

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **PORTFIELDS COMBINED SCHOOL**

Newport Pagnell

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 131718

Headteacher: Mary St-Amour

Reporting inspector: David Marshall  
27681

Dates of inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Inspection number: 230762

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 and middle

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 12

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Westbury Lane  
Newport Pagnell  
Buckinghamshire

Postcode: MK16 8PS

Telephone number: 01908 616060

Fax number: 01908 610793

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Simon Baines

Date of previous inspection: Not applicable

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
27681	David Marshall	Registered inspector	Geography Music English as an additional language Modern foreign languages	How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed?
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Pupils' personal development and attendance
20404	John Evans	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	How well are the pupils taught?
24896	Kathleen Hurt	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Foundation Stage	How well does the school care for its pupils?
18936	Christopher Bolton	Team inspector	Mathematics Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14976	Peter Dexter	Team inspector	Science Religious education Special educational needs	
20653	Eva Wilson	Team inspector	English History	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

The inspection contractor was:

Schoolhaus Ltd  
Suite 17  
B.P.S. Business Centre  
Brake Lane  
Boughton  
Nottinghamshire  
NG22 9HQ

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London  
WC2B 6SE

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Portfields was built as a combined school 25 years ago but due to growth became two schools over 14 years ago. They retained a joint governing body and shared a building but each had a headteacher and separate staffs. Three years ago the school reverted to its combined status. It is now a larger than average school with 624 children on roll – 327 boys and 297 girls. There are 23 classes in the school. A further 30 pupils will join the school at Easter as they have three intakes a year. Children start part time the term after their fourth birthday. They are moving to a single point of entry next September. When children enter the school, their attainment is broadly average. There are only two pupils claiming free school meals, which is well below the national average. The school has further information to show that many more pupils could claim than do so at present. Pupil mobility is significant at times. There are 33 children with English as a second language – above the national average. There are 78 pupils with special educational needs – below the national average. Eight pupils have statements of educational need; this is in line with the national average. The school is spacious and is set in attractive grounds.

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

Portfields is an outstanding school that provides a happy and very stimulating learning environment for its pupils. There is a very positive ethos, and staff and pupils work hard. Pupils achieve good standards in literacy and numeracy, and good standards in all other subjects. The quality of teaching is very good; pupils are challenged and make very good progress whatever their previous attainment. The school provides an exceptionally broad curriculum. It also provides very well for the pupils' personal and cultural development. The headteacher's contribution is outstanding and with the senior teachers leads the school very well, with very good support from all staff and the governing body. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Pupils achieve high standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science throughout the school. They make good progress in all subjects and achieve above expected standards by the time they leave in Year7.
- Pupils achieve high standards in music and information and communication technology by the time they leave school.
- The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. As a result, pupils' behaviour and personal development are very good and they become more confident of their own ability by the time they leave the school. They are polite and courteous and are very enthusiastic. They co-operate very well, think of others, and their ability to get on with each other is excellent.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, the deputy head and other key staff. The governors are very effective and make an important contribution to the school's success.
- Staff promote a very good school ethos for learning through the very broad curriculum and the very good range of additional activities.
- Staff accurately assess pupils' achievement and use the information very effectively to ensure the best progress.
- The school's relationships with parents are very good.

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

- There are no major issues for the school to consider. Inspection evidence shows that those minor issues for improvement observed are already in the school's improvement plan and are currently being addressed.

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

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

Since the last inspections of the first and middle schools in 1996 and 1997, they have combined. This significant change means that Portfields is essentially a new school and therefore comparisons with earlier years are not appropriate. Staff, parents and governors consider that the amalgamation of the two schools was managed very effectively and represents a very considerable achievement for all concerned. There have been impressive alterations and additions to the building that have enhanced provision for all age groups.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	C	C	C
Mathematics	B	C	A	A
Science	A	C	A	A

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

The results in English in national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001 when compared with all schools were average in English, and well above average in mathematics and science. This is also the case when their results are compared with those in similar schools. In the last two years the school's results have fluctuated, but the overall improvement in all core subjects of the curriculum have followed the upward national trend. Those pupils with above average potential make good progress. These results show the school is successful in meeting its agreed targets for improvement.

Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage and their attainment in most areas of learning is above what could be expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. In the last two years the school's improvements at the end of Key Stage 1 in all core subjects of the curriculum have followed the upward national trend. In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds the pupils' results were above the national average in reading and writing, but average in mathematics. When their results are compared to those of pupils in similar schools, based on the number claiming free school meals, they are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teacher assessments show pupils' standards in science at the age of seven are well above average.

The school has targets for pupils to attain before they leave the school at the end of Year 7. These targets, based on the school's own very good assessments, indicate that standards are set to continue their upward trend, and pupils will continue to achieve above expectations for their age.

The inspection finds that, by the age of eleven, pupils' attainment is above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. In music, history and religious education pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age at the end of both key stages. In information and communication technology (ICT) and art and design pupils achieve standards above expectations for their age by the time they are eleven. Standards in design and technology, geography and physical education are in line with what could be expected for their age throughout the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well in relation to the targets set for them. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their learning.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. Their attitudes to learning are also consistently very good. They respond enthusiastically to stimulating and well-planned lessons. Pupils concentrate well and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good overall, both in class and around the school. There is no incidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour. The pupils' behaviour at lunchtimes is particularly impressive.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils enjoy working co-operatively in the friendly atmosphere the school presents. They form excellent relationships between themselves and teachers. Pupils learn to show consideration for the feelings and well-being of others.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall. This reflects the number of parents who take their annual holidays during term time. The school day operates punctually.

Pupils' very good attitudes to school, very good behaviour and excellent relationships have a very positive impact on both their academic achievements and personal development. They are very keen to come to school and happy in their school, and talk with friendly enthusiasm about their activities. They show tremendous enthusiasm for the very wide range of clubs provided, enhancing their achievements and enjoyment, especially for music and sport.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 7
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very 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.*

Teaching is very good overall. Examples of high quality teaching are found in all parts of the school. Teachers' management of pupils is excellent. This helps to create a constructive, purposeful ethos for learning. In all parts of the school, teachers combine thoughtful, supportive management with sharp focus on the task in hand. They successfully communicate a sense of shared enterprise in learning and the determination to succeed and improve. This promotes very good attitudes to learning, secures pupils' commitment to the task in hand and encourages good progress. Teachers motivate and encourage pupils by careful, well-judged praise and by valuing their contributions. This gives pupils the security and confidence to make suggestions and gives them satisfaction in learning. Excellent relationships bring warmth and purpose to lessons in all parts of the school. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum are very good throughout the school. Their planning is very effective. Clear aims for pupils' learning determine the course of each lesson. Planning is supported by very effective ongoing assessment. Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils very attentively. This enables them to teach literacy and numeracy particularly effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language progress well. Teachers know pupils very well and work closely with learning support assistants to implement pupils' individual education plans. Learning support assistants work very effectively with groups of pupils and within lessons. Able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons because teachers' expectations are high and well informed. As a result, they make good progress.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a very broad curriculum. The very good provision overall includes excellent extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are supported well in lessons and when withdrawn into small groups. Individual education plans are of a very high quality, with relevant and achievable targets that are regularly reviewed.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Pupils have access to the full curriculum and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good provision overall. There is a very strong emphasis on developing good moral and social attitudes that permeates much of the curriculum. The spiritual and cultural development of all pupils is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for ensuring the pupils' welfare, health and safety. Teachers use very effective assessment procedures to check on the academic progress that pupils make.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. The quality of information provided by the school, such as newsletters, details of the curriculum and pupils' progress, is very good. Parents are involved in fund-raising activities and extra-curricular activities and these provide very good support to the school in its work. The curriculum provided by the school is very good overall and very well planned.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher is outstanding and inspires all with her vision for the school. The deputy head offers very high quality support in all areas and other key staff are extremely hard working and effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors take their responsibilities very seriously and play an important and very effective role in shaping the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent overall. Specific success criteria are included in the school improvement plan so that regular evaluation of its progress ensures that the school's targets are met.
The strategic use of resources	Good. All resources are used very effectively. The school has good procedures to ensure that it gets best value for its money when purchases are made.

The school buildings and grounds afford very good accommodation to promote the breadth of the curriculum. Resources for learning are very good in supporting the breadth and depth of the curriculum. The level of teaching and non-teaching staffing is good, allowing the curriculum to be taught very effectively.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Their children like school.</li><li>• The teaching is good and their children make good progress.</li><li>• The school is well led and managed.</li><li>• Behaviour in school is good.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li><li>• The quality of information they receive about their children's progress.</li><li>• How closely the school works with them as parents.</li></ul>

Inspection evidence confirms the largely positive views of the parents. The inspection team does not agree with some parents about the range of activities outside lessons. Their children are given many additional opportunities and the quality of extra-curricular activities is generally very good. Inspectors feel the school gives parents very good information on their children's progress and makes every effort to work closely with them.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. When children are first admitted to the school initial assessments show that their attainment is broadly in line with that expected for their age. Children in the pre-reception and reception classes make good progress in their learning as a result of effective teaching. By the time they leave the reception class most children have achieved the planned Early Learning Goals<sup>1</sup> and are ready to move on to the National Curriculum. By the end of the Foundation Stage many are achieving standards above those expected in communication, language and literacy, and mathematical and creative work, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, and personal, social and emotional development. The nursery and reception class teachers, nursery nurses and support assistants work closely together in planning and assessing pupils' achievements. This helps to promote the good progress the children make.
2. In the national statutory tests for pupils aged seven in 2001, the proportion attaining the levels expected was above the national average in reading and writing. When compared with those of pupils from similar backgrounds the results were average in both subjects. Of pupils aged eleven in 2001 the proportion attaining the levels expected in English was average nationally and when compared with pupils from similar backgrounds. There was little difference between the results of boys and girls at both key stages. The pupils who have special educational needs, or English as an additional language, make good progress in English and are a testament to how carefully the school now assesses their individual needs in this subject and plans appropriately. Results of tests over the last two years show that the overall trend is upwards at the end of Key Stage 2 and in line with the national trend of improvement.
3. The year 2001 national assessments in mathematics for seven year olds showed that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected attainment Level 2 was in line with the national average. In 2001 tests for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 the proportion of eleven year olds achieving the expected Level 4 was well above the national average, and for those gaining the higher Level 5 it was also above average. Comparisons with schools in similar social circumstances indicate that these results were average for seven year olds but above average for eleven year olds. Results over a two-year period to 2001 show that the school is raising levels of attainment in line with the national trend of improvement.
4. In 2001 the results of teacher assessments in science for Year 2 pupils showed that standards were well above the national average, and well above average when compared with those in similar schools. At Key Stage 2 the results last year were close to the national average overall but above average for similar schools. There was little difference between the results of boys and girls and the school is raising levels of attainment in line with the national trend of improvement.
5. Thanks to the good teaching and planning, the school's results at the end of both key stages generally exceed the targets they set in conjunction with the local authority. In 2001 the school's target for pupils aged seven was for 92 per cent to achieve the average Level 2 in reading and writing; the school's results were 93 per cent in both subjects. In mathematics the target was for 94 per cent to achieve the expected level and just 91 per cent did. In science 100 per cent achieved Level 2 and the target was 97 per cent.
6. The school has also consistently exceeded its appropriately increasing targets for pupils aged eleven. For instance, in 2000 in English the target was 80 per cent to achieve Level 4 and 86

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<sup>1</sup> Planning in the Foundation Stage is geared towards pupils achieving standards known as the Early Learning Goals in six areas of development – personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

per cent achieved this. In mathematics the target was 76 per cent, and 76.4 per cent achieved this level. In science, the figures were 90 per cent and 91 per cent respectively. In 2001 all these figures were exceeded. In English 88 per cent achieved Level 4 having been set a target of 80 per cent. In mathematics it was 82 per cent and a target of 80 per cent. In science 96.4 per cent achieved Level 4 and the school's target was 90 per cent. Realistic targets have been set for the next two years and inspection evidence shows that the current cohorts of pupils are on track to achieve them.

7. Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening throughout the school and attain standards above those expected, by the end of Years 2, 6 and 7. Within lessons there is scope to discuss in pairs, and share their knowledge to very good effect. Opportunities to discuss as a whole class strengthen a wide range of speaking and listening skills. Pupils learn to speak with conviction using formal language so as to be taken seriously. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment in reading is above average. In Year 7 pupils attain above the expected levels for pupils of this age. Reading resources are continually being added to, so that pupils use a very good variety of both fiction and non-fiction texts. Teachers nurture reading explicitly, enabling pupils to make good progress in acquiring a wide range of skills. Infant pupils use their good word-building skills to make sense of unfamiliar words and read with good levels of fluency. They build comprehension skills well, showing by their responses to questions that they have understood what they have read. These skills are built upon throughout the Years 3 to 7 by the end of which, pupils have good, and in the case of the higher attaining pupils, very good comprehension skills. They make deductions from the information gleaned and recognise the use of inference within a text. Pupils have very good attitudes to reading. As early as Year 2 they have established favourite authors and texts such as Enid Blyton's 'Famous Five' and Roald Dahl's 'Enormous Turnip'. By the end of Year 6 pupils enjoy Lemony Snicket's 'The Wide Window' and the great favourite, J.K. Rowling's 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone'. Pupils make good progress and by the end of Years 2 and 6 attain above average standards in writing. By the end of Year 7 pupils attain beyond the expectations for this age group. Pupils are given good opportunities to write in different forms. They use their writing skills well in subjects besides English. By the end of Year 2, the level of accuracy in pupils' spelling and punctuation is good. They use a wide vocabulary and are beginning to use some joining words such as 'and', 'then' and 'but', to add interest and meaning to their writing. In handwriting they form letters properly. By the end of Years 6 and 7 pupils have acquired mature handwriting styles and they present work to a high standard. Spelling, punctuation and style of writing are all good. They organise their work into paragraphs and structure it well. Not quite as successful is the development of the plot in narrative writing, by some Year 6 pupils. There is a tendency to write imaginative openings and endings but the events of the middle part of stories are sometimes underdeveloped.
8. Pupils enter the school with average skills in numeracy overall and make good progress throughout the school, so that by the end of Year 7 standards are above those expected for their age. By the end of Year 2 pupils can count on and back in twos, threes, fours and fives successfully, although some less able pupils find it hard to apply this knowledge to mental problems. Most can add and subtract numbers up to 100 in a variety of ways and more able pupils know that subtraction is the inverse of addition and that multiplication is repeated addition. Pupils have a good grasp of 'halving' and 'doubling' and can explain the difference between 'odd' and 'even' numbers. They can calculate change from a given sum of money. Pupils can assemble data and represent it on a bar chart. They know the properties of common shapes and recognise lines of symmetry. They can explain their strategies in problem solving tasks well. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made good progress in extending their understanding and use of numbers and other mathematical ideas. These include properties of angles and shapes and more complex ideas about symmetry. They can use more complex fractions, percentages and decimals. They have developed their mental abilities well to solve number problems using, for example, approximation techniques. Generally, pupils explain how they arrived at their answers well, although some less able pupils struggle with more difficult mental problems such as conversion of fractions into percentages. Year 7 pupils are fluent in the mental use of fractions and decimals. They have a

good understanding of ratio and proportion and can calculate the volume of complex three-dimensional shapes. They know how to simplify algebraic equations. They have very good skills of checking the reasonableness of their results. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through the school, because of the good support they receive.

9. By the age of seven pupils achieve standards in science that are well above average compared to other schools nationally. Pupils aged eleven also reach standards well above the national average; the progress of pupils in Year 7 is well above the expected level for their age. More pupils reach the higher levels in this subject than is usual in most schools. Pupils make very good progress in their learning and build their scientific knowledge and understanding year by year. Pupils with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language, make good progress, particularly when they have extra support from learning assistants. By the age of seven pupils have a very good grounding in science. They are beginning to agree conclusions from their experiments and to compare these with their predictions. There is similar very good attainment in other areas of science such as electricity, materials and healthy lifestyles. There is a good link to mathematics when pupils sort everyday electric machines according to their properties. Pupils make further good progress in their understanding of scientific enquiry as they move through Key Stage 2. They spend more time on science, which reflects both their greater understanding and their breadth of knowledge. They readily predict, plan experiments and use resources thoughtfully so their results are increasingly accurate. When experiments are developing pupils discuss what is happening with each other, take turns to record observations, and when results or ideas are compared they use logical, reasoned argument. Pupils' work is set out very neatly in their books. It is written clearly and they use scientific language consistently, both in their writings and their well-drawn diagrams. Pupils in Year 7 make very good progress as they continue with this whole school approach to science. They cover aspects of the programme of study from Key Stage 3, matched very well to their age and attainments. They are fully prepared for their transfer to the next stage of their secondary education.
10. In music, history and religious education pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age at the end of both key stages and at the end of Year 7. In ICT and art and design pupils achieve standards above expectations for their age by the time they are eleven and by the time they leave the school. Standards in design and technology, geography and physical education are in line with what could be expected for their age throughout the school.
11. Pupils with special educational needs, at all stages of the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs, make good progress in relation to their abilities and their individual education plans. They achieve well in relation to their prior attainment and against the targets set for them in their individual education programmes. Work for all pupils on the register matches targets set in individual education plans, and their progress is reviewed rigorously and measured against these goals each term. Good support from classroom assistants enables pupils to complete tasks successfully.
12. The attainment and progress of learning of pupils from different ethnic minority communities and of those with English as an additional language are good. Those who enter the school with weaker English skills receive good support appropriate to their needs and with such support make good progress overall.

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

13. Pupils' very good attitudes to school, very good behaviour and excellent relationships have a very positive impact on both their academic achievements and personal development.
14. Pupils are very keen to come to school and happy in their school, and talk with friendly enthusiasm about their activities. They show tremendous enthusiasm for the very wide range of clubs provided, enhancing their achievements and enjoyment, especially for music and sport.

15. The youngest pupils in the Foundation Stage have settled into school very well and are developing very good attitudes to learning, responding well to the wide range of interesting and challenging activities provided. For instance, in a reception class the excitement shown when they heard the story of Little Red Riding Hood developed their listening skills and enthusiasm for reading very well. Throughout the school pupils show very good attitudes to learning in lessons and work very hard. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson all pupils concentrated very well showing a real sense of enjoying their work when testing a range of materials such as coins and old socks, enabling to learn very effectively about magnetism.
16. Behaviour is very good. No pupils have been excluded over the last two years, a figure well below the national average. Pupils have a very strong sense of fairness and are developing a very good awareness of the impact of their actions on others. No bullying, racist or sexist behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils show no concerns in these areas. Pupils in Year 7 talk about the family feel of the school and have no fears of bullying because they feel the school treats everyone fairly. Behaviour at lunchtimes and in the playground is very good. The manners and politeness shown by all pupils are of an exceptionally high standard.
17. Pupils' personal development is very good. They undertake duties and responsibilities keenly. Their development as good citizens is a particularly strong and improving feature. Pupils have developed a very mature and responsive attitude to the concern for others. Pupils in Year 7 are made to feel special and important and their response is outstanding. As an example their mature and responsible attitude to helping supervise 'the little ones' both while eating lunch and in the playground afterwards gives them a sense of being valuable and also gives them the opportunity to be excellent role models and appreciate the value of helping others.
18. Relationships are excellent throughout the school. Interactions between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves, both in lessons and around the school, are most productive as is the encouragement given to pupils to develop independence. For example, in a Year 7 music lesson pupils work independently in groups using a wide range of musical instruments to produce some wonderfully eerie theme tunes for a freaky television show. Pupils with special educational needs are very positive about school and are fully included in and contribute very well to all lessons and activities. They are developing their own self-esteem very well and are readily accepted by their peers.
19. Attendance rates are satisfactory, being about the average for primary schools. Pupils arrive promptly enabling lessons to start on time. The level of unauthorised absences is low. The relatively high number of pupils who take holidays in term time affects the overall level. These pupils often miss important parts of their education especially at the start of the school year and around the time of national tests.

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

20. Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school. The teaching seen during the inspection showed many strengths, most of which were common to most lessons. While some minor shortcomings occurred in individual lessons, there were no recurrent weaknesses. This is a remarkably strong picture. As a result of these features, the quality of learning is very good both overall and in the different parts of the school.
21. Teachers' management of pupils is excellent. This helps to create a constructive, purposeful ethos for learning. In all parts of the school, teachers combine thoughtful, supportive management with sharp focus on the task in hand. They successfully communicate a sense of shared enterprise in learning and the determination to succeed and improve. This promotes very good attitudes to learning, secures pupils' commitment to the task in hand and encourages good progress.

22. Teachers motivate and encourage pupils by careful, well-judged praise and by valuing their contributions. This gives pupils the security and confidence to make suggestions and gives them satisfaction in learning. Excellent relationships bring warmth and purpose to lessons in all parts of the school. Teachers and learning support assistants promote effective relationships by skilled management and through the models they provide of attentive support and collaboration. As a result, pupils are very well behaved, good humoured and hard working. They work constructively alongside one another and co-operate well. Good examples of this were seen in two whole-year physical education lessons. Here, teachers' very effective teamwork helped to promote constructive attitudes to practice and competition among pupils. Pupils' ability and readiness to work effectively together are further promoted by the opportunities teachers provide for pupils to follow paired and group projects, for example, in ICT.
23. Planning is very effective. Clear learning objectives determine the course of each lesson. These are drawn from coherent overall plans, so that each lesson builds progress within a strong framework. Teachers share the lesson objectives with pupils, ensuring, by concise explanations and examples, that pupils understand them fully. This makes for secure, purposeful learning. It helps to create a sense of joint enterprise in learning and enables pupils to work confidently and independently.
24. The school's well-organised setting arrangements in English and mathematics make it easier to ensure that work is closely matched to pupils' needs and abilities, enabling pupils to progress well. Pupils with special educational needs are grouped in one set in each year group so that they can benefit from closely targeted support. These arrangements are generally effective. However, in a small minority of lessons, the work is planned for the set as a whole and does not make the best allowance for the range of abilities within the set. As a result, lower ability pupils occasionally progress too slowly in some tasks and depend too much on support.
25. Planning is supported by very effective ongoing assessment. Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils very attentively, for example, during writing tasks. They ensure that pupils fully understand their work, check and clarify pupils' progress and guide them towards the next step in their learning. In their planning teachers identify several pupils for more focused assessment. This arrangement combines practicality with effectiveness. It ensures that each pupil benefits from frequent, detailed assessment and enables teachers to build progress from one task to the next. Teachers also mark pupils work very carefully, for example, in English, mathematics and science, nurturing pupils' confidence and giving each pupil clear advice on how to improve. These arrangements motivate pupils, encourage positive attitudes to learning and promote good progress.
26. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally very good. For example, in an excellent Early Years lesson, the teacher's very good subject knowledge enabled her to devise exciting tasks that captured pupils' interest and extended their understanding of numbers. Excellent subject knowledge was a feature of several ICT lessons in the juniors and Year 7. Here, the teachers' expertise and enthusiasm ignited pupils' interest and promoted excellent progress in control technology.
27. In all parts of the school, teachers are careful to use language concisely. This brings clarity to their explanations and improves the accuracy and quality of pupils' speaking and writing. It also sharpens pupils' subject knowledge because they learn the right terminology to describe, for example, the features of a Tudor building or the action of micro-organisms in causing decay.
28. Teachers question very effectively. In many mathematics lessons, teachers improve pupils' mental agility by rapid, well-directed questioning, moving swiftly from one challenge to the next. In other subjects, for example English, they use questioning to extend thinking and encourage reflection. In a successful upper junior lesson, the teacher deepened pupils' understanding of a story extract by encouraging them to think about the author's choice of words and portrayal of character. In this and most other lessons seen, teachers target their questions carefully,

taking account of pupils' differing needs and abilities. This builds pupils' self-esteem, giving them the confidence to frame their own ideas, and enables them to progress well.

29. The pace of lessons is almost always well judged. However, in a small minority of lessons, the initial discussion and writing tasks overrun, so that too little time is left for the final plenary. As a result, pupils do not have the chance to review what they have learned and share their thoughts about it, which reduces the effectiveness of their learning.
30. Very effective use is made of homework, for example, in English, science, history and ICT. Arrangements are systematic and carefully planned to ensure that homework is integral with classroom learning. As a result, homework extends the range of pupils' study, encourages independence and responsibility and helps to forge a valuable learning partnership between home and school.
31. Teachers build very informative links between different subjects. For example, discussion and factual writing in history is planned to improve pupils' speaking, listening and writing skills. ICT is linked with art, music, science and design and technology. These links enrich pupils' learning in both subjects and make for very constructive use of teaching time.
32. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very effective. The many strengths identified in teaching promote good progress in the basic skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing and in the different aspects of mathematics. Teachers make lessons interesting for pupils by setting challenging and varied tasks. They instil enthusiasm and motivate pupils well so that they are fully engaged and keen to improve.
33. By means of good organisation, sensitive support and a warm yet purposeful ethos for learning, teachers successfully include all pupils. Teachers know pupils very well and work closely with learning support assistants to implement pupils' individual education plans. Learning support assistants work very effectively with groups of pupils and within lessons. These arrangements enable pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language to progress well. Able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons because teachers' expectations are high and well informed. As a result, they make good progress. Many pupils benefit greatly from the additional activities that teachers provide, for example, in music.

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

34. The school provides a very good range of curricular learning opportunities including the teaching of French. Statutory requirements are fully met including the teaching of religious education, and personal, health and sex education as well as the dangers of misuse of drugs. As well as giving due priority to the teaching of English and mathematics, curricular breadth is achieved by the provision of an appropriate balance of other subjects. There are planned opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge in different subjects, for example, using their mathematical understanding of co-ordinates in their map work in geography. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is very good, offering a rich range of experiences to allow children good coverage of the Early Learning Goals for children of this age. The school's strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy are very good and pupils make good progress in these areas.
35. Curriculum planning is very good. All subjects have appropriate plans that clearly identify what is to be learnt and how this is to be done and linked with National Curriculum levels. Time is used well in structured and purposeful ways to ensure pupils derive the maximum benefit from the teaching. For example, in mathematics a range of activities that includes a brisk oral and mental session, discussion, planning in pairs, trying out ideas and recording may often occur within a single lesson.

36. The curriculum is inclusive and all pupils, including those with special education needs and with English as an additional language, have full access to it. The individual needs of all pupils are identified and met. Great care is taken to ensure that both boys and girls achieve well. Groupings in classrooms support full access to the National Curriculum for all pupils. Test results are carefully examined to ensure boys and girls achieve their full potential. Recent initiatives include supplementing the library stock with books that will appeal to boys to further encourage their interest in reading.
37. A significant feature of the school is the very good use it makes of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest to supplement the curriculum. These include residential visits for pupils in Years 4, 6 and 7. These are used well to develop pupils' confidence and social skills and fulfil the school's aims of developing all aspects of its pupils. There is a wide range of visits available for pupils in other years including the local theatre, museums, the local area and Warwick Castle. Visitors to the school include musicians, puppeteers and artists. Fire and police personnel give health and safety talks to support personal and social education.
38. The school's provision of extra-curricular activities is very good. A variety of activities are arranged for during lunchtimes and after school. Most of the activities are provided for pupils in Key Stage 2 and Year 7 and include a number of sports, recorders, choir, orchestra, and chess. Younger pupils participate in the dance club and book club. The school provides extra support for pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics through 'Booster' classes after school.
39. The school takes part in the sporting programmes available locally and the pupils have very good opportunities to represent their school against others. In these they achieve considerable success. For example, the boys' football team were league winners and reached the semi-final of the Milton Keynes Cup and the girls' netball team were runners-up in a local tournament.
40. The school's links with the community are very good. Pupils enjoy, for example, dancing to open the town's Christmas festivities. They raise money for a number of charities, such as Comic Relief. These experiences contribute to pupils' moral and social awareness. There are very good links with local businesses, such as Aston Martin, helping older pupils to learn about citizenship and leadership qualities. Supervised access to the Internet enriches pupils' links with the wider world.
41. The school has very good links with other schools. Teachers have good links with the staff of the nearby secondary school, exchanging ideas and knowledge. There are very good arrangements to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils, and to guarantee that there is no repetition of work or gaps in provision. There are visits by staff from the nearby nursery school and close links with local groups of primary schools.
42. The school's Beacon status, designed to provide high quality support to other schools, has opened up a wide range of links with schools and teachers across the country, each learning from one another about how to provide the best education for pupils. This makes a significant contribution to the professional development of teachers both within and outside the school and benefits the pupils' education. Very good links with higher education institutes involved in research and participation in such projects as training graduate teachers enriches the education provided for pupils in the school.
43. Overall, the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is a strength of the school.
44. The school makes very good provision for its pupils' spiritual development and it permeates the life of the school. Teachers work very hard to make learning worthwhile and extend it beyond the material into a spiritual dimension whenever appropriate. Through many aspects of the curriculum, such as art, music and poetry, pupils gain a sense of the wonder of life. The

youngest pupils had been observing the growth of beans they planted in pots. When the teachers removed the plant the pupils gasped at the length of the root revealed. Classrooms and public spaces around the school have attractive displays that celebrate the pupils' work, reminding everyone of the value and uniqueness of each individual. The school building is sited within an attractive and well-cared-for landscape. Within the school there is a peaceful courtyard and outside, Shamma's Garden with its herbs, flowering shrubs and water feature is an area of tranquillity, which encourages reflection and wonder. Assemblies make a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Music is used very well to create a sense of special occasion and to teach pupils to appreciate the wonder and beauty of great music. The school choir and orchestra contribute greatly to this. Moments of stillness and quiet reflection are included in assemblies. In one excellent assembly taken by the headteacher, there was a wonderful moment when tribute was paid to the life of Spike Milligan through the reading of his poetry. Pupils also develop an awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs in their religious education lessons. For example, Year 7 pupils study the beliefs of God held by Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi.

45. The provision for the moral development of pupils is excellent. The school places a high priority on the teaching and understanding of moral values. The ethos of the school is firmly based on respect and care for others and teachers make clear to pupils that they value them. As a consequence pupils take a pride in their own achievements and enjoy and rejoice in the achievements of others. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the whole class managed to count in fives and tens up to 100 without making a mistake and gave themselves a 'pat-on-the-back'. The school effectively teaches the values that distinguish right from wrong. Good attention is given to the reinforcement of codes of behaviour and sharing of positive values. Pupils respond positively, enjoying their work and showing care for the school. Moral values are well taught through discussions, such as exploring ideas about 'caring' and 'trust' through their own experiences. Such issues are specifically planned for in the personal and social education programme.
46. There are excellent relationships within the school and pupils behave courteously towards staff, visitors and each other. Pupils are encouraged to raise money for charities and learn of others less fortunate than themselves as a result. The understanding of citizenship is very well promoted. For example, in Year 5, pupils study leadership through questioning such people as a police sergeant and a scout commissioner. Where there are minor infringements of the rules teachers take time to talk these through with pupils. They help pupils to be aware of the responsibilities they have for their own actions.
47. The school makes excellent provision for social development. The youngest pupils soon learn the rules that foster a happy and calm atmosphere in classrooms. Throughout the school, pupils are taught how to work together through well-organised group and teamwork. Teachers explore personal issues and problems through organised class discussions, in which pupils are encouraged to speak freely and value other pupils' views. Support staff provide valuable guidance and support to pupils who are experiencing difficulties with their work or relationships, enabling them to access the curriculum as successfully as their classmates. Pupils are given many opportunities to take responsibility, for example, when older pupils have set up materials for younger pupils. Older pupils write books for younger pupils, improving their own literacy skills and giving them insight into the needs of these youngsters. Pupils' social development is strongly supported by the excellent role models provided by the teachers and other adults who work in the school.
48. The provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. Through many subjects of the curriculum, pupils become aware of their cultural heritage. Pupils have access to a wide range of literature, including poetry, from popular authors, as well as classical literature. For example, Year 7 pupils study the life and works of Chaucer. They listen to, discuss and perform good music. They begin to appreciate and recognise the styles of famous painters. They study their own contemporary culture and that of other countries, such as France, through learning French and a residential visit to the country. Pupils develop their

understanding of the daily lives and contributions of ethnic groups within the United Kingdom from an early age. For example, in the reception classes, parents of a Chinese child were invited to talk about how they celebrate their New Year. They have access to a range of 'dressing-up' clothes and dolls from other countries. There are planned opportunities to study a diversity of cultures throughout the school. In Year 2 pupils read traditional Hindi rhymes. Older pupils study life in the Caribbean in geography and read Caribbean poetry in their English lessons. The oldest pupils produce very good extended writing on the life and work of Mother Theresa in Calcutta. Pupils study world faiths. They learn, for example, of the symbolism associated with the artefacts from the Jewish faith. Two pupils, a Sikh and a Hindu, talked to other pupils about their faiths in an assembly and were asked many questions afterwards. The school values the pupils' and their parents' own experiences of other cultures.

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

49. Pupils are very well cared for. All staff provide excellent personal support. The strong family feeling in such a large school is outstandingly good and allows pupils to feel secure and develop very confident attitudes to learning.
50. Procedures and awareness in relation to child protection are very good. The headteacher rightly recognises the importance of regular training in relation to awareness of potential issues and careful and sensitive handling of any concerns. Pupils' personal development is monitored very well. Staff know the pupils and their backgrounds well and this allows them to give excellent individual support. Personal needs are dealt with very effectively. Very good procedures and a warm, inviting environment help pupils to settle well in reception classes. At the end of sessions particular care is taken in ensuring all children remain in the school until collected by a responsible person. Health and safety procedures and monitoring are very good. All appropriate risks are assessed very thoroughly. First aid and accident procedures are very good. All staff are provided with first aid training. The school is very clean, tidy and secure.
51. The school has a very good behaviour policy. The strong emphasis on developing pupils' self-confidence and awareness of citizenship is having a positive impact especially on their personal development. Procedures to deal with potential issues are very good and parents and pupils feel confident that the school handles them fairly and effectively. Although a few parents showed some concerns about supervision at lunchtimes, inspection evidence shows that supervision arrangements are very effective both in terms of organisation and use of time and accommodation but also in providing pupils with opportunities to enhance their personal development and social skills. Monitoring systems in relation to and training of staff in dealing with racial incidents are very good.
52. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are thorough and enable the school to identify, if not always eradicate, issues such as the impact of pupils taking holidays in term time.
53. The school's systems for checking how well pupils are progressing are very good. Children are assessed shortly after starting school in the Early Years Unit and again as they are due to start in Year 1. Staff working in the Foundation Stage regularly observe what children can and cannot do, and use this information to plan their next steps. Throughout the school, a comprehensive range of tests and checks are effectively used to assess pupils, particularly in literacy, numeracy, science and religious education. The information these give ensures that teachers have a very good understanding of what pupils need to do next, and they use it effectively in their planning and when organising pupils into ability sets for English and mathematics teaching.
54. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are very good, and their targets are relevant and achievable. There are very good links with outside agencies. All adults involved in the school have a good understanding of individual pupils' needs. Assessment

procedures are good and they are completed thoroughly and regularly. These result in pupils' progress being reviewed very well and modifications to their individual programmes of study being made at the best possible time.

55. Teachers mark pupils work thoroughly, giving useful pointers for further improvements in their comments. A good example of where assessment is used effectively is shown in writing, where the school has identified weaknesses in pupils' attainments. Teachers are now working very hard to improve teaching and learning still further by linking their marking more closely to what pupils should be learning. The school is currently streamlining the system for recording and tracking pupils' attainments. This is already good, but the use of a computer storage system currently being developed is intended to make accessing the records of individual pupils quicker and easier.

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

56. The partnership with parents is very good and contributes very well towards pupils' attitudes to school and their learning. Generally positive views were given by parents at the pre-inspection meeting, in the parental questionnaires, and in discussions with inspectors. They feel their children like school; they achieve high standards, and behave well. They praise the leadership of the headteacher, the standards of care and the ethos of the school. In particular they felt the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views.
57. A small number of parents wanted more additional activities to support the curriculum, better information on their child's progress, and felt the school could work more closely with parents. A very small number raised questions about lunchtime arrangements. Inspectors feel the school provides a very good range of activities to support the curriculum, gives parents very good information on progress, works very closely with parents and that lunchtime arrangements are very well organised.
58. The school provides parents with very good information about their children's progress and the life of the school, and encouragement to be involved in their children's education, especially through the regular newsletters and the school brochure. The strong emphasis on the vision of the school is very prominent in communications and is shared with parents very successfully. The newsletters provided for parents of children in the Foundation Stage give very good information on the focus of work for the term. Annual reports are very good especially in relation to sharing targets for improvement. These are precise and helpful, for example telling parents of a Year 1 child "Should write the numbers 10 to 20 in the correct way." Information provided at the very well attended and regular consultation sessions is of a very high quality and is valued by parents. The school provides an 'open door' to parents, who feel they are made very welcome. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved in their children's education well. The school keeps them well informed.
59. Most parents are involved well in their children's education by supporting homework, providing help in the classroom, attending consultation sessions and fund-raising through the School Community Group. Governors who are parents make a considerable contribution to the school. Most parents ensure their child's prompt and regular attendance, although a significant number take their child on holiday in term time.

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

60. The leadership and management of the school are very good overall. The leadership of the headteacher is of an exceptionally high quality. She has a very clear vision of the direction that she expects the school to take to ensure a first rate education for all pupils. She is a firm and caring leader with a very high level of professional knowledge and expertise that is clearly reflected in all aspects of her work. She has used these attributes to mould together a team of

dedicated and hard working teachers who share her vision that all pupils should receive the best possible opportunities that a school can offer.

61. An outstanding feature of her leadership and vision is clear in the way in which the school has combined so effectively in the last three years. The headteacher is fully supported and complemented by an extremely capable deputy who is a teacher of high quality in her own right. The deputy matches the headteacher in her enthusiasm for promoting the highest levels of education and care for both pupils and their parents. Both have a clear understanding of their roles as senior members of the school. As a result, the school is united in its approach to guiding and teaching pupils and is very successful in achieving its goals.
62. This strong leadership structure is strengthened further by the good work carried out by the co-ordinators. As a result of specific training, all co-ordinators are clear about the roles that they fulfil and they do this very effectively depending upon the length of time that they have held their specific responsibilities. They are all beginning to develop a good understanding of key strengths and weaknesses. They have had opportunities to look at pupils' work and teachers' planning. Some co-ordinators have also observed lessons, but this aspect of monitoring is still being developed in some subjects. The whole ethos of the school, and the attitudes of teachers to their work, is such that all respect the individual parts that each has to play in terms of guiding and monitoring the quality of their own work. As a result, this is a very good team of teachers who work as one for the total benefit of the pupils of this school.
63. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, as is the progress they make. The two co-ordinators for special educational needs work very well together. They have divided the school into upper and lower age ranges for their own areas of responsibilities and to make as much time available for their monitoring and support as possible. This works extremely effectively.
64. The quality of monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and the taking of effective action is very good. The main focus has been on supporting the development of teaching and integrating the two separate schools as efficiently as possible. This has been very successful. Co-ordinators monitor the effectiveness of teachers' planning on a regular basis and ensure that these plans are put into practice. The whole staff have contributed to discussions on effective teaching and the positive results of this combined approach were clearly observed during the inspection. The headteacher and deputy monitor and evaluate each teacher in action on a regular basis. The introduction of new staff to the school, including newly qualified teachers, is also very good. The staff booklet provides a clear set of guidance for new teachers to follow and includes a relevant induction sheet to support new teachers as they settle in. Newly qualified teachers are monitored regularly to ensure that they develop in a positive way. They receive regular guidance and targets are set to help them grow in confidence and skills. To this end, they are provided with appropriate opportunities to observe other colleagues in action and so learn from the good teaching practice of others.
65. The governing body is led by an experienced chairman and fully supports the actions that the headteacher is taking to move the school forward. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is excellent. They take their responsibilities very seriously and play an important and effective role in shaping the direction of the school. The 'vision' statement, which was largely their responsibility, is a very effective guide to the whole school. It is also clear they monitor this carefully and it is being fulfilled extremely well throughout the school. Committees meet on a regular basis to ensure that the management of the school is effective. These include a committee that has a close liaison with the curriculum co-ordinators so that it is kept fully informed of what is happening in each subject.
66. Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school extremely well because of their close involvement with what is going on. Parents feel that they can talk to governors about any issues as most are, or have been, parents of pupils at the school. Parents see them in and around the school regularly. The governing body also has a clear strategy for

checking on the progress that is being made. For example, it works closely with the headteacher to set targets for her to achieve and monitors the progress that is being made on a regular basis. This is a strong aspect of their involvement with the school. Both the headteacher and the governing body have an extremely clear understanding and insight on what needs to be done to improve the school further.

67. The school's improvement plan is excellent. It covers a period of three years through a general overview with the current year broken down into fine detail. This deals with all relevant aspects of planning and action and relates various priorities accurately to the costs involved and to the budget implications. All teachers are involved with the development of this plan and co-ordinators take specific responsibilities for developing their parts of it. The headteacher and governors ensure that specific success criteria are included in the plan so that regular evaluation of its progress occurs to ensure that the school's targets are met.
68. The school manages its finances very effectively. The day-to-day functions of the office are carried out very professionally by the office team. All matters relating to income and expenditure are dealt with efficiently and the school's use of best value principles in deciding upon purchases of resources is good. Specific grants are used very effectively for their designated purposes.
69. The school buildings and grounds afford very good accommodation to promote the breadth of the curriculum. The classrooms together with the shared areas are of a good size and there are two large halls for assemblies and physical education. As well as these, there are two good-sized, attractive and inviting libraries, which are used by pupils and staff to very good advantage. Especially exciting are the music room and ICT suite, which provide splendid facilities for pupils to develop their skills. These are in constant use. The buildings are maintained very well by the site manager and cleaning staff.
70. Outside areas provide ample space for pupils to play. There are three playgrounds suitable for each of the school's age groups to play with ease and in safety. Within one of these is a quiet garden in which flowers and perfumed shrubs make it a pleasant place to be in summer or winter. Such a facility promotes pupils' spiritual development very well. Beyond the playgrounds, the large playing field is used beneficially for outside games all year round.
71. Resources for learning are very good in supporting the breadth and depth of the curriculum. Many are inspirational, such as the musical instruments, the 33 computers in the ICT suite linked to the Internet and the range and quality of books embracing the whole of the curriculum. Other noteworthy resources which sustain learning, making it accessible to all pupils and at the same time interesting, include the science equipment for experimentation on, for example, electrical circuits, the apparatus for physical education and the varied and vibrant equipment and books used by the school's youngest pupils. Particularly significant and successful in nurturing learning are the overhead projectors used by all teachers. Their use widens greatly the scope of materials used for direct teaching, significantly adding interest and meaning to lessons.
72. The level of teaching and non-teaching staffing is good, allowing the curriculum to be taught very effectively. There are good arrangements for the induction of new staff who consider the support they received to be good. Very good teamwork amongst school staff means that the school exploits the expertise of individuals effectively.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

73. In the context of the school's many strengths, there are no key issues for the school to address, but the following minor points for improvement, already in the school's improvement plan, should be considered in any action plan:

- (1) Further develop the potential of some co-ordinators in the management of their subjects, and to support their colleagues further, by providing opportunities for them to monitor teaching and the delivery of provision in their subjects.

Paragraphs 62, 107, 112, 116, 138, 157

- (2) Build on the current procedures to make further concerted efforts to improve pupils' attendance.

Paragraph 19

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed

106

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	7	37	44	18	0	0	0
Percentage	7	35	42	17	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.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y7

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	624
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

YR – Y7

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	78

#### English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	33
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#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	48
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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	39	36	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	35	33
	Girls	36	35	35
	Total	70	70	68
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (91)	93 (91)	91 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	34	39
	Girls	36	35	36
	Total	71	69	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (91)	92 (95)	100 (97)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	30	26	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	25	29
	Girls	23	21	25
	Total	49	46	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (85)	82 (76)	96 (90)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	27	27
	Girls	21	22	24
	Total	45	49	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (81)	88 (79)	91 (88)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	5
Indian	14
Pakistani	9
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	8
White	517
Any other minority ethnic group	6

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***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 – Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	24.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	28

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y7**

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	213

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	1075565
Total expenditure	1001359
Expenditure per pupil	1548
Balance brought forward from previous year	-6991
Balance carried forward to next year	67315

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

**Results of the survey of parents and carers**

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	615
Number of questionnaires returned	241

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	49	48	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	35	57	5	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	54	12	1	2
The teaching is good.	54	40	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	59	13	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	42	11	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	20	55	19	2	5
The school is well led and managed.	43	46	5	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	48	5	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	39	18	7	17

## **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**

74. Children start part time in the Early Years Unit in the term following their fourth birthday, becoming full time as they transfer to the reception class. Their attainments on entry to the school cover a full range, but are average overall. Very good teaching means that children achieve very well in both classes. The adults have a thorough understanding of how young children learn that shows in their effective planning. Their management and control is exemplary because they have established excellent working routines and relationships with the children. They provide a rich and exciting range of experiences that successfully stimulate children's interest and enthusiasm for learning. Their strong teamwork and very good rapport with each other and the children sets a very good example for children to follow. There are regular, thorough checks on what children can and cannot do that are used to carefully plan their next steps. This is particularly true of those with special educational needs who are soon identified and clear targets set. The majority of children attain the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning and are well launched into the early stages of the National Curriculum by the time they leave the reception class. However, because of the way children are admitted to the school, the youngest children in each year group have significantly less time to cover the Foundation Stage curriculum. Their relative lack of experience means that some of them do not attain the goals set for them by the time they are ready to start in Year 1. The introduction of new admission arrangements later this year is intended to address this problem.

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

75. The children make very good progress in this area. They play happily together, sharing the toys and taking turns fairly. This was seen when a group of children in the reception class were helping each other to read the instructions so that they could each correctly move their toy cars 'forwards' and 'backwards'. They are settled and confident because teachers establish good routines so children know what to do and how to behave. Children in the Early Years Unit enjoyed playing with hoops, balls and quoits out on the large playground but they soon stopped and listened when asked to do so by the adult. In the reception class children changed quickly and independently for physical activities in the hall because they had been shown how to turn their chairs around to give more room, and encouraged to fold their clothes neatly to help them dress quickly at the end. They were all eager to beat the sand timer, and were soon ready to start. The teaching in this area is good as teachers work extremely hard to ensure that their lessons are lively. Children were fascinated and totally absorbed during group and whole-class sessions when teachers used puppets and role-play or varied their voices imaginatively.

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

76. Very good teaching helps children to make rapid strides in this area, particularly in their speaking and listening and reading. In story sessions and discussions, children in both classes listen very carefully so that they remember what they have heard. They are eager to answer questions and explain their ideas because adults praise them and show a keen interest in what they have to say. Most children speak clearly and confidently. The best examples of this were seen in very good teaching in the reception class where children were engrossed in a 'Red Riding Hood' theme. They read expressively from a 'Big Book' along with their teacher, using a small squeaky voice for Red Riding Hood's speech without any prompting. Later, children were able to re-tell the story in detail, as seen when a child explained, "The wolf got into bed and he put on granny's spectacles and a night-cap". They closed their eyes and were fascinated when their teacher donned a mask and 'the wolf' came to visit them, encouraging them to ask questions. Their eyes shone as they excitedly asked him questions about himself and his family. There is a good emphasis on children learning

their letter sounds and a bank of basic words that they can read and write easily. Regular practice and checks by adults using word games and key word cards, mean that many children are well launched into reading, and read simple texts confidently and independently by the time they start in Year 1.

77. Their writing skills are not as strong as other areas of communication, language and literacy although the majority are at, or approaching, the Early Learning Goals. Although the teaching is effective, this is where the youngest children struggle because they have less experience. The teacher in the Early Years Unit pays good attention to helping children develop good writing habits right from the start by showing them how to shape and position letters correctly. This stands them in good stead so that they learn to write their names and captions with recognisable letters, for instance when writing about a 'Toys on Tuesday' special day. Older children in the reception class enjoyed writing magic spells when they learned to use words more expressively. "Slippery snakes ... that's alliteration", explained a child proudly. Play activities successfully stimulate and develop children's writing skills, for example when they wrote tickets in the 'travel agency', messages on a fax machine in the 'hospital' and letters from Goldilocks to the three bears.

### **Mathematical development**

78. This is another area where effective teaching helps children make very good progress in both classes. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1 the majority reach the targets for their age and are working at the early stages of the National Curriculum, particularly in the number aspect of mathematics. Teachers are very clear about what children are to learn, but also flexible enough to adapt when the need arises. Both teachers make effective use of practical activities, resources and displays in their teaching. The 'Routines' time at the start of sessions, used for counting and such activities as recording the date, helps them strengthen their skills in using and applying their mathematics skills that are sometimes fairly limited on entry to school. Excellent teaching was seen in the Early Years Unit where a group of more able children learned to count accurately and calculate 'one more' and 'one less' with numbers to 10. The teacher's infectious enthusiasm and expressive use of a puppet stimulated a lively enthusiasm. Children concentrated extremely well and worked hard to make sure that their counting was accurate so that the puppet would not 'shiver'. When the teacher realised that the children had achieved the target she made it more challenging by working with numbers to 30 and above using a number line displayed nearby. Other children made equally good progress, but at a lower level, because they benefited from the individual attention and support given by other staff that helped them count more carefully and accurately. The reception class teacher used a mixture of questions and discussion successfully so that children learned to subtract. They were asked to think how many would be left if Red Riding Hood gave the rabbit four of her eight toy bears. "Why is four a better guess than eight?" asked the teacher, prompting one child to observe that, "if you give some away you can't still have eight."

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

79. Children show a keen curiosity about the world around them and make very good progress in building on their basic knowledge and understanding, particularly in the scientific aspects where they exceed the targets set for children by the end of the Foundation Stage. The main strengths in teaching lie in the very good use of resources and practical experiences that capture children's interest, and the rich opportunities for observation and discussion that strengthen their understanding. The youngest children in the Early Years Unit were learning about new growth in a topic on springtime. They were fascinated as the teacher showed them a hyacinth bulb and frogspawn, but there was a real sense of wonder and suspense when she removed a bean plant from its plant pot. She used her voice expressively, sometimes speaking quietly, and moved the soil away very slowly so that they gasped when they saw the plant growing from its seed. Older children in the reception class explored magnets and tried to explain why like poles repel. The activity extended their language skills as well as their

understanding of magnets as they discussed their investigation. For instance, "Will it pick up two of these (paperclips)?" ... "If you put two together, (magnets) will it work?" they asked each other.

80. The teaching in other areas is good and children reach the targets by the end of the reception year. Visits and visitors that successfully extend their awareness of the wider world, boost children's knowledge of other people's lives. For example, they learned about the Chinese way of life when a parent visited and talked to them and showed them interesting artefacts. Role-play is used effectively to extend their awareness of the different jobs people do, for instance when they take on the roles of nurses and doctors in the class hospital. They know how to operate simple computer programs like number games, operating the mouse carefully to move around the screen.

### **Physical development**

81. The area set aside for outdoor play provides limited space, but there are plans to improve this to create a more stimulating play environment. However, teachers make good use of the large playground and hall for physical development. Children enjoy physical activities and behave very well because teachers have given clear explanations of what they are to do and how they should behave. Children in both classes used space well and moved around confidently and safely without bumping into others. When noise levels rose during a lesson in the hall, the teacher stopped them and a quiet reminder was all that was needed to restore quiet. Activities have a clear purpose, and help children to build their skills systematically. This was seen when an assistant in the Early Years Unit showed children how to bend their knees and control their hoops and quoits so that they rolled them more accurately. However, there were too few opportunities for them to experiment and practise their skills in their own way. They lost interest when tasks were routine, like when they were trying to roll their hoops along the playground lines. Very good teaching in the reception class resulted in some high quality work as children worked in groups to create a route for Red Riding Hood and then to explore ways of moving along it. There were many happy faces as they jogged on the spot to warm up. They listened intently to the instructions that followed and were soon setting up their routes. The well-briefed adult helpers provided good supervision and advice as children decided how they would use the apparatus. They moved benches, planks and jumping stands safely and sensibly because they had been taught how to do it. Timely intervention by the teacher reminded them to try out different movements, so that by the end of the lesson their movements became more imaginative.

### **Creative development**

82. The teaching in this aspect is good overall and most children reach the targets set for them. Children in the Early Years Unit made the best progress when adults intervened in their activities. This was best seen when an assistant joined a group of children exploring the musical instruments. They had been inspired by an earlier activity when all the adults had demonstrated singing and playing to accompany the 'Magic Rattle' story. Although there were too few opportunities for children to experiment and play musical instruments in this lesson, they remembered it well and in the next 'activities' session chose the music corner as their activity. They knew the names of some percussion instruments because the teacher talked about each in turn. With her encouragement, they proudly presented their own performance of the 'Magic Rattle' song. A parent helper talked to children as they played in the 'castle' role-play area. This helped some children act out simple stories involving princes and princesses. However, when they have free choice, some children do not persevere with their creative activities as well as they might and this slows their progress. It was noticeable that girls enjoyed the art activities more than boys, and their achievements were better. The girls painted bright recognisable pictures of blossom and spring flowers. They thought carefully about the shape and colour of the petals and stems, whereas the boys were still experimenting with paint and their pictures were less mature. Children in the reception class

exceeded the targets in their musical development in a very well planned and managed lesson that they enjoyed enormously. They responded imaginatively to the story by singing and creating interesting sounds to accompany it using percussion instruments. They thought hard about the best ways to interpret the sound of a bird flying, a roar and a rattle in the story, varying the speed, loudness and patterns in their playing as well as singing tunefully and enthusiastically.

## ENGLISH

83. Standards in English at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are above average. In Year 7 pupils attain better levels than those expected for pupils of this age. These inspection findings agree with teachers' assessments of pupils' attainments. They also show improvement when compared with the standards gained by pupils of Years 2 and 6, in the National Curriculum tests, in the past two years. Influencing this raised attainment is the school's very good, and ever-strengthening process of gauging pupils' needs and planning to meet them explicitly. These enable pupils in Year 7 to continue to make good progress and achieve standards that are above expectations for their age by the time they leave the school.
84. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Successful planning contributes to this significantly, through lessons having clear learning intentions and all pupils having individual targets to guide their learning. At the beginning of lessons, the learning intentions are shared with the pupils so that they know what they should achieve by the end of the lesson. They participate with a clear focus. Planning adheres well to the National Literacy Strategy and basic skills are taught particularly well. Teachers are also successful in nurturing English skills to good advantage across the curriculum. For example, in history pupils use research and writing skills very well. They present history work to a high quality as seen in Years 5 and 6 pupils' studies of Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. Above all, teachers form excellent relationships with pupils, which result in a respectful learning environment where pupils behave very well, have very good attitudes towards their work and enjoy it greatly.
85. A strong culture of speaking and listening pervades the school, embracing the whole of the curriculum. Consequently, pupils make good progress and attain standards above those expected, by the end of Years 2, 6 and 7. Pupils enjoy the many opportunities they are given to develop and use their speaking and listening skills. Within lessons there is scope to discuss in pairs, such matters as the use of phonics, adverbs and connectives. This strategy encourages the sharing of knowledge to very good effect, because pupils behave responsibly and take full advantage of it. Opportunities to discuss as a whole class are equally valuable in strengthening a wide range of speaking and listening skills. For example, in Year 7, pupils discuss the type of vocabulary necessary to conduct an argument about the advantages and disadvantages of school uniform. They learn to speak with conviction using formal language so as to be taken seriously. The use of correct and varied vocabulary is promoted dynamically and should pupils make mistakes, teachers correct them constructively.
86. This good practice occurs throughout the school. Pupils of Year 2 talk about how the poem entitled 'The Magical Horse' makes them feel, using such words as 'excited' and 'magical'. Pupils of Year 3 demonstrate their good skills in explaining what the contents of a time capsule reveal about the owner, while pupils of Year 5 explore the effect of micro-organisms in causing food to decay. Teachers' very good questioning skills contribute significantly to pupils' successes. They pitch questions at just the right level to suit the varying abilities of their pupils, involving everyone and allowing all to succeed, not only in speaking well but in listening purposefully. Pupils listen and build on each other's contributions beneficially. All teachers are good role models in encouraging a wide and aptly used vocabulary. In the very best lessons teachers also demonstrate how to use expression to add interest to what they have to say.
87. By the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils' attainment in reading is above average. In Year 7 pupils attain above the expected levels for pupils of this age. Reading resources are continually being

added to, so that pupils use a very good variety of both fiction and non-fiction texts. There are two good, inviting libraries, which are well organised and categorised. This gives pupils easy access to a wide range of titles. Two teachers co-ordinate the organisation and quality of the libraries and ensure that the best possible use is made of the facilities. The Junior Librarian Cataloguing Computer System is being installed currently. This is intended to improve further the already smooth access which pupils have to the library. Classrooms too are well stocked with a very good range of reading materials for teaching the different aspects of reading and for meeting the demands of the curriculum. With such good resources at their disposal, teachers are able to nurture reading explicitly, enabling pupils to make good progress in acquiring a wide range of skills.

88. Infant pupils have good word-building skills, which they use to make sense of unfamiliar words. They read with good levels of fluency. They are building comprehension skills well, showing by their responses to questions that they have understood what they have read. These skills are built upon throughout the junior years, by the end of which pupils have good, and in the case of the higher attaining pupils very good, comprehension skills. They draw information confidently from across the text to support their points of view. They make deductions from the information gleaned and recognise the use of inference within a text. Very good examples of reading with expression occurred in two of the Year 6 classes, when teachers read the warning story 'One Frosty Morning' not only expressively but in one case, matching voice to characters. Such excellent practice could be shared more widely, so that expressive reading is effectively developed, to enable all junior pupils to read with the same liveliness.
89. Parents contribute well to their children's reading skills, working profitably in partnership with teachers through the home/school reading log. In turn, pupils have very good attitudes to reading. At all stages of the school, pupils choose to read at home. As early as Year 2 they have established favourite authors and texts such as Enid Blyton's 'Famous Five' and Roald Dahl's 'Enormous Turnip'. By the end of Year 6 pupils enjoy Lemony Snicket's 'The Wide Window' and the great favourite, J.K. Rowling's 'Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone'. Many exciting events stimulate pupils to read, such as the recent World Book Day when staff and pupils dressed up as characters from favourite books.
90. Pupils make good progress and by the end of Years 2 and 6 attain above average standards in writing. By the end of Year 7 pupils attain beyond the expectations for this age group. Pupils are given good opportunities to write in different forms. However, in Year 2, there is an imbalance in retelling well-known stories too often, and writing imaginatively, from a given title, too seldom. Pupils use their writing skills well in subjects besides English. For example, they write factually and purposefully in history, geography, science, design and technology and religious education.
91. By the end of Year 2, the level of accuracy in pupils' spelling and punctuation is good. They use a wide vocabulary and are beginning to use some joining words such as 'and', 'then' and 'but', to add interest and meaning to their writing. In handwriting they form letters properly. By the end of Years 6 and 7 pupils have acquired mature handwriting styles and they present work to a high standard. Spelling, punctuation and style of writing are all good. They organise their work into paragraphs and structure it well. Not quite as successful, but still good, is the development of the plot in narrative writing, by some Year 6 pupils. There is a tendency to write imaginative openings and endings but under-develop the events of the middle part of stories. Also in Year 6, boys tend to write good, imaginative, action-packed stories, but neglect to describe the characters' feelings. This reduces interest and is an area to be developed in the co-ordinators' action plan.
92. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress as a result of informed, structured teaching and skilled, experienced help from the team of learning support assistants. The targeting of pupils using a range of assessments,

carefully structured phonic work and detailed individual education plans has a positive impact upon the standards that pupils achieve.

93. The co-ordinators provide very good leadership and management, characterised by their enthusiasm for and knowledge of the subject. They monitor teaching, planning and pupils' work and from an informed basis have refined planning ensuring that all lessons are driven by clear learning intentions. They are in the process of improving marking still further to ensure that it relates directly to the learning intentions. This is excellent practice. Methods of assessing and recording pupils' progress and attainment are very good. A cumulative record is built up from which information may be drawn readily. This record forms part of the transfer arrangements and passes with the pupil throughout the school and onto the next.

## **MATHEMATICS**

94. Standards are above those expected nationally by the age of seven and eleven and Year 7 pupils achieve above the levels expected for pupils of this age. Pupils enter the school with average skills in numeracy overall and make good progress throughout the school. This is a direct result of very good teaching. Underlying this is the commitment of staff to the careful analysis of the achievement of individual and groups of pupils. This enables them to know exactly where they need to direct their efforts in each class to challenge the able pupils and to provide extra support for pupils finding it difficult. 'Booster' classes in Year 6 also help to raise standards.
95. By the end of Year 2 pupils can count on and back in twos, threes, fours and fives successfully, although some less able pupils find it hard to apply this knowledge to mental problems. Most can add and subtract numbers up to 100 in a variety of ways and more able pupils know that subtraction is the inverse of addition and that multiplication is repeated addition. Pupils have a good grasp of 'halving' and 'doubling' and can explain the difference between 'odd' and 'even' numbers. They can calculate change from a given sum of money. Pupils can assemble data and represent it on a bar chart. They know the properties of common shapes and recognise lines of symmetry. They can explain their strategies in problem-solving tasks well.
96. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made good progress in extending their understanding and use of numbers and other mathematical ideas. These include properties of angles and shapes and more complex ideas about symmetry. They can use more complex fractions, percentages and decimals. They have developed their mental abilities well to solve number problems using, for example, approximation techniques. Generally, pupils explain how they arrived at their answers well, although some less able pupils struggle with more difficult mental problems such as conversion of fractions into percentages. There are good opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in other subjects such as science and geography. Year 7 pupils are fluent in the mental use of fractions and decimals. They have a good understanding of ratio and proportion and can calculate the volume of complex three-dimensional shapes. They know how to simplify algebraic equations. They have very good skills of checking the reasonableness of their results. Pupils with special educational needs, and with English as an additional language, make good progress through the school, because of the good support they receive.
97. Across the school, teaching and learning are very good with some excellent lessons seen during the inspection. Teachers have a very good understanding of mathematics, which means they make clear teaching points and answer pupils' questions accurately. There is a sharp focus in lessons on precisely what is to be learnt. In all lessons this is shared with the pupils, so they know what is expected of them. Teachers expect pupils to concentrate in lessons and this has a positive effect on the quality and quantity of work produced. Teachers plan and organise their lessons well and use a variety of strategies to keep pupils interested, such as mathematical games and puzzles. Teachers' skills of questioning are particularly

strong and gauge whether or not pupils are making enough progress. This was the case in a Year 5 lesson on subtraction problems; the teacher realised that some pupils were using very lengthy strategies to arrive at an answer. Pupils soon found more efficient and economical methods after the teacher posed the question "How can you make it easier for yourself?" Excellent management of pupils, achieved with good humour and without fuss, is a strong feature of teaching. Teachers treat pupils with respect and value their contribution. As a result, pupils pay very good attention to the teachers.

98. Excellent relationships between pupils and their teachers contribute very effectively to pupil's positive attitudes. A feature of several lessons was the way in which pupils enjoyed and rejoiced in their own and others' achievements, underlining the excellent relationships within classes. Many opportunities are created for pupils to reflect on their learning and to explain their thinking, particularly in the whole class session at the end of each lesson. Sometimes this is rather hurried and as a consequence occasionally pupils do not have enough time to consolidate their ideas. Within the 'set' classes, further groupings are often made, enabling teachers and assistants to work with pupils at a common level of understanding. In some classes the range of ability is very wide and very occasionally the work is not sufficiently modified to enable all the pupils to experience maximum success. For example, in a Year 2 class, one child completed the set task of recording the ten times table in two different ways in quick time, while other pupils had only just begun.
99. The subject is well managed and the co-ordinators have a clear idea of what needs to be done to further raise attainment. Assessment procedures are very good in mathematics, and the analysis the school is developing of its teaching and the results of pupils' work enables teachers to target pupils to support their learning. There are good resources to back up the teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy. There are good examples of pupils using ICT, for example for work on data handling. Pupils are involved in a homework scheme called 'Impact Maths'. This is a positive incentive for parents to assist their children's learning of numeracy skills.

## **SCIENCE**

100. By the age of seven pupils achieve standards in science that are well above average compared to other schools nationally. Pupils aged eleven reach standards above the national average; the progress of pupils in Year 7 is well above the expected level for their age. When these results are compared to similar schools they are well above average. More pupils reach the higher levels in this subject than is usual in most schools. Pupils make very good progress in their learning because they build their scientific knowledge and understanding year by year through following a very well planned programme of scientific enquiry. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, particularly when they have extra support from learning assistants.
101. The recent school improvement plans have raised standards in science because through these the school has:
- made sure scientific enquiry has a strong focus;
  - set homework in a well-organised way so that it supports, or extends, class lessons;
  - incorporated national guidance into science plans very skilfully;
  - assessed pupils' work regularly so that all teachers share the same high standards.

As a result of these measures the school has met, or exceeded, its targets in science in successive years.

102. By the age of seven pupils have a very good grounding in science. For example, in a very lively lesson about friction, pupils discussed what effect different materials might have on their model cars, set up an experiment using ramps to find out, and began to record their results in a simple way. Pupils then began to agree conclusions from their experiments and to compare these with their predictions. Displays and pupils' workbooks confirm similar very good attainments in other areas of science when they explore electricity, materials and healthy lifestyles. For example, experiments with mixtures of flour, sugar, rice, butter and orange peel show that pupils recognise 'it cannot be changed back'. This is linked to the manufacture of bricks and paper well to extend pupils' understanding that some changes cannot be reversed. Displays of pupils' work on electricity illustrate their very good knowledge of simple circuits. There is a good link to mathematics when pupils sort everyday electric machines according to their properties; this shows that they are able to recognise circuits around them, together with the dangers they present. Pupils' workbooks confirm this very good scientific approach is used in all lessons; the full programme of study is covered extremely well.
103. Pupils make further good progress in their understanding of scientific enquiry as they move through Key Stage 2. They spend more time on science, which reflects both their greater understanding and their breadth of knowledge. They readily predict, plan experiments and use resources thoughtfully so their results are increasingly accurate. Where there are deviations they are able to give reasons why this might be so. When experiments are developing, pupils discuss what is happening with each other, take turns to record observations, and when results or ideas are compared they use logical, reasoned argument. As part of this they are able to identify how they might improve the experiment next time. This approach was seen consistently in lessons involving investigations. Some very good examples of this were seen in Year 4 when pupils were comparing the arm lengths of older pupils with their own, in Year 5, where the experiments on the preservation of food, and decay caused by micro-organisms, produced a very lively debate, and in Year 6 when pupils explored the results of air resistance on a 'falling spinner'. Pupils' work is set out very neatly in their books. It is written clearly; they use scientific language consistently, both in their writings and their well-drawn diagrams.
104. Pupils in Year 7 make very good progress as they continue with this whole school approach to science. They cover the appropriate material from the Key Stage 3 programme of study, matched very well to their age and attainments. For example, they separate solvents from solutes, classify materials into solids, liquids or gases, and explore 'smartie chromatography'. Pupils have a very good knowledge of the solar system that they showed in a carefully organised lesson, built around a well-chosen video. They are fully prepared for their transfer to the next stage of their secondary education.
105. Teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall with some examples of very good teaching seen during the inspection. The strength of all science teaching in every year is the focus on experiments. These are well prepared so that pupils explore science in a way that is suited to their age and experience. Teachers ask well-directed questions of pupils of different abilities and praise their responses, and as a result they are very keen to contribute. Teachers know the science programme of study in detail because they have incorporated national guidance into whole school plans to make a very well constructed series of lessons. Very good resources are ready to hand; for example in Year 2 pupils use ramps covered with different materials so there is no delay in any practical work; in Year 6 pupils use timers which record in hundredths of a second to make sure their readings are accurate. In some lessons learning assistants support pupils with special needs very effectively, sitting alongside pupils whilst they work. Books are marked very constructively. Teachers record what pupils understand, or what they need to do further to improve. Homework is given weekly and then discussed with pupils so previous classwork is always added to and revised. Year 6 pupils discuss their homework at the beginning of the next lesson, and it is clear that it helps pupils to recall previous work on, for example, the effects of gravity and wind resistance. Relationships are very good, and sometimes excellent, and as a result pupils are well-behaved, enthusiastic scientists.

106. Some areas for development are evident throughout the school. Occasionally time in lessons is out of balance. In Key Stage 1 some lessons are hurried because the time allowed is too short. In Key Stage 2 sometimes too much time is taken at the beginning of lessons for explanations, resulting in less time for experimentation. In all classrooms, including Year 7, it is clear pupils had been writing about their experiments in different formats. The school has begun to explore the use of a more standard set of headings for 'experimental write ups'. Although this is in its early stages of development, where it has begun it has had an immediate positive impact.
107. The co-ordinator leads the subject well. She has supported the raising of standards by working closely with colleagues, particularly in planning and the scrutiny of pupils' work. Currently there are few opportunities for her to see teaching in other classrooms and this has been identified as an area for development within her management responsibilities.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

108. Standards are as expected by the end of Year 2, but above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in art and design that continues in Year 7. This is due to good teaching that draws closely on the school's effective scheme of work and encourages pupils to do their best work.
109. Pupils' observational skills are promoted particularly well throughout the school and standards in this aspect are high. In lessons in Year 2 pupils explored paintings by Lowry and their teachers used questions effectively to draw pupils' attention to the distinct style of his work. There were very good links with history as teachers encouraged pupils to remember what factory workers' lives might have been like, and the buildings and smoky environment at the time of his painting. This reflected well in the matchstick figures, tall buildings and attention to clothing and body stance in their own drawings. The discussion prompted some pupils to experiment with pencil shading to create a smoky effect that added further impact. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their work in art because teachers provide good stimulation through interesting activities. Very good use was made of a residential visit to Woodrow High House in Year 4. Some of the pupils' 'Through the window' pictures were very detailed and attractive. A walk in the moonlight stimulated more interesting pictures in the style of Seurat. When pupils explored photographs of pop stars and other famous people and painted landscapes from a nearby hill, in Year 7, their own work was very detailed, with imaginative use of colour and shading.
110. Pattern making was being taught particularly well in Year 4 where effective planning provided a good range of experiences. Pupils' work, using stencil, printing and black and white effects, was interesting and imaginative. Teachers displayed the work attractively, which further boosted pupils' enthusiasm for art. This is a strong feature elsewhere in the school, where pupils' work and examples of the work of famous artists are prominently displayed. As a result, by the time they leave the school, pupils have a good awareness of famous artists and the different styles and techniques they used.
111. There was good use of art as a stimulus for work in ICT when pupils in Year 5 interpreted work by artists such as Vernet in a 'Write me a picture' activity. Some minor weaknesses in teaching meant that occasionally pupils did not make as much progress as they might have done. For example, pupils' art work was slowed when materials were not to hand in a Year 1 lesson, or pupils spent too long drawing a grid for a scale drawing of Pharaoh in Year 5. Sometimes, pupils were not encouraged to develop their own ideas enough, as when a pupil creating a themed hat in Year 6 wanted to use wood as a better support for a ring around her planet hat and was not enabled to do so.
112. The art co-ordinator is enthusiastic, and promotes the subject effectively, particularly in organising the high quality displays around the school. This gives her a good overview of

standards, but her role in monitoring teaching to identify what works well, and what needs improving, in the teaching of art and design, is still being developed.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

113. Standards in design and technology are broadly average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school and are achieving the expected levels by the time they leave the school in Year 7. Recent developments in planning provide improved guidance for teachers in their lesson planning so that there is better coverage of all aspects of the subject. The skills pupils need to design their projects, and to shape and join materials, are now taught systematically in each year group. These are all helping to improve standards.
114. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 7. Pupils show a keen interest in their design and technology work because teachers plan interesting real-life projects that challenge and stimulate their enthusiasm. Several said that it was their favourite subject. As a result, they work very hard and take pride in presenting a good quality finished product. Pupils in Year 2 concentrated very well when attaching wheels and an axle in order to make their 'dream car' move. In all the lessons, very good relationships meant that teachers managed their pupils extremely well, and there was a strong sense of teamwork and co-operation. Where teaching was good or very good, there were very good introductions so that pupils knew exactly what to do. Teachers carefully observed pupils as they worked, intervening with just the right questions to help them improve their work. This was best seen when the co-ordinator discussed whether masking tape or corner supports would provide a better join for a pyramid shape as a pupil made a shelter in Year 6. Because of this discussion, the pupil improved her structure and made it much firmer.
115. There is good attention to teaching the skills involved in the designing and making process. Pupils carefully produce well-labelled diagrams and plan the materials they will use. They understand the importance of trying out their designs by making a prototype. They learn to evaluate their work critically. This was evident when pupils in Year 3 changed the shape of their package for a healthy cereal bar because they noticed that it would fall out of their 'mock up' package. Pupils in Year 7 made their plans more detailed by adding measurements. However, this aspect is sometimes missed as pupils move through the school. Older pupils' designs are sometimes in the form of a picture, rather than a working diagram showing more detail, like working measurements. Pupils do not refer to their plans enough as they work on their projects. Sometimes their finished item is quite different from the one they planned, and so the design element of their work is diminished.
116. Pupils worked with a limited range of tools and materials, with a heavy use of paper and cardboard for many of the projects seen during the inspection. For instance, when they designed and made slippers in Year 5, they worked hard to make them practical and attractive to the buyer. However, some opportunities were missed for pupils to work with fabrics and materials other than paper. Teachers' confidence is improving but the subject co-ordinator is aware of the need to widen further the range of tools and materials pupils use. She is enthusiastic and provides a strong lead for others in her teaching. The opportunities to enable her to monitor teaching and learning in order to ensure that pupils move forward in each year group, for example when projects involve making a similar box in Years 3, 5 and 7, is a priority in the school improvement plan.
117. Pupils in Year 7 spoke enthusiastically about a homework project where they designed and made a working volcano. They proudly explained the different techniques they used to create the structure, and the problems involved in making it 'erupt'. Such projects successfully link the design and technology skills with those in other subjects, like geography and science.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

118. Standards are above those expected for pupils' age in Years 2, 6 and 7. During the inspection it was possible to see geography being taught only in Years 2, 5 and 6. However, from talking with pupils, analysis of pupils' past work and looking at teachers' planning, it is evident that pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are making good progress throughout the school.
119. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to make maps and plans and to identify the human and physical features of a place. They extend their knowledge of the local environment and consider ways of making it safer. By Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of the locality and describe with real accuracy how to get to a variety of places within the area. They understand why roads are where they are and how many uses they have. They take part in fieldwork in order to investigate local traffic issues. They clearly describe potential hazards posed by conditions on local roads. Pupils use ICT to create a database for the information they have researched and record the data from the traffic survey on computer-generated graphs.
120. Pupils have a good understanding of how humans cause damage to an environment and how this can affect the lives of the inhabitants. Year 6 pupils have good recall of their work on mountains and Snowdonia in particular. They explain how Newport Pagnell is very different from Snowdonia, and from mountain areas in the Andes. They identify and compare the physical and human features, such as natural resources, the weather and annual rainfall, population and occupations. They use maps to plot routes to the Andes and to locate the continents and countries of the world. The work in Year 7 on 'Underground/Overground' shows a very good understanding of igneous and metamorphic rock and how the world was formed. Their work is characterised by very good use of precise geographical vocabulary such as 'parasitic cone' and 'seismic'.
121. In the three lessons observed, the teaching was good, and consistent with the evidence of good teaching over time seen in pupils' books and in talking with them. Teachers plan well for the development of pupils' skills of geographical enquiry. Work is marked and provides some helpful guidance to show pupils how they might improve their work. The revised curriculum framework ensures that pupils cover work appropriate to their age group.
122. The co-ordinator is relatively new to her post but has already determined ways in which the subject could be improved. She has begun to compile a portfolio of pupils' completed work in order to ensure that all topics are covered in depth and that learning is relevant to pupils' identified needs. The range of resources is used effectively to support pupils' learning, and the high level of reference books enhances the development of their research skills.

## **HISTORY**

123. By the end of Years 2, 6 and 7, due to very good teaching, standards are above the expected levels. The quality of teaching is very good overall. At the infant stage of the school this judgement is based upon teachers' planning, pupils' work and through talking to pupils, as no teaching was seen in the infant classes during the inspection week. The high quality of teaching is also reflected in the very good attitudes pupils have towards work.
124. Infant pupils make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 2 pupils develop a good sense of chronology by sequencing objects, significant events in their life and generations of their families. They have good knowledge of famous people in history such as Florence Nightingale. They are beginning to be aware of significant events in history such as World Wars through the National Poppy Day Appeal. By looking at old and new homes, they draw out changes, which have occurred through time. Their visit to Milton Keynes Museum added to their knowledge through a very worthwhile, first hand experience. As well as appreciating

buildings of old, pupils were intrigued by forms of transport of yesteryear such as a penny-farthing bicycle and an old tram.

125. Throughout Years 3 to 6, and in Year 7, pupils make good progress and achieve very well. They show an increasing depth of factual knowledge, not only of British history but also of the history of the wider world, in their studies of Invaders and Settlers, the Tudors, Ancient Egypt and Ancient Greece. Their work is presented to a very high standard. It shows that diligent research has contributed significantly to it, and that they have selected and organised information very well, making appropriate use of dates and historical terms. They have a very good understanding of sources from which information may be drawn and make very good use of books, the Internet, CD-ROMs and visits to such places as the British Museum. Pupils talk animatedly about this particular visit, saying how amazed they were to see that artefacts had survived for so long in such good condition and how surprised they were by the size of the Greek Temple. Some made comparisons with modern living and marvelled at how ancient civilisations survived without modern facilities. Such experiences add very positively to the richness of the curriculum and to pupils' enthusiasm for the subject.
126. Strengths of teaching include planning. A rich curriculum is planned thoroughly using national guidelines. Lessons are driven by clear learning objectives, which are shared with pupils at the beginning of lessons so that they know what they should achieve. Excellent relationships are built up between teachers and their pupils, creating an environment, which is conducive to learning. Also adding to the vibrancy of the subject are good resources for both pupils' and teachers' use. Teachers build up information about pupils' progress and attainment on individual records and in the pupil's Week-Ten Book, which stores samples of what each pupil knows, understands and can do. This information is shared with parents at the end of the year. History is supported well by two co-ordinators, who are developing the subject well through hard work and their good leadership and management skills.

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

127. Standards in ICT are as expected by the end of Year 2, but exceed expectations by Year 6. The standards achieved by the end of Year 6 are significantly better than in most schools. Pupils in Year 7 make good progress and the work seen in Year 7 lessons exceeded the expected levels for pupils in this year group. The high standards and good achievement reflect consistently good and often excellent teaching.
128. By Year 2, pupils understand that computers respond to commands and know the importance of giving precise instructions and sequencing them correctly. Most use the mouse and keyboard fluently and are beginning to make confident choices to achieve intended outcomes. In a successful Year 1 lesson, pupils learned how to draw and use colour to make a birthday card design. Most remembered very clearly the sequence of instructions the teacher demonstrated. They evaluated their work as they proceeded and the most able pupils quickly made changes to improve it. Pupils of all abilities were clearly at home with computers and confident in using them.
129. In discussion, infant pupils explained what they were trying to achieve and showed, for example, how to select colour and incorporate simple text. They talked about their use of ICT at home and mentioned some applications in the wider world, for example, to control machines in factories. Pupils' recent work focuses on the use of *Paint* to create pictures, including self-portraits and rectilinear images reflecting the style of Mondrian. These show satisfactory improvement in technique from year to year. Teachers' planning and conversations with pupils show that infant pupils cover a wide range of interesting and relevant work that is well matched to their needs and abilities.
130. By Year 6, pupils are fluent in the use of computers, are knowledgeable about the uses and applications of ICT and show a good understanding of its value, impact and limitations. Most pupils are adept in the use of word processing to improve and present their work. They

combine text and images to make, for example, the page of a school newspaper. They access the Internet and use a CD-ROM to research topics, for example, in history, and use spreadsheets to manage, present and interrogate data.

131. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, have good ICT skills and wide experience. This consistency of good achievement is a particular strength. It results from teachers' very effective use of the school's well-equipped ICT suite to build pupils' skills systematically. It also reflects teachers' good, and often excellent, subject knowledge. This gives them the confidence to take pupils forward by means of challenging work and imaginative projects. A good example of this is Year 6 pupils' current work on control technology. With the teacher's guidance, pupils of all abilities design a flow chart showing how a lighthouse and foghorn will respond in a pre-determined way to information from light sensors.
132. This example also illustrates the way in which teachers skilfully link ICT with other subjects, in this case, science and design and technology. Further examples link ICT with English, mathematics, music and art. These connections extend pupils' learning in each of the subjects and broaden their understanding of the ways in which ICT skills can be applied.
133. Pupils have a good grasp of the uses of ICT and can consider ways in which it has added to, and sometimes detracted from, the quality of their lives. They point out, for example, its value in exchanging information, for example, by e-mail, as a research tool and as a means of organising and presenting data. They appreciate its usefulness in improving the accuracy and presentation of their work. On the other hand, they comment that technology can be frustrating when it goes wrong. They realise, however, that its apparent shortcomings may result from inadequate information or incorrect commands.
134. Pupils in Year 7 sustain the good progress seen in Year 6. Their work with control technology is of a high standard. In a very effective lesson, pupils produced a flow diagram detailing the control process for a car-park barrier and ticket machine. Pupils showed very good facility with computers and understanding of the task. They were perceptive in applying their developing knowledge of monitoring and control to solving the practical problem.
135. The quality of teaching is very good overall and excellent in Year 7 and some Year 6 lessons. Progress through the school is good but in the upper junior classes and Year 7 it is especially vigorous and secure. This results from the teachers' excellent subject knowledge, skilled management and ability to engage and motivate pupils. Teachers make lessons interesting, pace them well and set consistently high standards of work and behaviour. They question thoughtfully, checking pupils' understanding and encouraging them to think for themselves. They give clear explanations and use technology imaginatively to demonstrate and share ideas.
136. These features promote good progress and encourage very good attitudes to learning in all parts of the school. Pupils are enthusiastic about their ICT work and enjoy discussing it. They handle equipment sensibly and are very responsible. When working together, pupils support each other very well. Pupils' well-developed skills and the flexible, informed support that teachers provide, enable pupils of all abilities to work independently at a suitable level.
137. The subject co-ordinator is effective, enthusiastic and knowledgeable. He has a very clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and good plans for its future development. Several teachers have very good subject knowledge, which they valuably share, and recent training is helping to build a secure base of expertise in all parts of the school.
138. As yet the school is still developing systematic procedures for monitoring teaching. Such procedures should be helpful in sharing further the features of effective teaching found in many lessons. The present planning systems ensure very good coverage but are not yet supported by systematic assessment procedures. These are important because, although teachers have brought most pupils to a good level of skill and knowledge by the time they leave the

school, differences in attainment remain. These result mainly from differences in pupils' experience of computers outside school. Concise assessment procedures should enable these differences to be accurately described. This should enable higher ability pupils, in particular, to be even more strongly challenged.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

139. The pupils in Year 6 begin a French course towards the end of the summer term. In Year 7 they receive a period of French every week. This is the format common to all combined schools in the area. The aims and objectives are agreed by the schools and are very clear. Pupils are taught French to develop their basic skills, particularly speaking and listening.
140. It was not possible to see any French being taught as it occurred on the one day outside the period of the inspection. By talking to a number of pupils it was possible to ascertain that their competence is good and meets the general aims and objectives of the planned course. They were all able to speak many words, phrases and short sentences well. They were able to ask and answer questions in French about a range of topics, including about themselves, their families, the area and the weather. It was impressive that they could move from the first or second person (Quel ?ge as tu? J'ai douze ans. As-tu des frères ou des soeurs?) to the third person when asking and answering questions (Quel ?ge a-t-il/a-t-elle?).
141. The pupils were very enthusiastic about learning another language and they say their lessons are fun. They were clearly proud of the fact that they could converse in the language and felt well prepared for their impending visit to France. Teachers' planning shows an appropriate emphasis on preparation for this visit. It is making the learning of the language come alive for these pupils. They are not only learning to speak the language, but also in a limited way to read and write it too. It is clear from their responses that the teaching they receive is effective and they are making good progress as they move through the year.
142. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and very well organised, monitors standards very carefully and manages the subject well. As a result, the overall planning is secure, and there is consistency in provision in the two classes.

## **MUSIC**

143. Pupils throughout the school attain standards that are above those expected for their age, and all enjoy their music-making activities. The many pupils who are learning orchestral instruments attain standards that are well above those expected and their playing is a strength of the school. The tuition provided by the part-time specialist teacher, and the instrumental teachers, is very good and enables the school to have impressive choirs, a brass ensemble and orchestra that further enhance the provision for older pupils.
144. During the lessons observed, pupils knew a good range of songs and performed these with actions. They all sang with confidence and enjoyment and many of them have strong voices. Most older pupils have a well-developed awareness of keeping a steady beat when singing or when using instruments. They work together very well, refining their performance. They were particularly adept at singing different songs in a round and keeping to their own tune.
145. There are many pupils learning instruments, and the groups in the lessons taken by the part-time teacher were particularly effective. The pupils' joy was good to see. They all joined in and enjoyed the whole experience. They were very well behaved throughout, listened carefully and carried out instructions well. Many pupils in the assemblies and the upper school singing session showed a good level of singing ability. The playing of the brass ensemble and a separate saxophone duet in an assembly, were particularly striking.

146. Pupils' attitudes to music are very good. They behave very well when taking part in practical activities and handle instruments carefully. This was particularly true in one lesson observed in a Year 4 class when pupils were focused on singing different songs through playing, listening and moving to the music being played. The fact that by the end of the lesson a pupil was able to conduct the playing of the whole class and produce a pleasing sound that they all enjoyed was very impressive.
147. The teaching by the part-time teacher was very good. Too little of other teachers was seen to form a secure judgement of teaching overall. The part-time teacher's lessons moved along at a very good pace to take full advantage of the time available and to ensure that there was good momentum to pupils' learning. She has a very good knowledge of the subject and her enthusiasm is infectious. She managed the pupils effectively and monitored them carefully when they were all working on practical tasks. There is now a structured approach to teaching music, and detailed guidance and assessment that ensures pupils make the best progress they can. The co-ordinator and part-time teacher lead the subject well. They have raised standards by working closely with their colleagues, particularly in planning and valuing pupils' work.
148. The range of musical resources is good. There are many tuned and un-tuned percussion instruments and drums. The music room is a further benefit to the effectiveness of the subject. There is significant time allowed on the timetable for the subject to provide further opportunities and continuity for the pupils, and all are making the most of the opportunities provided.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

149. By Year 2 and Year 6, standards in physical education are at least in line with the expected levels and often above, and all pupils progress well. No Year 7 lessons were seen during the inspection but teachers' planning shows that pupils in Year 7 follow a programme of work that is set to sustain these standards and progress.
150. Year 2 pupils show sound co-ordination and control in following dance steps modelled by the teacher. They match the speed and shape of their movement effectively to the pulse and mood of the music. Most pupils recall the steps accurately and link actions, such as sliding, turning and skipping, in simple, planned sequences. The most able pupils show imagination in devising and linking movements of their own. Pupils work energetically and practise safely. They show good awareness of their own space and that of others. Pupils of all abilities listen carefully to the teacher and seek to improve. They are appreciative of each other's performances.
151. Infant pupils show a satisfactory understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies, noting, for example, how their heart rate increases as they work harder and slows when they rest. The school's timetable during the inspection allowed mainly dance lessons to be seen in the infant classes. However, planning shows that teachers provide a good range of interesting, relevant activities, including gymnastics and games.
152. Year 6 pupils show skill in throwing, striking and retrieving a soft ball. They practise with great care and commitment and are keen to improve. In team games they show soundly developing tactical awareness, for example, in deciding where to place fielders. In an orienteering exercise, pupils followed instructions accurately, worked very effectively together in teams and showed great determination to achieve. At the same time, pupils' attitudes to competition and towards each other were exemplary. They worked hard, sustaining energetic activity for most of the lesson, and supported each other very well. Pupils' behaviour in all lessons seen was excellent. In both junior lessons, for example, pupils often worked at some distance from the teacher, but continued to practise responsibly and concentrate hard on the tasks they had been set.

153. The quality of teaching is good in infant and junior lessons. Lessons are well planned to include appropriate warm-up and cool-down and a good balance of vigorous activity with discussion. In whole year group lessons, for example in Years 4 and 6, teachers work very effectively together. This helps to promote good teamwork and constructive attitudes among pupils. In the most effective lessons, teachers provide time for pupils to observe and comment on each other's work. This sharpens pupils' understanding of quality and helps them extend their own performances. In most lessons, teachers demonstrate skills effectively and draw attention to points of technique that will bring improvement. For example, in a successful Year 5 lesson, the teacher helped pupils to improve the accuracy of their ball striking by showing them the correct way to grip a racquet and move to receive the ball.
154. Teachers' manage pupils very well, combining secure control with warm, constructive relationships. This promotes very good attitudes to learning among pupils in all parts of the school. Teachers are careful to ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, experience a sense of achievement and pleasure in learning and make sound progress.
155. The school's current arrangements for the teaching of swimming enable all Year 4 pupils to have a concentrated course on a long educational visit. The oldest pupils then have additional organised time to learn to swim competently. All pupils are therefore able to swim 25 metres before they leave the school.
156. The physical education curriculum is enhanced by, for example, adventurous activities during residential visits, inter-school competitions and a good range of extra-curricular activities including netball, football, hockey and athletics. These introduce pupils to a variety of different individual and team activities. This is valuable in building pupils' skills, developing appropriate attitudes to competition and promoting pupils' personal and social development. The subject co-ordinators are enthusiastic and well organised and are given the opportunity to monitor standards and actively manage the subject. As a result, planning is secure and there is consistency in provision throughout the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

157. Pupils' standards in religious education at the ages of seven and eleven exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and are above those seen in most schools. Year 7 pupils make good progress as they add further to their skills, knowledge and understanding from Key Stage 2. The progress of pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, is also good in all classrooms.
158. The co-ordinator has drawn up a whole school plan for religious education carefully from the agreed syllabus so that there is the same general pattern for each year group. National guidance has been woven into this pattern skilfully to make sure that some topics have extra support when it is needed. Resources have been audited recently; each year group now has sufficient for each topic they have to cover. Assessments are currently being developed to judge pupils' progress under three broad headings. These will show pupils' progress in the knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, the evaluation of religious issues and the recognition of the significance of religion at one of three levels of achievement for each pupil. Thus there is a coherent structure for religious education that enables pupils to build their understanding year by year effectively.
159. Pupils in Year 2 learn about special occasions, special places and relationships. They make a book about themselves when they write such things as "I am kind and understanding, a big sister and a treasure to my family", thereby showing a sensitive understanding of self and family relationships. They write to a good standard when they write about Christmas and Hanukkah and link symbols of light, such as candles, to the menorah used in Jewish celebrations. Workbooks show pupils are forming their own views; they know about some

Christian and other religious traditions; they know that the Christian religion is the main tradition of the United Kingdom. Pupils' progress and achievements at Key Stage 1 are better than those usually achieved by pupils of this age.

160. This good progress continues, ensuring that by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils achieve standards that are better than most other eleven year olds'. One of the strengths in this is the whole year religious education lesson taken by one teacher at the beginning of the week. This is prepared in detail with very good supporting text, artefacts and books. A very good example seen during the course of the inspection was a Year 4 lesson about icons, with a wealth of detail about icons in the Orthodox Church, how they are made, why they are made in a particular form, and how they are used in worship. Pupils then write about this in their next religious education lesson, after further input from each class teacher. This approach was also seen in a Year 6 lesson later in the week when pupils built on their whole year lesson from Monday. They were writing about William Booth after discussing the influences that had shaped his beliefs, and why as a result he had decided to form the Salvation Army. Pupils are learning to a good standard about the richness of religions, their distinctiveness and the place of symbolism. As a result they are able to form thoughtful opinions on religious issues and discuss them maturely using appropriate language.
161. By Year 7 pupils explore their ideas in greater depth. They discuss 'Natural disasters and God' and 'The Creation' and learn about pilgrimages and leaders such as Martin Luther King. Other religions are included too. For example they write about Buddha under such headings as 'right thought', 'right speech', 'right livelihood', 'right action'. In every class there is a 'thought for the week'; during the course of the inspection one such thought began 'You should respect each other and refrain from disputes'.
162. The quality of teaching is good overall. Work in pupils' books and all teachers' planning confirm a well-organised approach to religious education, based on good knowledge of the subject and the locally agreed syllabus. Questions challenge pupils to think, and then to express their views at some length, as happened in a Year 2 lesson when pupils sat in a circle and talked about someone who had helped them, after hearing the story of the Good Samaritan. Pupils are sensitive to each other's views on these occasions because of the very good relationships maintained in all classrooms. For example, when a pupil in Key Stage 2 explained some of his religious beliefs, using artefacts from home, pupils listened with respect throughout. Workbooks are always neat; pupils take pride in their work and when they make little books as they do in Key Stage 1, or write in length at Key Stage 2 and Year 7, there is evidence of the good use of literacy skills, including note taking from older pupils.
163. In the minority of lessons judged to be satisfactory, it is because the initial part of the lesson does not fully engage the pupils. This is not the same high standard expected in the whole year lesson at the beginning of the week. Consequently, pupils occasionally lose concentration and begin to lose sight of what they are setting out to learn.
164. The co-ordinator is new to the post and relatively inexperienced. She is steadily coming to grips with the role and has realistic plans for further improvements. She looks at planning and pupils' work, which she then discusses with the teachers concerned, and is developing the monitoring of teaching to support her colleagues further.