test designed by the LEA each half term and the outcomes will be used to identify progress and used as the basis for forming groups. In addition, all pupils are set individual targets for improvement. Early indications are that these measures are effective in meeting the school's intentions of helping pupils make good progress.
84. While the quality of teaching overall is good, it is better in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1. From the lessons seen in Year 1 and Year 2, the teaching is satisfactory and occasionally very good. In Years 3 and 4, teaching is usually good. In Key Stage 2, teachers plan their lessons together, views are exchanged and new ideas are tried. They review the progress pupils make

and use this as the basis for adjusting the composition of groups and to enable pupils to work at a pace where they can make progress. Teachers in Year 1 and 2 plan individually and this makes it more difficult for them to ensure continuity across the key stage.

85. Where the lessons are good, pupils are made aware of the objectives and they build on work that has gone before. Pupils are encouraged to solve problems in their own way and questioning is used to challenge individuals to think of innovative answers. For example, during a lesson on division, the teacher asked probing questions and led the pupils to consider 'fairness' which they then explored. Activities are sequenced so that the challenge increases, the pace is good and pupils' interest is maintained. In a few lessons, the pace is slower or the pupils are expected to listen to teachers for too long a time. As a result, the pupils become fidgety and their interest is lost. The over-reliance on worksheets in some lessons does not always cater for the more able pupils who finish their work early.
86. The teachers are familiar and secure with the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively and are trialling a revised version of this. The three-part lesson is well established; however, the use of clear questions and discussion at the end of a lesson to establish what pupils have learnt is not always a strong feature. The oral and mental starters are usually delivered with enthusiasm and the pupils learn quickly and most show good mental agility. In most lessons seen during the inspection, very little use was made of ICT to develop pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge satisfactorily in other subject areas. For example, they draw accurate shapes for their designs of toys and make good use of tables and standard measurement to record observations in science.
87. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection. There is currently no full-time co-ordinator for the subject and the headteacher is caretaking this role. This adds to his already heavy workload and does not allow the subject to be developed or monitored well. Assessment procedures have been improved through the introduction of pupil tracking but not all pupil records are yet passed on to new teachers when pupils change classes.

## **SCIENCE**

88. The standards attained by the oldest pupils in each key stage are average. By seven, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and a high proportion, including those with special educational needs, attain the expected Level 2. However, too few achieve the Level 3 of which some are capable because the work planned for them is not challenging enough. These findings reflect the most recent results in teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1; in 2001 these showed that performance was close to the national average but that a lower than average proportion of pupils gained Level 3.
89. Pupils in Year 1, for example, have a suitable knowledge of the senses. They begin to understand how different tastes are experienced on different parts of the tongue. They begin to record their tasting experiments in diagrams and writing. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils carried out a simple experiment on the sense of touch. The teaching in this key stage is satisfactory but does not enable the higher attainers, for example, to practise predicting the outcomes of experiments or begin to plan how they would set up the experiment independently of their teacher.
90. By the age of nine, standards are average. This represents good progress for this year group in relation to the standards they attained at seven when their results were well below the national average. This good progress, which includes the pupils with special needs, has been achieved by careful joint planning by the teachers of the Year 3 and 4 classes who have high expectations of what their pupils can do and who organise well-structured, challenging work. This good teaching has also resulted in the pupils in Year 3 attaining standards that are above average for their age.
91. Pupils in both Years 3 and 4 achieve well in the practical and investigative aspects of the subject. They regularly carry out experiments and record their findings in a wide variety of ways, using tables and labelled diagrams well. They begin to identify for themselves how to set up a fair test;

for example, when dissolving a range of different sugars, they ensure that the amounts of water and sugar are the same and that the mixtures are stirred for the same amount of time. They predict outcomes and take careful measurements. Their good progress is supported by good teaching in these age groups. Tasks are interesting and varied and include high levels of practical work. Teachers explain work clearly and use question and answer sessions well to extend pupils' ideas and check their understanding. Teachers stress the importance of using correct vocabulary and encourage their pupils to 'be scientists'. This motivates the pupils who become absorbed in their work, keen to learn and well-behaved. Resources are used well; in the lessons seen, teachers used planning boards very successfully to lead pupils to identify the various stages of their experiments and how they would be achieved.

92. Pupils in each key stage work on a two-year rolling programme of activities, designed to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum, especially in the mixed-age classes. This is a laudable aim and broadly achieves this coverage. However, the work is currently not varied enough to cater for the full range of ages and attainments. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' levels of attainment in the two year groups are not as varied as would usually be seen because there are higher levels of special educational need in Year 4; because of this it is possible to teach similar activities to both age groups. However, in Years 1 and 2, there is a wider range of attainment and not enough consideration is given to how the oldest and most capable will be stretched. At the same time, activities are sometimes *too* demanding for the lower attainers and do not enable them to make progress at the best rate.
93. The science co-ordinator is currently on leave. She has worked with her colleagues to implement a scheme of work that is gradually incorporating the most recent national guidance. She has established productive links with the middle school to ensure that the transition in the curriculum is smooth when pupils move on and meets with colleagues from other lower schools to agree how pupils' work will be assessed. The school has begun to track pupils' progress in science but these moves are not as advanced as in either English or mathematics and the structured assessments are being tried by teachers for the first time this term. The school has begun to share targets for improvement with the pupils and this is enabling the pupils to have a clearer understanding of their own progress. The co-ordinator has not yet had the opportunity to monitor her colleagues' teaching through direct observation of their lessons.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

94. It was not possible to see any lessons in art and design during the inspection. Evidence was taken from examining pupils' previous work and teachers' planning and from talking to pupils about their work. Standards in both key stages are average and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. Pupils' work with clay is better than is seen in most schools. These findings maintain the standards of the previous inspection.
95. The youngest pupils in Year 1 explore a range of media and techniques at a suitable level for their age. They make collage portraits based on paper plates, combining textiles and paint well. They have worked in three dimensions when making high quality clay hedgehogs. The work in sketchbooks by the older pupils in this year group shows careful mixing of paint colours to achieve an autumn palette. Pupils in Year 2 build satisfactorily on these skills with more advanced mixing of colours and they complete good pencil drawings and clay owls. They are introduced to the work of famous artists such as Klimt and Kandinsky.
96. Much of the work seen in Years 3 and 4 is linked to pupils' work in other subjects. It is especially effective in history where drawing and collage support pupils' learning about the Romans and Celts. Textiles are used well in this key stage. Pupils' sketchbooks show sound progress in drawing, paint use and design. They have recently completed careful, imaginative designs to embellish the toys they are making in design and technology. One class has made good quality clay faces of which they are justifiably proud. Pupils speak of their enjoyment of art lessons.
97. The use of pupils' sketchbooks varies considerably. The best make a valuable contribution to

pupils' progress and act as a record of achievement. In these, the work is dated and pupils build up banks of ideas for their work. The books record their observational drawings and act as a reference tool for items such as paint mixing and the use of a variety of pencils. In some classes, these books are underused and the work is not dated to indicate how well the pupils are progressing over time.

98. Because no lessons were seen, it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject's future development. She has received recent support to identify her monitoring role but does not have a comprehensive job description for her post and is not yet able to see the subject taught in other classrooms. This has a particular impact on her understanding of standards and teaching in Key Stage 2 where she is not directly involved in the planning of lessons. There is satisfactory written guidance for staff and relevant plans to update this. The co-ordinator has rightly identified the need to increase the multi-cultural aspects of the curriculum. Useful whole-school projects take place such as those on textiles. A visiting artist has been used well for work about local woodland. Assessment procedures are not established well but there has been a useful recent initiative to assess and record examples of work from pupils of all ages as a basis for future comparisons.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. Standards at both key stages are broadly similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally and some of the work produced in the Year 3/4 classes is of high quality. Standards are not quite as high as at the time of the previous inspection when they were judged to be above expected levels. The school has prepared a policy and implemented the national scheme of work since the last inspection. By following this scheme, the pupils acquire a range of skills that systematically build on previous work and their coverage of the National Curriculum is ensured. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily results and show much enjoyment during the lessons.
100. By the age of seven, pupils confidently draw and make a range of products from materials that include food, fabric and thread and recycled packaging. They are aware of a range of ways of joining things, for example using glue, staples and tape. The finished article shows that care has been taken and the quality of workmanship is generally satisfactory. The challenges they are set enable the pupils to use their imagination and make sensible decisions about the choice of materials and the colour schemes they use. For example, when designing 'Joseph's multi-coloured raincoat' they matched the colours to give the finished product an attractive appearance. Pupils can follow instructions in making artefacts but they find it more difficult to write their own method for making their designs. Scrutiny of pupils' written work shows they recognise what they have done well but are not encouraged to indicate how they could do better in the future. This is because this aspect is not emphasised sufficiently by teachers.
101. In Key Stage 2, by the time pupils are nine they are designing more confidently and include more detail in their drawings. They make a credible attempt at describing their method for making the artefact but this needs to be developed further. They are given the opportunity to use a wide range of tools, materials and components including wood, fabric, food, card, plastic, scissors and a range of glues and glue guns. They use the tools safely and confidently with reasonable accuracy. When working with wood, they can make joints using hot glue and they can explain how using a triangular piece of card can strengthen that joint. As they progress through the school, the pupils generate good ideas and their design and make skills are improving. The least successful aspect of their work is the ongoing review of their work and the evaluation of the final outcome to identify ways in which their working practices could be improved.
102. A judgement on teaching cannot be made because it was only possible to see one lesson being taught. However, additional evidence was gathered by the scrutiny of teachers' notebooks, lesson plans and pupils' comments, together with work on display and photographic evidence of work done in the previous year. Overall, the quality of planning is good. Teachers and the co-ordinator have a secure understanding of the subject and plan work that is interesting for the

pupils and systematically improves their skills and knowledge. In Key Stage 1, teachers appropriately focus more on making than designing, while in Key Stage 2 they spend more time on the design process. Where possible they link the work to that going on in other subjects and encourage pupils to use ICT to support their work.

103. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Half-termly plans are reviewed by the co-ordinator who provides advice for teachers when it is requested. The development of an appropriate system for recording pupils' achievements and supporting higher standards is not in place. The co-ordinator does not yet have opportunities to monitor teaching and the curriculum by direct observations in classrooms. Resources levels are good.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. Standards, overall, are average at ages seven and nine. Pupils' grasp of mapwork is good in Year 2 and at least sound in Year 4. Pupils in Year 2 identify key features on maps of the local area, including their own houses, roads and woodland areas. They know the importance of simple keys to explain where they have marked 'attractive' and 'unattractive' areas. They explain why they have chosen these; for example, why a busy road with roadworks creates traffic jams and is unattractive and how the playground is safer and more pleasant since the fence has been erected. In the only lesson observed, pupils showed great interest and enthusiasm due to well-prepared activities. Good questioning by the teacher focused pupils' thinking and encouraged them to use all their senses when identifying features of different places near to the school.
105. Pupils in Year 4 accurately locate places on a plan of the school grounds. They plan investigations to discover how much waste is accumulated in the school and are beginning to develop an understanding of the importance of evidence collection. Work seen from the previous year includes comparisons of contrasting localities in Mexico. Pupils make decisions about where towns and airports might be located on relief maps and explain where and why these locations are good choices.
106. The teaching and learning in the only lesson seen was satisfactory. Tasks were explained well and built on work in previous lessons. The teacher ensured that pupils were aware of what they would be learning. Good use is made of the locality to support pupils' learning in lessons. In Year 2 in pupils' village studies, digital photographs of village landmarks have been used effectively to help identify places on the larger class map. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are encouraged to carry out research at home to support their class work.
107. Pupils are given opportunities to discover more about other countries. A residential visit to France with two local schools gave rise to an interactive CD-ROM project about the geography of the area and the school hopes to produce an equivalent based on its own locality. Work on citizenship and social issues related to trade with other countries, covered in PSHE lessons, provides pupils with a greater understanding of the world beyond their immediate experience.
108. The broadly average standards identified in the previous inspection have been maintained. Some improvements have been made to provision but weaknesses in planning remain and the subject lacks effective leadership. There are plans to produce a new scheme of work next term but, currently, there is still not enough guidance for teachers to plan their lessons or assess pupils' progress. There is no clear structure to ensure that pupils develop their skills and knowledge systematically, particularly in the mixed-age Year 3 and 4 classes. The current topics in each key stage, both related to the environment, are based on national guidance but are not part of any agreed long-term plan. Work from the previous year includes activities at an appropriate level but indicates a limited range of experiences and ad hoc planning. Resources have improved since the previous inspection and include a range of maps and aerial photographs. These are being used effectively to support pupils' learning and contribute to their secure knowledge and understanding of maps.

## **HISTORY**

109. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. They are average in Year 4. Pupils recall facts about the Roman invasion of Britain such as why Hadrian's wall was built and what made the Roman army so effective. They have a satisfactory knowledge of chronology, explaining the meaning of 'BC' and 'AD' and placing events of the period accurately on a time line. Work from the previous year about Vikings and Anglo-Saxons includes comparisons of village life at that time with life in a modern village. Pupils looked at how evidence from the Sutton Hoo archaeological site can tell us about the past. Pupils show considerable interest in the work about the Romans and enjoy learning about how people lived at that time. They volunteer thoughtful contributions in discussions, for example, about how the baths were heated in Roman homes.



110. No lessons took place in Years 1 or 2 during the inspection and history is not timetabled for this age group until the Spring Term. Evidence from discussions with pupils and from examples of written work from the previous year indicates that standards are broadly average by the end of Year 2. Pupils know the names of some famous characters of the past, such as Florence Nightingale, Grace Darling and Guy Fawkes and explain why they are so well known. They describe the background to the tradition of wearing poppies in November each year and can talk about the Fire of London. Their understanding of chronology and the importance of historical evidence is less secure.
111. There is insufficient evidence to judge teaching in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Teachers introduce lessons well by reflecting and building on previous work and ensuring that pupils know what they will be learning. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and are involved fully in all activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory, although there are some inconsistencies in how teachers in different classes explain the same point. For example, descriptions and explanations of the ditch along Hadrian's Wall were different and contradictory in the lessons observed. Attractive and interesting displays of Roman life encourage pupils' interest but there is little attention in these to the historical skills that pupils should be learning. A short video extract of Hadrian's Wall gave pupils some insight into its size and construction but the school has limited resources to support this topic. Good links are made with work in literacy lessons in Years 3 and 4. Pupils develop their literacy skills through studying a Roman reference book, using carefully chosen descriptions when adding captions to illustrations of a Roman settlement. Reference books are used effectively to practise information-finding skills.
112. Planning for the mixed-age classes is based on a national scheme of work and teachers pick from a range of units of work. Evidence indicates that, over the last four terms, pupils in Year 4 have studied aspects of 'Invaders and Settlers' only and thus have experienced a limited period of history. The co-ordinator is currently on leave from the school but has recently completed a scheme of work which, when implemented, will support teachers' planning and promote progression in the development of pupils' skills and knowledge. It is based on national guidance materials and includes a two-year outline plan for each key stage but does not set out how teachers should assess and record pupils' attainment at the end of each unit.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

113. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. This has been despite the change in the type of computers being used and teachers and pupils having to become familiar with new programs. There has been significant expenditure on ICT equipment during the last school term. The school has standardised its new computer suite on Windows-based programs that have access to the Internet, and uses a variety of other computers around the school.
114. Standards in both key stages are similar to those expected of pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 4. In Year 2 pupils are able to use ICT purposefully to achieve specific outcomes. For example, they can use the tools of a painting program to draw a design that they later use in a design and technology lesson. They are confident users of the mouse and can save their work to their specified work area on the network with a little help from their teacher. They are able to give instructions to a screen robot to move around a maze on a screen and to search a CD-ROM to find pictures to illustrate their work. Children aged seven are able to talk confidently about how computers can help them with their work. Pupils in Year 1 explore different uses of ICT and how it helps them in completing their work. For example, they use a program that develops their basic mouse skills and can move text around a page. They understand how to print their work and exit programs.
115. Pupils in Year 4 are beginning to use ICT to develop their ideas and solve problems. They enter information into a database and then use it to draw graphs and find answers to a range of questions. They build on previous work by developing their common ICT skills like 'search' and 'replace'. For example, pupils solved the problem of changing the emphasis of a story that had

been previously prepared by using the 'replace' command. They used a prepared text file containing a story about a girl so that it read as if the main character was a boy as part of their literacy work. Pupils develop skills in the ICT suite and then apply them in a linked task in the classroom. The pupils are developing their understanding of the strands of ICT throughout the key stage. However, an aspect that the school will need to consider is the development of modelling activities and simulations that allow the pupils to change the rules so they can experiment with different outcomes.

116. Teaching is sound. Teachers plan in year groups so that lessons build on what has been taught before and focus on the development of skills. They group pupils effectively according to ability. They explain the purpose of the work at the beginning of each lesson and provide support, challenge and encouragement. Pupils are managed well and this creates a pleasant working environment. They work hard in class, behave well and persevere with their work. Those with special educational needs receive appropriate help and guidance. Good planning, using the national guidance materials, helps to ensure progression within the subject as well as breadth and balance in activities. Assessment during lessons is done well and the pupils' achievements are recorded in writing. This assessment system is in its infancy.
117. The number of computers available in the school meets the government's target for schools. However, a number of them are dated and may need to be replaced soon. The school and governing body have made the provision for ICT a high priority and effective use has been made of national grants, the school's funds and monies provided by the Friends of Maulden School to buy additional hardware and provide an ICT suite. There are now at least two computers available in each classroom in addition to the 10-computer station ICT suite. This room has enabled classes to be taught together but is very small and cramped, making it difficult for teachers and pupils to move around. In addition, it is difficult for pupils to be positioned for demonstrations during lessons, and this is something that is being considered by the school for improvement. Access to the Internet is provided through the ICT suite and has begun to be used for research. Some initial teething problems and unreliability in the systems have caused disruption for teachers.
118. The co-ordinator monitors plans each half term and provides advice for teachers if it is requested. She also deals with all technical problems associated with the equipment and this is taking a lot of her time. She does not yet play a fully effective role in the direct monitoring of teaching in the classroom and in supporting her colleagues to interpret pupils' achievements consistently across the school. Teachers' confidence in using ICT is developing and their current training programme is leading to the more effective use of this key area within classrooms.

## **MUSIC**

119. Standards are average overall, as at the time of the last inspection. Pupils have access to a wider range of opportunities to perform publicly and to learn to play a range of musical instruments. This enhances their learning in the performance element of the subject, which has developed as a strength of the school. The composing and appraising elements are taught in lessons through a published scheme of work, although these are under-emphasised and relatively weaker than performing.
120. Pupils in Year 2, for example, arrange sounds to match the movements of different animals. They maintain a good rhythmic pattern with their hands and percussion instruments and begin to control changes in tempo. They listen and concentrate well and make improvements to their playing as they gain in confidence. Pupils in the Reception/Year 1 class sing familiar songs and perform actions well. They make very good progress in keeping to a regular pulse through opportunities to practise well-chosen songs and patterns. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 successfully identify and describe pieces of music according to tempo and style but their use of musical vocabulary and knowledge of musical instruments are limited. They explore combinations of sound patterns as when they were seen portraying different sporting actions. Singing in assemblies and song practices are of satisfactory quality. Pupils sing enthusiastically, gaining in confidence and improving in both clarity and control as they learn new songs. Some pupils in

Years 3 and 4 reach a good standard in recorder playing and provide a useful accompaniment to singing in assemblies and concerts.

121. Teaching is satisfactory overall with many good features. Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge and expertise. They set high expectations by ensuring that lessons move at a good pace and that pupils listen, concentrate and are actively involved. Lessons are planned well, making effective use of a published scheme of work, although, in some cases, too much is squeezed into a lesson with insufficient time to consolidate some elements.
122. Too little use is made of ICT to support the development of pupils' musical skills. Special software is, however, being ordered and the co-ordinator plans to integrate this aspect into teachers' plans. Pupils are provided with a range of extra activities which enhance their learning, including concerts in the church and musical evenings which involve large numbers of pupils performing with a very wide range of instruments. Teachers provide lunchtime recorder clubs for pupils in both key stages. A few pupils receive specialist instrumental tuition.
123. The subject is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who provides a good role model in her teaching. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall but there are some weaknesses. The co-ordinator receives insufficient guidance and support in carrying out her role. There is no job description for the post and no policy to support staff. Release time is provided for the co-ordinator to prepare for school concerts but there are too few opportunities to monitor the effectiveness of provision for music in classes. A clearer structure is needed to support longer-term planning and for assessing pupils' attainment.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

124. Standards in physical education are average in Key Stage 1 and above average in Key Stage 2. This broadly maintains the standards identified at the time of the previous inspection. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls and the school continues to offer a broad range of activities for all its pupils. The school is taking part in the nationally sponsored 'Top Play' and 'Top Sport' schemes and this is helping to drive up the standards in games.
125. Pupils in Key Stage 1 enjoy this subject and work enthusiastically to perform the tasks that their teacher directs. They work well individually and collaboratively. There is good teacher planning, particularly when it is linked to work done in another subject. For example, in a lesson seen, through stretching, crouching and hopping, pupils began to emulate the crocodiles, lions and rabbits they were studying in science. When the sequence of activities is based only on the commercially prepared tapes in the scheme of work the school uses, lessons are not as effective and the pupils achieve less. Teachers have good control and when working in the hall ensure that pupils are safe. They clearly explain the purpose of the lesson to the pupils, ensuring they understand. Teaching, however, does not rise above satisfactory in most lessons because the pupils are not challenged sufficiently. A common feature is that pupils are not shown what to look for when performing their sequences so they are unable to improve the quality of their performance. Most seven year-old pupils are able to link movements together to create sequences successfully and are aware of the space around them. The pace of lessons is unsatisfactory because pupils are not given enough time to practise their routines before they demonstrate them.
126. Overall, teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 are good, particularly in games activities. This is mainly because pupils are challenged more and there is a greater emphasis on the development of skills, knowledge and understanding. This was well illustrated in a Year 4 lesson; when asked to explain the rules of the game they had invented, the pupils did this confidently and were also able to illustrate the reasoning behind their game and the techniques employed. Pupils are taught basic skills which are then applied in problem-solving situations. Planning is good and the activities are sequenced well to provide more challenge. Pupils work well both individually and in groups when planning and evaluating their work and use lesson time to the full. Expectations of what pupils can achieve in other aspects of physical education are not as high. In dance activities, for example, teachers use demonstrations by pupils to encourage others to improve the quality of their work, but do not give the pupils pointers for judging good performance. The pace of lessons is mainly good. During the summary sessions, targeted and challenging questioning is

used well to assess what the pupils know and understand.

127. Resources in the school are good and the swimming pool is used well in the summer months so that pupils in both key stages learn to swim. The pupils take part in a range of sporting activities, particularly at the weekend when the parents and Friends of Maulden School provide excellent support that enhances overall standards. There is no agreed system for recording pupils' progress and attainment and the co-ordinator has not been able to monitor teaching and learning at first hand.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

128. The standards attained by pupils aged seven and nine are in line with those expected by the local authority's Agreed Syllabus. Only two lessons could be seen during the inspection and these were both in Key Stage 1. Further evidence was obtained from looking at pupils' previous work, from teachers' planning and from talking to the oldest pupils about what they have done in the past.
129. The youngest pupils in Year 1 talk, for example, about autumn festivals from various religions. They particularly remember details of how Diwali is celebrated by Hindus. The older pupils in this year group recall the main events of the Christmas story. They discuss ideas of giving and receiving and how the message of Christmas relates to their lives. In a lesson on a similar theme in Year 2, the pupils' discussion was more mature and several spoke very sensitively of how the value of a gift can be more than merely its cost. The teaching and learning seen in this key stage were good in both lessons. Pupils' achievements over time are satisfactory; they are introduced to the main topics outlined in the Agreed Syllabus through a combination of class lessons and assemblies. Teachers make good use of discussions and questioning. They establish a purposeful and pleasant atmosphere in their classrooms that gives pupils the confidence to speak freely. They link work about religions well to the pupils' own experiences and this adds relevance to the lessons. Pupils behave well in lessons and show respect for the beliefs and ideas of others.
130. Pupils' achievements are also satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. The oldest pupils have a good recall of their visit to the nearby church and talk sensibly about its artefacts, building and graveyard. Most of their knowledge about religions is rooted in Christian traditions but they have a satisfactory awareness of other faiths such as Judaism and Islam. A relative weakness is that pupils too often relate their knowledge of faiths other than Christianity to other countries, rather than beginning to understand the multi-faith perspective of modern Britain. In the recorded work seen from the previous year, topics were almost entirely dealt with from a Christian perspective and there was little evidence of pupils' knowledge of other faiths. Again at this key stage, pupils' understanding comes both from their class lessons and from assemblies. A strong feature of provision is how teachers link their lesson content with what will be covered in assemblies and acts of worship. Good use is made of the local church and of visiting clergy. The school has visited places of worship from other faiths in the past and plans to do so again.
131. A thorough programme of work was produced by the previous co-ordinator based securely on the Agreed Syllabus and this supports the teachers' planning. The subject is supported by pupils' literacy skills and, in turn, gives opportunities for these to be practised through reading and writing experiences in many lessons. ICT is rarely used. There are weaknesses in how the subject is led and managed. There is currently no co-ordinator in place and the subject does not have a high status in the school's development. There is no formal monitoring of teaching and the curriculum. A very low budget is set and the available resources are limited. There have been few initiatives to raise teachers' confidence in how the subject is taught, for example, by exploiting opportunities to link work to the methods used in literacy. While standards have been broadly maintained since the last inspection, the subject has not moved forward significantly.