

INSPECTION REPORT

STANTON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110365

Headteacher: Mr N E Holt

Lead inspector: Mr D Page

Dates of inspection: 10 – 12 February 2004

Inspection number: 258019

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed primary
School category: Foundation
Age range of pupils: 8 to 12 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 303

School address: Fairfax
Bradville
Milton Keynes
Buckinghamshire
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Telephone number: 01908 221 242
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs R Woodhall

Date of previous inspection: 15 June 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is smaller than other middle schools (303 pupils compared with the average size nationally of 401 pupils). The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (25.7 per cent) is above the national average. Eighty per cent of the pupils are white British, and there are small numbers of pupils from a very broad range of ethnic backgrounds. Three per cent of pupils are Asian, three per cent are black Caribbean and three per cent are black African. There are two refugees from Somalia. The percentage of pupils learning in English as an additional language (9.8 per cent) is high. Six pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs, including Statements (26.7 per cent) is above the national average. The percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs (3.5 per cent) is above the national average. The majority of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia, other non-statemented pupils have moderate learning difficulties or social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, or speech or communication difficulties. The percentage of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than the start of the school year is very high. The wards from which the school draws its pupils demonstrate very significant social deprivation. Standards in national tests before entering the school are well below national averages.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1028	D Page	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Modern foreign languages English as an additional language
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21893	V Brittain	Team inspector	English Geography History Religious education Citizenship
28320	R Willey	Team inspector	Science Art and design Music Physical education Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall **effectiveness of the school is good**. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Leadership by the headteacher, and the school's ethos are both very good; management, teaching and learning are good. In light of the above, and the high costs per pupil, the value for money it provides is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- A very positive ethos pervades the school, which leads to strong relationships, and is highly effective at ensuring all pupils are fully included in the life of the school.
- The headteacher provides very clear leadership; management is good and involves appropriate staff well.
- The quality of teaching is good because teachers use a broad range of strategies, and this enables pupils to achieve well.
- Marking and self-evaluation are used very well by pupils to improve their work, and managers monitor the work of the school effectively.
- The curriculum is very effectively enriched by special event days, sport and activities held outside school time.
- Standards in writing are too low and there are too few opportunities for extended writing in other subjects.

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. Very good improvements have been made in addressing the key issues from the last inspection. Satisfactory improvements have been made in the areas which were already very good during the last inspection, namely: achievement; attitudes; teaching and learning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E	E	C
mathematics	E	E	E	C
science	E	D	C	A

Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' **achievement is good**. When compared to their low standards on entry, pupils make good progress and reach standards which are often appropriate for their age in Year 7. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The trend in performance over the previous five years has been broadly in line with the national trends in English and mathematics, and slightly better than the national trend in science. The progress made by pupils from when they take national tests at the end of Year 2, and when the same pupils take the tests at the end of Year 6, is in line with the national and similar school averages. Pupils' achievement throughout the school in English and mathematics is good, and very good in science. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 7, when they leave the school, standards in all subjects have risen to be in line with national expectation, except in English where standards are kept below expectation, by the standards in writing.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **very good**. Pupils' attitudes are very good and behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory, although, just below the national median. Punctuality to school and to lessons is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The **quality of education is good**. Teaching and learning are **good** with a significant amount of very good teaching. The way all pupils are included in lessons is a strength of the school. Lessons are very well-planned and pupils are very well managed. Teachers use a broad range of ways to maintain pupils' enthusiasm. Assessment is very good and marking is very good at helping pupils improve their work. A small number of lessons are less well structured than most, and the pace of learning slows. In some lessons, the setting of individual pupil targets is inconsistently used. The curriculum is good overall. Opportunities for enrichment are very good and a strength of the school. Overall provision in French is very good and in all other subjects is good, except in art where provision is satisfactory. The care, guidance and support for pupils are very good. Partnerships with parents and the community are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher provides very good leadership which has been instrumental in establishing the school's positive ethos. The management and governance of the school are good and all staff and governors work very well in teams. The governing body is very effective at ensuring it meets its statutory duties; achieving best value, and in contributing to the way all pupils are included in the life of the school. The school's procedures for monitoring and evaluating its performance are very good and lead to well focussed plans for improvement. However, not all subject leaders have an equally clear overview of their subject.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are generally very pleased with the school's provision and they are confident that their children are very well cared for and happy. They are particularly pleased with: the way staff expect their children to work hard; the degree to which their children like school; the way they feel comfortable about approaching school, and the good teaching. A small number of parents were concerned about bullying, although the inspection found that the school was very effective at dealing with the few incidents that do occur. Pupils' views are overwhelmingly positive. They particularly like: being at this school; the help they get when they get stuck; being shown how to make their work better and the way teachers listen to their ideas. Approximately 20% of pupils sampled were concerned about the behaviour of other children. However, behaviour was very good throughout the inspection.

IMPROVEMENT NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing and develop opportunities for extended writing in other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is good. Standards in Years 4, 5 and 6 are below expectation and are in line with expectation in Year 7.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- By the end of Year 7 standards in all subjects have risen to be in line with national expectation, except in English where standards are kept below expectation, by the standards in writing.
- All pupils, including those learning in English as an additional language; having special educational needs, or the gifted and talented, achieve well.
- Standards in writing are lower than in other aspects of English.

Commentary

- 1 Pupils' achievement at the school is good. As a middle school, pupils join the school in Year 4, 3 terms after they take their National Curriculum tests. There are no national tests at the point when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 7. On entry, pupils' standards are well below national expectation. Results by the end of Year 6 are well below the national average in English and mathematics, and in line with the average in science. When compared to similar schools, results are in line with the average in English and mathematics and well above the average in science, and achievement is good. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 7, when they leave the school, standards in all subjects inspected have risen to be in line with national expectation, except in English where standards are still below expectation, due to the standards in writing.
- 2 All pupils, including those learning in English as an additional language, having special educational needs, or the gifted and talented, achieve well due to good teaching. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The trend in performance over the previous five years has been broadly in line with the national trends in English and mathematics, and slightly better than the national trend in science. The progress made by pupils from when they take national tests at the end of Year 2, and when the same pupils take the tests at the end of Year 6, is in line with the national and similar school averages. Pupils' achievement throughout the school is very good in science and French. Achievement is good in all other subjects inspected throughout the school, except in physical education in Year 7 where it is very good.
- 3 Although the majority of pupils with special educational needs attain below average standards they achieve well. The additional support provided for them ensures their good progress. Work is well planned to enable them to access the wider curriculum while close attention is paid to the development of basic skills in English language and literacy. The previous report referred to very good provision for pupils with special educational needs who generally made good progress. Provision has been successfully maintained between inspections and pupils continue to achieve well due to very good provision.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	24.2 (24.7)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	24.8 (24.0)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.6 (27.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 87 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are very good. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also very good. Their behaviour is good. Attendance is satisfactory, although below the national median, and punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The effectively implemented school aim of "making it right for every child every time" ensures very good pastoral care, which in turn leads to very positive relationships.
- The behaviour system works well and ensures that the majority of pupils have attitudes to learning that are very good.
- The school enables pupils to take responsibility and to make decisions.

Commentary

- 4 Pupils behave well generally in and around the school and on many occasions very well, particularly in assemblies and when the teaching is very good. Many pupils' previous history indicates that they have the potential to exhibit challenging behaviour, but the consistent approach of all staff has a very positive impact. The exemplary behaviour on the corridors, where pupils open doors and greet adults is particularly pleasing to visitors and reflects the strong ethos which pervades the school. There is very little bullying or harassment of any kind, and pupils agree that the school deals with any instances of inappropriate behaviour swiftly and effectively.
- 5 Classroom routines are well established and movement around the school is well organised. The pupils value their school highly. They enjoy the opportunities that are offered and want to be there. In lessons, they listen carefully and persist well with their tasks. They work well independently and collaboratively, and share resources appropriately. Relationships are very good and are a strength of the school. The adults provide very good role models and work hard to establish strong relationships with the pupils. The pupils are taught right from wrong and are given clear moral direction. Pupils are able to speak about how much they appreciate all the efforts the staff make on their behalf.
- 6 Many pupils enter school with little confidence and low self-esteem. The careful use of the reward system makes sure that all pupils are able to achieve in at least one area during the school year. These achievements are recognised in the nominations assemblies held each week. There are opportunities to take responsibility in the classroom, for example, by returning registers, and by holding doors open to facilitate class movement. Further opportunities are afforded by representing the class on the school council. By the time the pupils reach Year 7 the range of responsibilities has grown and involves, amongst other tasks, having some responsibility for the younger pupils and running the tuck shop. This growth in confidence and self-esteem improves the quality of learning.
- 7 The high quality extra curricular provision, involving a wide range of sport and the arts, in which almost all pupils are involved, promotes very good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The residential visits are particularly valuable in supporting personal development, and appreciated by the pupils. Opportunities are found to bring visitors into school, and to plan outings. The school is relentless in its efforts to widen the pupils' social and cultural experience. In an excellent whole school assembly led by the headteacher, the theme for the week of self esteem made a clear and effective contribution to pupils' personal and social development. A well-chosen, popular and appropriate song was played as pupils entered. They settled readily, and spontaneously joined in with the chorus, encouraged by their teachers. Pupils were effectively involved through questioning, and points made from a previous assembly were effectively reviewed. Pupils' behaviour was excellent throughout. Humour was used very well to reach out to the pupils and communicate the ideas of the assembly. A computer-based presentation was used very well to emphasise the points

being made. Pupils' moral development was effectively supported when Jesus was used as an example of someone whose attitude determined his approach to life, and the good that consequently flowed from this. While the assembly was broadly Christian, the multi-faith nature of the pupil community was sensitively addressed.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.6	School data	0.0
National data	6.0	National data	0.3

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

- 8 Attendance is just below the national median, but despite this, is satisfactory and punctuality is satisfactory. The school works as hard as it can to promote good attendance and is reluctant to allow any holidays in term time. There is no unauthorised absence. Pupil absence is largely connected with social circumstances or illness, and school is very aware of the problems.

Exclusions

Three pupils were excluded in the last academic year involving four fixed periods and one permanent. There have been none so far, this academic year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	238	4	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	8	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	7	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	9	0	0
Black or Black British – African	9	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	2	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Overall, teaching and learning are good. Provision for assessment is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The way all pupils are included in lessons is a strength of the school.
- Teachers use a broad range of strategies which maintain pupils' enthusiasm.
- Assessment is very good and marking is very good at helping pupils improve their work.
- A small number of lessons are less effectively broken up into different activities, and the pace of learning slows.
- In some lessons, the setting of individual pupil targets is inconsistently used.

Commentary

- 9 Teaching and learning are good with a significant amount of very good teaching. The way all pupils are included in lessons is a strength of the school. A significant feature of many lessons is the careful and sensitive support for all pupils provided by teachers and teaching assistants alike. In English, lower attaining pupils, and those learning in English as an additional language, are achieving as well as others because of the high quality support from teaching assistants. The teacher's support for pupils in French is matched to their individual need very sensitively, ensuring all learn well. In mathematics, pupils with individual education plans are given careful support.
- 10 Lessons are very well-planned and pupils are very well managed. The central, computer based planning makes efficient use of time and allows senior managers and subject leaders to monitor the planning. In English, planning is highly detailed and leads to well structured and highly effective lessons. In mathematics, an evaluation of the previous lesson's effectiveness is an important feature of planning, and, teaching strategies are changed frequently which ensures pupils stay on task well. In science, good teaching leads pupils to have the confidence to adopt creative approaches to experimental work.
- 11 Teachers use a broad range of strategies which help to maintain pupils' enthusiasm. In English, there are good strategies in place to develop speaking skills, such as the use of 'talk partners' to share ideas, and the school has introduced a broad range of strategies to improve pupils' reading skills. In a French lesson where the teaching was excellent, the range of teaching strategies led directly to excellent learning, through the enthusiasm and interest they generated. In mathematics, teaching strategies are changed frequently which ensures pupils stay on task well.
- 12 Generally lessons are effectively broken up into different activities, in all subjects. However, a small number of lessons are less well structured, and the pace of learning slows. Where teaching was satisfactory in English, there were insufficient activities for the length of the lesson and some pupils became restless. In one information and technology lesson the pupils were distracted from what the teacher was saying by fiddling with the keyboards. A different arrangement of when activities took place in the lesson would have avoided this. In some English lessons, the setting of individual pupil writing targets is inconsistently used.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in [number] lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (3.2%)	11 (35.5%)	14 (45.2%)	5 (16.1%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

- 13 Teachers' expertise is being used well to raise standards, for example, teachers' expertise is used well in music and art and maximises the quality of teaching and learning. In physical education, the co-ordinator takes classes across the school for the current focus on games. Class teachers observe these lessons in order to enhance their own expertise.

In a Year 5 French lesson, exciting and inspiring teaching delivered at a cracking pace, along with sensitive and effective support, ensured all pupils achieved highly.

The lesson was part of a series of sessions on colours. The learning objectives were shared very clearly at the outset, and referred to frequently throughout. Choral speaking was used at a cracking pace to engage pupils extremely well from the outset. French was used almost exclusively with appropriate brief use of English. Support for lower attaining pupils was provided quietly, and with great sensitivity, and led to them feeling confident to contribute orally to the lesson. The teachers' pronunciation was extremely good and as a consequence pupils spoke extremely well for their age. Paired work was used frequently to break up the lesson, and, along with much humour, and an unrelentingly fast pace, successfully kept all the pupils fully on task. Positive feedback was given to the pupils very frequently, which contributed to their self esteem, and their willingness to participate actively. The interactive white board was used very imaginatively to support and extend pupils' learning, allowing them to choose colours in the target language and respond appropriately to instructions in French. A very thorough plenary allowed pupils to reflect effectively on what they had learnt.

- 14 Assessment is now very good. There is a good development plan for assessment which is well integrated with the whole school development plan. Detailed targets are identified and achieved within realistic but challenging deadlines. Targets have recently included the further development of pupil performance analysis, including analysis by ethnicity and gender. This has shown that there is no significant difference between the performance of ethnic minority pupils and their peers. The outcomes of evaluating the plan are used well to inform future priorities. Data analysis is being used to make clear the links between absence and standards. The outcomes of data analysis are planned to be used more consistently to help set targets for individual pupils in literacy and numeracy. Assessment and tracking procedures to monitor pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science have been thoroughly established. The optional national tests for English, mathematics and science are analysed in detail and as a consequence development priorities are very well focused. A very good and comprehensive schedule of assessment opportunities across the four years of the school is used to ensure assessment is very well organised across subjects, and very well linked to national tests in English, mathematics and science. The systems deal well with the large numbers of pupils who join the school other than at the normal times of the year.
- 15 Marking is very good at helping pupils improve their work. In English, marking of work is good and focuses clearly on what pupils need to do to make their work better. Pupils are becoming very involved in evaluating their own learning at the end of lessons, and through the use of individual targets. In French, the marking is constructive and very detailed and it is very effective at helping pupils improve their work. In mathematics, marking encourages pupils as well as helping them improve.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides a good range of experiences for all pupils, and opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision of enrichment activities both within and outside the school day is very good.
- The curriculum is very well planned to ensure equal opportunity for all pupils.
- Opportunities for developing pupils' sporting prowess have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- The provision for personal, social and health education, including citizenship, is very good.
- Opportunities to enable pupils to consolidate writing skills in other subjects are not consistently used.

Commentary

- 16 The school has a strong commitment to ensuring equality of access and opportunity for all its pupils. Lower attaining pupils, and those learning in English as an additional language, are very well supported in class by well-trained teaching assistants. Gifted and talented pupils are provided with additional opportunities to develop their skills, especially in the creative arts and in sport. The school is committed to the inclusion of all pupils. Consequently, particular attention is given to ensuring that the curriculum caters for those pupils identified as having special learning needs. The targets set for them are generally clear and the support and learning experiences provided for them are very good. Careful assessment of progress and the effective use of support staff are key factors in the school's approach and are a major reason why these pupils progress as well as they do.
- 17 Thorough planning for all subjects ensures that knowledge and skills are developed systematically as pupils progress through the school. A computer-based planning system enables the headteacher, deputy headteachers and subject leaders to monitor the curriculum. This rigorous monitoring by senior managers and some subject leaders effectively identifies areas for development. Standards in science have improved significantly in recent years because of the strong emphasis on the development of investigational skills. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are now well embedded and have been successfully adapted to meet the needs of pupils, with leading mathematics and literacy teachers using their expertise to identify and tackle areas of weakness. For example, initiatives introduced to improve pupils' speaking and reading skills are proving successful in raising attainment in these areas of English. Pupils' writing skills are developing more slowly because there are fewer, planned opportunities to practise them outside of the daily literacy lesson. In mathematics, approaches drawn from the national strategy enliven the start of lessons.
- 18 Governors and staff are committed to providing a broad and rich curriculum. Every opportunity is used to make learning more meaningful and interesting for pupils. The provision of a wide range of experiences outside the basic curriculum, which are open to all, is a strength of the school. They generate real enthusiasm for learning. Days which focus on whole school participation such as Book Character Days, Art Days and Number Days are regular features. Visits, for example, to the National History museum, are planned to link directly with topics being covered in the classroom. Visitors include authors, artists and musicians. The number of sporting activities outside the school day, including weekends and holidays, has increased significantly in recent years, both in scope and in range, and has resulted in the school being chosen by the local education authority as 'The Most Improved School' in Milton Keynes for its success in competitive sport. Residential visits for all year groups contribute very effectively to pupils' personal and social development.
- 19 Teachers and support staff work well together in year groups to review and develop the curriculum. In most year groups, teachers made good use of their subject expertise by teaching specific subjects to all classes. The accommodation is spacious, clean and attractive and displays of pupils' work reflect the inclusive ethos of the school. At present, pupils are involved in planning the development of 'The Coppice' in the school grounds so that it can be used for environmental work. Resources are well chosen to enhance learning for all pupils.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of the pupils. They are very well supported and involved in the work of the school through the school seeking and valuing their views. This is in line with the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All staff are fully briefed in respect of child protection issues.
- Teachers know their pupils very well.
- Pupils have a very good opportunity to become involved in the running of the school and express their views.

Commentary

- 20 This is a very caring school where many pupils come from challenging backgrounds and are in need of extra care and protection. The school has succeeded in building a strong family atmosphere outside the home where the pupils can be nurtured and allowed to grow. Child protection procedures are very good. All members of staff are fully briefed and understand that concerns must be reported to the designated person with overall responsibility. There is very good support from the outside agencies, which the school appreciates. The school strongly regrets it is not in a position to fund a breakfast club on a regular basis, although, it has been possible to provide this on one or two special occasions. Routines for dealing with first aid and accidents are well established and there are ten members of staff trained in first aid. The medical room adjacent to the office is well used and supervised. All necessary safety checks and risk assessments are carried out and there are regular fire drills.
- 21 Teachers know the pupils very well. The personal, social and health education programme, circle time, where structured activities allow pupils to talk about issues facing them, and citizenship lessons, are all used to enable teachers to support the pupils' personal development. They provide effective guidance on any problems. Achievement is very carefully monitored alongside personal development. The pupils have no hesitation in saying that they have at least one adult in school in whom they would be happy to confide.
- 22 Induction arrangements on entry are very well managed to the satisfaction of the pupils. The partner first schools involved in the process generally work well with the school to provide a smooth transition. There is a high pupil mobility rate which the school handles with sensitivity. A buddy system is in place which supports the new pupils in class, and parents are given regular updates on progress.
- 23 The views of the pupils are sought and received as part of daily life in school, and the pupils feel that they are listened to. The school council deals with ideas and complaints in a formal way where each class returns a representative to give opinions on the agenda items. These council members organise all pupil initiatives and play a big part in the running of the school. This includes the discussion of sanctions for those who misbehave, and the distribution of harvest gifts to the elderly. Pupil problems identified via the "worry box" also go through council. This forum works very well for the pupils and the school, and contributes greatly to making the pupils feel valued and responsible.
- 24 The way all pupils are included in the life of the school is very good. Pupil performance is analysed by ethnicity across all subjects and the outcomes of this analysis show that these pupils are achieving in line with their peers. A record is kept of racist incidents which is extremely detailed and comprehensive. Since the record has been introduced the number of racist incidents has fallen to the low level of approximately six per year. Each incident is pursued, parents are involved every time, and specific action is defined and recorded. The success of the actions are evaluated. The programme of whole school assemblies includes planned opportunities for every country represented by the pupils within the school to be featured. Pupils are given the opportunity to share their culture with others, for example one assembly on Ghana focused on food. These activities ensure that not only are all pupils valued and fully included in the life of the school, but they also make an effective contribution to pupils' cultural development.
- 25 An extremely broad range of experiences are planned and provided by the school for gifted and talented pupils. Identification of a particular gift or talent occurs soon after pupils arrive at

school, even if this is at times other than the normal start of the school year. For example, a pupil recently joining demonstrated skill in cross-country running and the school arranged for him to take part in the local Cross Country Club races.

- 26 Arrangements for supporting pupils learning in English as an additional language are very good. Funding for support for these pupils is no longer available from the local education authority. As a consequence, the school's commitment to ensuring all pupils are fully included in the life of the school has led to the school funding support for these pupils out of its own budget. An appropriately qualified language specialist is employed for two days every week, and is a fluent speaker in the predominant community language in the school. Pupils learning in English as an additional language are encouraged to use their first language as well to help encourage and develop their self-esteem. The specialised support is prioritised by using local education authority guidance and is appropriately targeted on those pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition. Less specialised, although effective, support is provided for pupils at later stages of English language acquisition. The provision of this quality support ensures pupils are fully integrated into the main stream classes of the school in line with the school's policy.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnerships with parents and the community are very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The links with other schools are generally good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents have a very high regard for the school; they particularly appreciate the ethos of the school and the standard of behaviour.
- Parents receive very high quality information about the school and its activities.
- Links with the local and wider community are very good.
- The school is aware that the annual pupil progress reports are in need of improvement.

Commentary

- 27 The parents' views throughout the inspection process have indicated that parents are generally very pleased with the school's provision and they are confident that their children are very well cared for and happy. The school effectively welcomes parents and is willing to discuss concerns whenever they arise. The very high quality information to parents includes a comprehensive prospectus and governors' annual report which now meet statutory requirements. The leaflets outlining the school's policies, curriculum information, newsletters, completed homework contracts, and home school agreements, all assist in making the partnership arrangements clear and keep parents very well informed.
- 28 The pupils' annual reports give information on progress and targets to be reached, and are satisfactory. There is an opportunity for parents to discuss their children's progress further at the parents' evenings. School is keen to improve the content of the reports and is already planning a revised format. Parents' views are sought by way of a questionnaire in an effort to understand more about the parents' needs. Some parents help in school on a regular basis and many are willing to give time to sporting and leisure events. The Friends of Stanton is an active, but small, group of parents and teachers who arrange social events. They have in the past, raised money to help with the library and playground equipment. Most parents are enthusiastic in supporting their children, although, some do have difficulty in becoming involved with the work of the school. The school is very concerned about reaching out to those who most need support and is constantly looking at new strategies.
- 29 The school is involved with the Milton Keynes Primary Foundation Schools Association which is chaired by the headteacher, and the Stantonbury Liaison Group involving more than twenty schools. The transfer arrangements into the secondary school are satisfactory. The school passes relevant information on transfer and welcome secondary school staff visiting during

Year 7. The transfer arrangements from the partner first schools are very good. The school premises are also let to other bodies such as the Children's Fund and the Brownies. A community bus also visits the playground to give benefit advice.

- 30 Links with the community are rich and varied. The sporting links with the adjacent secondary school, other teams, and clubs, are both extensive and greatly valued by the pupils. There is a big involvement by pupils in local leisure and entertainment opportunities, both as participants and as audience. People from other communities visit the school, such as the skilled raconteur from Ghana, who has proved to be a delight to the pupils. Pupils visit France as well as other parts of England where they mix with these communities and gain in confidence and experience. These activities very effectively promote the pupils' cultural development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The headteacher's leadership of the school is very good. School governance and the management of the school are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a very clear, shared vision for the school's development and the skills to put this into practice.
- Governors have very effective systems in place to oversee the work of the school and fulfil statutory duties.
- Overall, management is good but not all subject leaders have an equally clear overview of their subject.
- The headteacher is well supported by two energetic and capable deputy headteachers; together they form a strong team.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good because resources are very well managed.

Commentary

- 31 The headteacher is a well established, confident leader who gives very clear direction to school improvement. He has a high profile around school and is accessible to both adults and pupils. His style of leadership ensures the effective involvement of staff and has enabled all to share a vision for the school that is clear, corporate and attainable. This has promoted a very good ethos and climate for learning within the school. He recognises and values the talents and range of professional expertise of his colleagues and gives them good opportunities to use and develop their skills. He is supported very well by two deputy headteachers whose competencies complement his own. Together they form a vigorous and motivated team.
- 32 The well-established senior management team collects and disseminates information very well. There are very good systems in place for the school to monitor its own performance. Areas needing development are identified, such as the extension of the successful drive to raise standards in reading during literacy lessons, which is now to be extended to the whole curriculum. The school's improvement plan is appropriately focused on raising pupils' standards. It is well organised, detailed, costed and provides an effective tool to manage the way forward.
- 33 Governance of the school is good. The governing body is very effective at ensuring it meets its statutory duties; achieving best value, and in contributing to the way all pupils are included in the life of the school. Governors have established well-informed monitoring arrangements to enable them to fulfil all their statutory duties. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses that enables it to help shape the

future. Although they give encouragement and good guidance to the headteacher, other commitments make it difficult for them to visit the school as frequently as they would wish.

- 34 Subject leaders review teachers' planning as it is available to them on the school's computer network. However, they do not have regular opportunities to observe lessons, except when their subject becomes a curriculum focus. This creates long gaps between lesson observations for particular subjects and limits the subject leaders' overview. The role, and therefore the effectiveness, of some subject leaders is less well developed. The continuing professional development of staff is well supported when teachers' expertise is used in, for example, physical education. The co-ordinator takes classes across the school and the class teachers observe these lessons in order to enhance their own expertise.
- 35 The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator, the teacher responsible for child protection, and the headteacher, form a caring and highly effective team. There are clear structures in place for the early identification of need and the review of provision. Support assistants are deployed well. The quality of pupils' individual education plans is generally good. However, the co-ordinator is aware that in some plans, targets, and success criteria, need to be more specific. The school's commitment to the total inclusion of all pupils is testimony to the appropriateness of the school's "Investors in People" award.
- 36 The financial affairs of the school are well managed. The finance officer ensures that day-to-day budgetary matters are carefully addressed and reports directly to the finance committee of the governing body. She works closely with the local education authority's finance officer. Budgets are not allocated to subject leaders who currently make a case for resources as and when these need improvement. The school is, however, moving towards a system whereby budgets will be allocated in conjunction with curriculum reviews. The governors fully understand the principles of best value which results in them ensuring that quality resources match educational objectives.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	751,541
Total expenditure	757,498
Expenditure per pupil	2,405

Balances (£)	
Balances from previous year	23,356
Balances carried forward to the next	17,399

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

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 2

LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and this leads to good achievement overall for all pupils.
- Teaching assistants work effectively with targeted pupils.
- Assessment, including marking, helps pupils to improve their work.
- Standards in writing are still too low.
- Pupils need more opportunities for sustained writing.

Commentary

- 37 National test results for Year 6 pupils in 2003 show standards to be well below the national average and below those of similar schools. However, the trend in performance over recent years has been in line with the national trend. There are differences between attainment in reading and writing. Standards in reading for Year 7 pupils are average, and present Year 6 pupils are achieving just below nationally expected levels. Standards in writing are significantly lower for both year groups. This is because the major emphasis on development over the past two years has been on improving attainment in speaking and in reading. The success of these initiatives means that now the focus can move to improving writing skills. An audit of pupils' writing has already taken place and staff will receive training this term before new strategies are implemented. Given their low starting point, pupils are achieving well throughout the school. Lower attaining pupils, and those learning in English as an additional language, are achieving as well as others because of the high quality support from teaching assistants. Tasks for higher attaining pupils give appropriate challenge.
- 38 Many pupils enter school in Year 4 with a limited ability to express themselves clearly. By Year 6, listening skills are average and speaking skills just below. In Year 7, both speaking and listening are at expected levels. This improvement is because staff realise the importance of developing speaking and listening skills in order to help pupils with reading and writing. There are good strategies in place to develop speaking skills, such as the use of 'talk partners' to share ideas, as well as the teaching of specific subject vocabulary, and these are used well in all classes. At the end of lessons, pupils report back what they have achieved, and teachers give sufficient time to allow pupils to explain. This develops pupils' confidence when speaking in groups. Pupils are interested in their lessons and consequently they listen well to staff and to each other.
- 39 The school has introduced a broad range of strategies to improve pupils' reading skills. For example, with younger pupils, a recent emphasis was placed on the teaching of how to build words up from their constituent sounds. This skill is less evident in older, lower attaining pupils. Teachers guiding reading in groups is being used to good effect, although, occasionally texts have insufficient challenge, particularly for higher attaining pupils. The decision to provide extra support in Year 4 for additional guided reading sessions each week is helping to drive standards up. Average and higher attaining pupils talk with enjoyment about books they have read and are beginning to develop preferences for the work of authors such as Jacqueline Wilson and Philip Pullman. The library is a good resource for research, and pupils know how to find information in books. Most pupils choose books to take home

regularly, and are taught how to check for suitability. Sometimes pupils choose books which do not match their level of competence, and this does not help to improve their reading skills.

- 40 In writing lessons, work is well planned to develop pupils' knowledge and skills in spelling, punctuation, vocabulary and grammar. Pupils practise these skills by writing in a range of styles. Spelling is generally well taught; pupils learn common spelling patterns and are encouraged to develop strategies to help them to remember irregular words. Dictionaries and thesaurus are readily available and used well. Older pupils show that they are able to write for different audiences and in a wider range of styles. Pupils plan and sometimes edit and redraft their own work. However, despite good teaching in literacy lessons, pupils' writing skills in Years 4 to 6 are not developing at the same rate as their reading. This is because there is insufficient time for sustained periods of writing in which skills can be consolidated. Year 7 pupils have made significant progress this year because of the opportunities given to them to practice their skills. For example, they wrote and produced their own 'Alternative Fairy story' books. Support for developing handwriting skills is insufficiently well developed; there are many pupils still not using a cursive joined script.
- 41 Teaching is good overall. Teachers plan well and learning objectives are shared with pupils so that they are involved in their learning. The positive relationships established by teachers enable pupils to develop good attitudes to their learning. There are high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Effective questioning helps to develop pupils' understanding. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson the teacher enabled pupils to develop their skills of inference and deduction when reading the poem 'Whatever happened to Lulu.' Where teaching was satisfactory, the lesson was too long for the activity and some pupils became restless. A very good assessment system is in place to support teachers in planning and to monitor pupils' progress through school. Marking of work is good and focuses clearly on what pupils need to do to improve their work. Pupils are becoming involved in evaluating their own learning at the end of lessons, and through the use of individual targets. Pupils know their individual targets in reading and what they need to do to improve. Writing targets are less effective because they are not being used effectively in all classes. Targets work well in Year 5; they are written at the front of workbooks and the teacher records progress together with pupils so that they know how well they are achieving.
- 42 The subject is well co-ordinated. Initiatives to raise standards in reading and speaking have been well managed and monitored and this has been crucial to their success. Current priorities, focussing on writing, are relevant in order to raise standards further.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 43 Opportunities to enable pupils to practise writing skills in other subjects have been identified but these are not used consistently. This is affecting standards across the school. In all subjects teachers place a good emphasis on the use of subject specific language. Word processing could be used more for drafting, editing and presenting work.

FRENCH

Provision in French is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and leads to very good learning.
- All pupils are sensitively supported to achieve very well.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

- 44 In Years 4, 5 and 6, French is not statutory and the standard of pupils' work is, therefore, above expectation. The standard of pupils' work in Year 7 is also above expectation. Pupils in a Year 5 lesson understood short passages of familiar language spoken at, and often

faster, than a natural pace. The teachers' pronunciation was extremely good, and as a consequence, pupils spoke extremely well for their age. Most pupils were able to use set phrases with pronunciation mostly correct. With the support of textbooks, Year 7 pupils are able to write short sentences on familiar subjects. They can express personal likes and dislikes, and are working above national expectation. Pupils' work extremely well together. The teacher's support for pupils is matched to their individual need very sensitively. In this way, all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity, prior attainment or special educational need achieve extremely well.

- 45 Teaching and learning are very good. Learning objectives are shared very effectively with pupils so that they are clear on why they are carrying out their tasks. French is used almost exclusively with appropriate, brief support in English. The interactive white board is used very well to support and extend learning. The range of teaching strategies leads to pupils maintaining their enthusiasm and learning very well. Planning is highly detailed and leads to well structured and highly effective lessons. The marking is constructive and is very detailed and it is very effective at helping pupils improve their work.
- 46 Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject leader has collated a very comprehensive file including a very good development plan focused on raising standards in the subject. Both national and European guidelines are used to inform the planning and teaching very well. The scheme of work is very well linked to the National Curriculum programme of study. The file constitutes a very effective support for non specialist teachers. The subject benefits from a good range of resources. Since the previous inspection, the provision has improved well. Pupils' standards, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress have all been maintained. Assessment and marking have improved significantly.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good with many very good lessons.
- Pupils achieve well in their time at the school.
- Management of the subject is very good.
- Marking is very good and helps pupils to improve their work.
- There are insufficient opportunities planned for pupils to use information and communication technology individually to support their learning.

Commentary

- 47 On entry to the school, standards are very low. In Year 4, higher attaining pupils are able to begin to understand place value of numbers up to 1000 and can work out whole number problems involving multiplication. Middle attaining pupils are able to choose appropriate methods for addition and subtraction and can count sets of objects to 10. The lower attaining pupils are able to carry out the same tasks as middle attaining pupils but with less confidence and needing much support. By the end of Year 6 in 2003, results in national tests were well below the national average. When compared to similar schools, results were below the average. There is no statistically significant difference between the relative performances of boys and girls. The trend in performance over the previous five years has been broadly in line with the national trend. There is no statistically significant difference between the performance of higher attaining pupils compared to their peers.
- 48 Overall, standards in Year 7 are in line with expectation. On leaving the school at the end of Year 7, higher attaining pupils are able to construct and use simple formulae requiring one or two operations, and can explain the conclusions demonstrated by graphs. Middle attaining

pupils are able to add and subtract to two places of decimals, while lower attaining pupils are able to make 3-dimensional models with help.

- 49 All pupils, whether learning in English as an additional language, the gifted and talented, or having a special educational need, are helped to achieve well. Because the learning objectives for the lesson are clearly shared with the pupils, achievement is well focused on the particular content of the lesson. Teaching assistants are briefed well by the teacher and are therefore able to provide very good support to lower attaining pupils; those learning in English as an additional language, or those with special educational needs.
- 50 Teaching and learning are good. There are many lessons where the teaching is very good. Lessons start promptly with a mental exercise, in line with the guidance from the National Numeracy Strategy. In this way, pupils are quickly engaged in the lesson from the outset. Many of these activities are particularly lively, such as in a Year 6 lesson where teaching was very good. The class began by singing the nine-times table to a lively ragtime tune. This exciting start led well to the use of cards with numbers on them for pupils to show the teacher their answers to multiplication tasks. Pupils' skills in literacy are well supported with subject specific words on display on the wall which relate to the current lesson. Teachers reinforce these words by using them frequently and, as a consequence, pupils are happy to use these words. Teaching strategies are changed frequently which ensures pupils stay on task well. For example in one lesson, choral chanting; class exposition; pupils' individual number cards; 'function machines'; individual pupil white boards, and paired work were all used. These approaches ensure that all pupils want to work very well and behave very well.
- 51 Planning is very detailed and includes an evaluation of the previous lesson's effectiveness. This helps refine the focus of the current lesson. The end of lessons includes a very effective plenary which gives pupils opportunity to reflect on their learning. In many cases, these are structured in such a way that pupils are able to evaluate their own performance, which makes an excellent contribution to their involvement in their own learning. The interactive white board is used frequently in lessons to help support and extend pupils' learning. However, more opportunities for pupils to use computers individually to support their learning in mathematics need to be planned. Marking is very good at encouraging pupils and frequently indicating what pupils have to do in order to improve their work. There is a requirement for pupils to respond to these comments in writing which increases the effectiveness of the marking in raising standards. The 'maths fun days' generate much enthusiasm for the subject.
- 52 The subject leader provides good leadership and very good management of the subject. She is a leading numeracy teacher for the local education authority, providing support for numeracy in other schools. She has good opportunities to provide in-service training for staff at the school. This is based on detailed analysis of pupils' performance which identifies the issues that require development. Once the in-service training has been given the subject leader monitors the impact and progress of the development. The subject leader has very good opportunities to monitor the subject: through accessing the central, computer based planning; by observing lessons and providing focussed feedback to teachers, and by monitoring books and pupils' work. Monitoring is very effective and very well focused.
- 53 Since the last inspection report the subject has improved well. The good features in the last report: standards; progress; attitudes; the quality of teaching and subject leadership, have all been maintained. Resources have been much improved and are now very well organised.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 54 Mathematics is well supported across the curriculum. The mathematics subject co-ordinator is a leading numeracy teacher for the local education authority and has good opportunities to provide in-service training for staff at the school. In this way, the profile of numeracy in the school is raised. In information and communication technology, numeracy was well supported through the use of spreadsheet formulae. There are many good opportunities for

pupils to develop their skills of numeracy in design and technology, for example, when measuring the wood and card used in making a controllable vehicle.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have risen over the last four years as a result of the focus on investigations and experiments.
- Good assessment procedures supported by high quality marking have improved pupils' performance.
- Subject leadership and management have been effective in raising standards.

Commentary

- 55 Pupils' attainment in last year's science tests was well above the national average and average in similar schools. This is the result of the school's response to poor results in 1999, from which time science has had a high profile in the curriculum. Since then, scientific ideas have been taught using an investigational approach so that most lessons give pupils the opportunity to experiment. Resources have been significantly improved to support this. There has also been an imaginative approach to improving pupils' scientific vocabulary with the introduction of stimulating activities, with musical jingles to help pupils memorise new terms. Together, these approaches have captured pupils' interest and, as a result, the progress they make in their learning has increased significantly.
- 56 Teaching is good and has also contributed to the rise in standards. In the plenary session of a Year 4 lesson about thermal insulators, pupils were given opportunity to describe and discuss their findings as a class. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and teach the processes of scientific enquiry effectively. Pupils learn to predict outcomes, conduct a fair test, record their findings and evaluate the results. In a lesson where pupils in Year 6 were discovering that changing wires can affect the brightness of bulbs; one group set up parallel experiments so that they could carry out a direct comparison of the results. This creative approach illustrates the confidence pupils have acquired as a result of the good teaching they have received. The work in pupils' books indicates that teaching is often very good. Teachers expect a high volume of work which they mark carefully. Not only are there complimentary comments, but also indications of how the work could be improved. Pupils are expected to initial these to indicate that they understand what the teacher has written, and to answer any questions asked. Assessments are routinely carried out after each unit of work and pupils' attainment recorded, allowing their progress to be tracked.
- 57 The subject leader analyses the results of national tests and identifies areas of weakness. As a result she is able to indicate the topics that need more input when teachers are planning their work. This has also helped to raise standards. She is able to monitor lesson plans, but does not currently have opportunities to see teachers in action, so is limited in her overview of provision in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and all pupils achieve well.
- The way all pupils are included in lessons, and racial harmony are very good.
- Subject leadership and management are good.
- Further develop the use of the interactive whiteboards.

Commentary

- 58 On entry to the school pupils' standards are well below expectation. In a Year 5 lesson where teaching was good, most pupils were able to use a computer to organise information and present their findings using a simple database. These pupils were working below the level expected for their age. All pupils, regardless of gender, special educational need or ethnicity, were supported to make achieve well. In a Year 6 lesson where teaching was good, most pupils were able to produce and amend their ideas using presentation software and were helped to describe they use of information and communication technology. Some pupils needed much support to do this and overall, pupils were working below national expectation. In a year 7 lesson where teaching was good, all pupils were able to use models to help them solve problems for example, the profit and loss in potential discotheques sales, and were then able to make suitable choices on the basis of the outcomes. A small number of higher attaining pupils were able to reflect critically on their work and make improvements. Standards were in line with expectation.
- 59 All pupils achieve well. In one lesson, the teacher's circulation around the working pupils was vigorous and well focused which insured all pupils regardless of special educational need, gender, ethnicity or whether they were learning in English as an additional language, achieved well. Pupils of all prior attainment were supported in a very well targeted way, by both teachers and teaching assistants, in order to ensure that they all achieved well.
- 60 Teaching and learning are good. The interactive whiteboard makes a very significant impact on the motivation and engagement of pupils and its use needs to be further developed by incorporating more opportunities for its use in planning. The ends of all lessons are good and ensure that self evaluation by pupils is very actively supported and very well structured. Social inclusion and racial harmony are very good. Teaching assistants make a significant impact on learning by working in a well focussed way with specific pupils.
- 61 In a good Year 5 lesson, the interactive white board was used very well to successfully engage the pupils' attention, and for the teacher to model the tasks the pupils were about to undertake. This worked very well in effectively motivating pupils. Pupils' were very attentive and the teacher was very effective in managing behaviour. Pupils were excited and enthused, but when necessary, the teacher effectively settled them down. Racial and gender harmony was excellent with pupils working very well together at the keyboards in mixed race and gender groups organised by the teacher. Subject specific language was well supported. In a good Year 7 lesson, the use of the interactive white board excited the pupils and ensured they were very attentive. Paired discussion was well used to break-up the lesson and maintain a lively pace throughout which ensured pupils kept well on task. The activity was very well related to the interests of the pupils as it concerned the use of a spreadsheet to cost entry tickets and refreshments for a school discotheque.
- 62 Leadership and management of the subject are both good. The information and communication technology development plan is detailed and focuses on actions which are likely to be effective in developing the use of information and communication technology in other areas of the curriculum, and raising standards in the subject. A complete section of the plans is focused on ensuring that all pupils are effectively included in the school's work on information and communication technology. Strategies include work with the special educational needs co-ordinator, and the purchase of specialised software including speech recognition programs. The subject leader monitors planning effectively using her access to the school's central computer network on which teachers store their lesson planning. This analysis has led to the identification of issues for development incorporated in the subject development plan. A sophisticated approach to assessment is helping teachers to assess pupils' progress in the subject. Very good technical support is funded by the school.

- 63 The provision for the subject has improved well since the last report. Standards and progress, and the quality of teaching and learning have been maintained. Assessment has been significantly improved, and in the last inspection the separation of the two computer suites required careful lesson planning. This has now been fully addressed. Resources and technical support have been significantly improved.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 64 Generally information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in other subjects. In French, information and communication technology is used very well to motivate and engage pupils. A comprehensive policy for design and technology effectively supports information and communication technology with planned opportunities in these lessons. Word processing could be used more for drafting, editing and presenting work. In mathematics, while pupils use the interactive whiteboard very well, more opportunities for them to work individually with computers need to be planned.

HUMANITIES

Geography and History

- 65 Geography and history were sampled. Two lessons were seen in geography and one in history. Planning indicates that the relevant parts of the National Curriculum programmes of study are being covered. National guidelines have been adapted appropriately to meet the needs of the school and to ensure that pupils progressively develop knowledge and skills. A scrutiny of pupils' work reveals that opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills are not being consistently taken up across the school, despite this being a major focus of action plans for both subjects. Marking in both subjects is effective in helping pupils to improve their work. The monitoring of provision is not well developed but subject leaders do identify relevant priorities for development.
- 66 In geography, good use is made of the locality for fieldwork. Each year, residential visits to the Isle of Wight and France enable pupils to compare Milton Keynes to contrasting localities. Teaching in geography in Year 6 is good. It builds on pupils' knowledge and skills by the use of well-chosen resources and relevant activities. As a result, pupils are beginning to distinguish between different types of environment and can locate their position on world maps. In one lesson, misconceptions were challenged, for example, 'that all deserts are hot' with examples given to disprove this. Pupils' knowledge of locations is generally lower than is expected for pupils of their age due to their standards on entry to the school.
- 67 Visits and other enrichment activities play an important part in making history interesting and this encourages the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Recently, pupils have taken part in Victorian and Tudor role-play. Visitors, such as the 'Blitz evacuee' are able to bring history to life through their first hand experiences. Teaching was satisfactory in the one history lesson seen. Pupils had watched a video about the river Nile and, with additional information from books, they were able to recognise the importance of the river to the everyday lives of Ancient Egyptians. The very good support of a teaching assistant enabled lower attaining pupils, and those learning in English as an additional language, to achieve as well as others.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are encouraged to consider religious doctrine in relation to their own lives.
- Good use is made of visits and visitors to enhance pupils' learning.
- Staff have been well prepared to ensure a smooth transition to the new, locally agreed syllabus.

- Opportunities could be created for extended writing.

Commentary

- 68 There was little written work to show evidence of achievement because much learning takes place through discussion. However, talking to Year 6 and Year 7 pupils indicates that standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and that pupils are achieving well. They express their understanding of religion in responses such as “what you believe,” “a way of life” and “a path to follow.” They show a good understanding of the key beliefs and teaching of Christianity and Islam and have some knowledge of other major world faiths. Their developing awareness of a spiritual dimension to life is reflected in prayers which they have written. Pupils are very well aware of how moral and social issues, such as the need to care for and support others, can be related to religion.
- 69 Teaching is good. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher used pupils’ experiences of school rules to generate an interesting discussion about the need to have laws in the wider community. This led well to an introduction of the principal teachings of Christianity and the Ten Commandments. As a result, pupils realised the significance of these rules to their own lives. The teacher acted as a good role model, treating the Bible with reverence, as a sacred text. Teaching assistants enable lower attaining pupils, and those learning in English as an additional language, to become fully involved in lessons and they achieve as well as others. In Year 4, the knowledge of a Moslem pupil was used to good effect to help others. Pupils enjoy their lessons, play a full part in discussions, and their mature attitude to the subject enables them to make good progress. Opportunities could be created for extended writing in order to support the school’s drive to raise standards in writing.
- 70 The subject leader has spent considerable time this year in preparing the staff for the new Milton Keynes agreed syllabus, and in ensuring that the curriculum is well planned to achieve a smooth transition. Leadership and management are good. Lessons in religious education play a full part in pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision and standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design

- 71 Art was sampled. An analysis of work in the subject’s portfolio, in pupils’ sketchbooks, which have been introduced since the last inspection, and in the work displayed in the school and on its website indicates that pupils are given opportunities to develop their skills using a variety of techniques and materials. Standards throughout the school are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils have opportunities to work in the same style as well known artists such as Klee and Picasso. Work is often linked to other areas of the curriculum. The landscapes produced by pupils in Year 6 were linked to their geography topic and the needlework based on the Bayeaux Tapestry done by pupils in Year 7 to their topic in history. Resources are good and leadership and management in the subject are satisfactory.

Music

- 72 Music was sampled. Pupils’ music notebooks and the very good lesson seen during the inspection showed that all strands of the subject are now covered well. This is because a new scheme of work, that includes full lesson plans, has been introduced to support non specialists teaching the subject. Standards throughout the school are in line with those expected for their age. Pupils enjoy the opportunities given to them to make music and take full advantage of free lessons, taught by visiting specialists, for keyboards, string, brass and wind instruments. Annual productions of musical plays, as well as performances at Christmas, allow pupils to experience singing before an audience. The school has a dedicated music room and good resources. As a result of observing lessons throughout the

school, the subject leader has a good overview of the subject and its needs. Leadership and management of the subject are good.

Design and technology

- 73 Design and technology was sampled. It was not possible to observe any lessons, however, a comprehensive portfolio of work was analysed. Standards by the end of Year 6, in making a slipper and a controllable vehicle, are just below national expectation. Pupils are able to use tools to shape materials with some degree of accuracy. In their planning they demonstrate clearly that they are thinking ahead and sequencing their work. However, many pupils do not pay sufficient attention to the quality of the finish which pulls their standards down. By the end of Year 7 standards have risen to be in line with expectation. All pupils, whether learning in English as an additional language, or having special educational needs, are supported to achieve well.
- 74 Pupils have opportunities to work with a broad range of materials, for example wood; plastic; cloth; paper, and card. A good range of jointing techniques, such as sewing and glueing, are also used. Planning sheets, to be used by pupils during the early stages of their projects, are well structured to encourage effective group work. Evaluation sheets are effective at helping pupils to develop the criteria by which they can assess the success or otherwise of their work. There are many good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills of numeracy, for example, when they use rulers for measuring the wood and card used in making a controllable vehicle.
- 75 Leadership and management of the subject are both good. There is a comprehensive policy for design and technology which effectively supports approaches to literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology in these lessons. The subject leader has carried out an audit of the provision for the subject, which has effectively informed future planning. An overview of future development of the subject for the next four years effectively addresses all areas of the subject, including control technology. The plans are very well related to national guidelines and driven by the desire to continue to raise standards. Medium-term planning for the subject draws largely on national guidance but the school is beginning to modify this in light of their own experience and detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of lessons. The woodwork club provides enrichment of the curriculum after school and gives a very good opportunity, which is particularly popular with girls, to explore further aspects of the subject.
- 76 The subject has made good improvements since the last inspection report. While standards by the end of Year 6 have fallen slightly, they have been maintained by the time pupils leave at the end of Year 7. Progress has been maintained and teachers' understanding of the course has been significantly supported. Planning for lessons, and for the subject's development, are both now good.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made good use of the subject leader's skills to raise attainment, particularly in games.
- There is a very good range of extra-curricular sporting opportunities available for all pupils.
- The school has won this year's Primary School Category for Achievement in Sport awarded by the local authority.
- The school's own good facilities and resources are well supplemented by use of the local secondary school's swimming pool and staff.

Commentary

- 77 Standards overall throughout the school are in line with those expected for their age. As a result of a focus on games and athletics, however, standards in these areas are rising. The school is now using staff expertise to best effect to raise standards in the subject. As a result, pupils' skills have been improved and they have won the Primary School Category for Achievement in Sport awarded by the local authority for being the school where improvement has been greatest. The school has also won the regional tournament of a national football competition and the local authority's cross country and badminton competitions. Links have been developed with the local secondary school to provide swimming instruction in their pool for pupils in Year 7, in addition to the Year 4 arrangement reported at the last inspection. As a result, most pupils can swim a minimum of 25 metres by the time they leave.
- 78 Teaching is good in Years 4, 5 and 6, and very good in Year 7. The subject leader has been freed to teach games to all classes. He is supported by the class teachers. His very good teaching methods have raised levels of attainment in these aspects of the subject while simultaneously providing training for other members of staff whose expertise is not as great as his own. This model for improvement has been so successful that the subject leader is planning to use his teaching time over the next year to develop gymnastics and dance in order to raise standards in these areas also. Planning of lessons is very good and ensures pupils progress very well. The very good use of resources and consistently high expectations of pupils' behaviour contribute to the success of the best lessons.
- 79 Leadership of the subject is very good and the subject is well managed. The school's sports facilities are good overall, with resources for games being very good and satisfactory for gymnastics. At the time of the last inspection, there was no competitive sport against other schools and, apart from football training, for which pupils had to pay, no extra curricular clubs for sporting activities. There is now a wide range of sports clubs aimed at broadening pupils' leisure interests and developing a healthy lifestyle that includes regular exercise. Some, such as cross country, cricket and hockey, are seasonal whilst others, such as line dancing, operate all year. Outside agencies have been employed to cater for basketball, sailing and trampolining as well as connections made with professional football and cricket clubs to provide coaching. These activities have engendered such great enthusiasm amongst pupils that a rota system has had to be developed to ensure that all who wish to participate may do so.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

- 80 Although no lessons were seen, pupils' attitudes to learning and their positive relationships with staff and each other reflect the school's very strong commitment to pupils' personal and social development. All classes have 'Circle Time' each week, in which pupils can discuss and explore feelings and relationships. This is an important part of the school's approach to behaviour management. Assembly themes such as 'Self Esteem' consolidate learning in class. A Year 7 literacy lesson used 'Agony Aunt' problems to develop pupils' understanding of cause and effect while at the same time enabling them to discuss issues pertinent to young adolescents. Sex education and drug awareness programmes are in place and have been adjusted to fit the needs of the changing ethnic mix in the school. Lessons are given a specific focus, such as a recent 'Anti-Bullying Week' which helped to raise awareness of difficult issues and give pupils the opportunity to confront their own concerns. The school values the views of pupils.

Citizenship.

- 81 Citizenship was sampled. The school teaches the appropriate curriculum for Year 7 pupils and actively involves them in discussing issues relating to the wider community in which they live. Teaching is good. In lessons, well-chosen examples, such as 'nurse' and 'professor' enable pupils to understand how stereotypes are created. Pupils own experience of 'TV Soaps' were used to develop the understanding that the media can influence people's perception of young people, for example, their involvement in crime and that this can adversely affect relationships between age groups. The well-run school council, attended and run by elected representatives from all year groups, is a good opportunity to take part in the democratic process and is a valid preparation for later life. This provides a good basis for older pupils to develop their understanding of citizenship.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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

