

INSPECTION REPORT

ARDLEY HILL LOWER SCHOOL

Dunstable

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109517

Headteacher: Miss F. Mead

Reporting inspector: Natalie Moss
22685

Dates of inspection: 11 - 14 February 2002

Inspection number: 194431

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Lowther Road Dunstable Bedfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. R. Driver
Date of previous inspection:	12 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22685	Natalie Moss	Registered inspector	English English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
16472	Catherine Stormonth	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
8203	Shelagh Halley	Team inspector	History Religious education Special educational needs	
22223	Helen Ranger	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Children in the Foundation Stage	
17852	Lawrence Moscrop	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography Music Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ardley Hill is an average size lower school with 248 pupils between the ages of four and nine on roll. The majority of the pupils come from white family backgrounds. A small number of pupils speak English as an additional language and none are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The school is situated near the centre of Dunstable and pupils come from a mixture of owner occupied and local authority housing on the surrounding estate, though approximately half come from outside the school's catchment area. About four per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, a figure which is below the national average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs is well below the national average but the percentage of those with statements of special educational needs is above average. Few pupils enter the school or leave at other than the normal entry or leaving times. Many pupils join the school from the independent playgroup on the school site and most come having experienced pre-school education. Attainment on entry is average overall. The school is set in spacious and attractive grounds and has recently received a great deal of refurbishment and improvement.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a school whose strengths outweigh its weaknesses. Teaching in the reception class and in Years 1 and 2 is good and this leads to good progress by the majority of pupils. Standards are at least average in all subjects by the time pupils reach age seven, though they are not as high in Years 3 and 4, where progress is unsatisfactory. Behaviour and attitudes towards work are good in Years 1 and 2, but they are often unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4. The school provides pupils with a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school's management is satisfactory overall, though the monitoring roles of senior management and subject co-ordinators are not fully developed. Overall, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Provides good teaching in reception and Years 1 and 2, leading to effective learning;
- Ensures children make a good start to their education in their reception year;
- Provides well for pupils with special educational needs in reception and Years 1 and 2;
- Has established good, productive links with parents and the community.

What could be improved

- The quality of teaching and standards of pupils' attainment in Years 3 and 4;
- Behaviour and attitudes of pupils in Years 3 and 4;
- The development of management roles to ensure the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection report in 1997. The planning of the curriculum has been improved by the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the use of nationally recommended plans in other subjects. The school has developed effective systems for measuring pupils' attainment and progress and there is a whole school approach to assessing, analysing and using data to plan strategies for raising standards, especially in Years 1 and 2. There is now a well developed long term framework for school improvement, which allows for evaluation, close links with the budget and criteria for measuring its effectiveness. Provision for pupils' cultural development, both within their own and that of other cultures, is now satisfactory. Teaching and learning are now regularly monitored, but not sufficiently rigorously. Standards in English, mathematics and science have improved in the Foundation Stage and by the age of seven, but there are still significant weaknesses by the age of nine. The standard of behaviour has fallen in Years 3 and 4. The use of information and

communication technology across the curriculum has been well developed. Progress of pupils with special educational needs is now better in Years 1 and 2 than at the time of the previous inspection. The school is in a good position to make further improvements.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
Reading	A	A*	A	B
Writing	A*	A*	A	B
Mathematics	A	A	B	C

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

Children begin the Foundation Stage with average standards overall. Learning is good, especially in literacy and numeracy. Many are ready to start the National Curriculum early, having achieved the required 'stepping stones' in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development before they begin Year 1.

Standards for the pupils in Years 1 and 2 are above the national average for pupils in the current Year 2, in reading, writing and mathematics and in line with it in science, but this cohort is less able than that in 2001. The national test results in 2001 showed standards to be well above average in reading, writing and above average in mathematics. Teachers' assessments in science indicated well above average standards. These achievements show pupils making good progress. Standards by the age of seven in history are above average and are average in art and design, design and technology, geography, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. Pupils progress satisfactorily in all these subjects

Standards for nine year olds, tested by the school and by teachers' assessments are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not progress as well as those in Years 1 and 2. Inspectors found that standards by the age of nine are broadly average for English, mathematics and science, with few attaining at a higher level and that progress at this key stage is unsatisfactory. Standards in the current Year 4 meet average levels in all other subjects.

Achievement by pupils with special educational needs is good in Years 1 and 2 and sound in Years 3 and 4. The progress made by the very few pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory, as it is for gifted and talented pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall. Attitudes are good in the lower half of the school and pupils work with interest and concentrate well on learning. However, in Years 3 and 4 pupils' attitudes are often unsatisfactory.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory overall. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not always show respect for one another as they do in Years 1 and 2.

Personal development and relationships	Unsatisfactory. Older pupils do not develop good levels of personal responsibility. Relationships are good in Years 1 and 2, but in Years 3 and 4 there is often insufficient collaborative learning by some pupils, which affects the progress of others.
Attendance	Very good. Above the national average with a lower than usual level of unauthorised absence. Punctuality is generally good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Satisfactory

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 satisfactory overall. In the Foundation Stage, teaching is good. There is a strong focus on developing the skills for all children in all areas of learning which enables them to make a very good start to their education. Teaching up to the age of seven is good overall, with some very good features. The best lessons enable pupils of different abilities to make equally good progress through good planning which matches work appropriately to their needs. In Years 3 and 4, teaching is generally satisfactory, but with significant weaknesses. In these years, teachers do not always manage pupils' behaviour well or foster their independence and concentration; this prevents pupils from making better progress.

Throughout the school, literacy and numeracy are generally well taught, and the new strategies have been effectively implemented. The teaching of numeracy is successfully extended in other areas of the curriculum, such as design and technology and science. The teaching of information and communication technology skills is now sound across the school. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress in Years 1 and 2, but their learning needs are not always adequately met in Years 3 and 4. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are supported satisfactorily.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The curriculum meets requirements and in the reception class ensures that children make good progress in learning. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory overall. It is good in reception and Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Those pupils on the school's register of special educational needs generally receive good support and make appropriate progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The very few pupils in the school in need of additional help are effectively supported and fully involved in all lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Unsatisfactory overall. There is effective provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Provision for moral and social welfare, however, is unsatisfactory in Years 3 and 4 and the trusting atmosphere in the earlier part of the school is lost.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Apart from procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, which are unsatisfactory, those for care and welfare are satisfactory. Overall assessment of pupils' attainment is done satisfactorily, and the information gathered on the rate at which pupils progress is well used.
How well the school works in partnership with parents and carers	Good links exist with parents and carers, who make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. Parents are provided with very good information about their children's progress and are made welcome in the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory overall. The leadership by the headteacher and senior management ensures the progress of pupils in the earlier part of the school, but not of all pupils in the upper half.
How well the governors fulfill their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school and they carry out their statutory duties and the administration of finance well. They are not always well informed about behaviour and attitudes in the school to help in raising standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The school has recently been successful in using all available data in evaluating its own performance and is clear about its educational priorities, other than the important issue of behaviour, and what needs to be done to improve further.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory overall. The school uses its accommodation to good advantage. Resources are used well in all subjects, but there are too few support staff for the large classes in the current Year 4. Care is taken to ensure that spending decisions are fully evaluated and that best value for money is obtained wherever possible.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children enjoy coming to school and make good progress • behaviour is good • teaching is good and staff are approachable over questions or problems • the school has high expectations of children • children are helped to become mature and responsible adults • the school is well led and managed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • better information on how children are progressing • the school working more closely with parents • the number and range of out of school activities provided by the school

The inspectors agree with many of these positive views of parents. However, in Years 3 and 4, behaviour is too often unsatisfactory and many pupils do not behave in a mature and responsible manner. Information on pupils' progress is judged to be very good. Parents receive annual reports with targets for future learning and are kept consistently aware of what their children are studying and of how they can help them. The school works closely with parents, involving them in school life wherever possible. The range of out of school activities offered is very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage with broadly average standards of attainment. They learn well and make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. By the time they are ready to enter Year 1, most are likely to have achieved the goals expected of them by this age.
2. In 2001, in reading and writing, pupils' scores in the national tests for seven-year-olds were well above the national averages and above those in similar schools. In mathematics, they were above the national average and matched those for similar schools. These results follow a pattern set in the previous three years, where results in reading and writing have risen to well above the national average, and have, with a little fluctuation, remained above average in mathematics. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were in line with the national average in reading and writing and mathematics, so that there has been good improvement since that time. In reading and writing, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher than expected level was well above average and it was average in mathematics. Teachers' assessments for seven-year-olds in science in 2001 showed very high results, in the top five per cent nationally and the proportion reaching higher than the expected level was close to the national average. In most of the past few years, boys and girls have reached similar standards. The findings of the inspection are that for the current Year 2 pupils:
 - attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is above the national average and science matches the average;
 - there is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls;
 - there has been a generally rising trend in reading, writing, mathematics and science.
3. Standards by the age of nine, as judged by the school's use of optional national tests for this age group and by teachers' assessments, are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 do not progress as well as those in Years 1 and 2, largely because of the significant amount of disruptive behaviour in these years. Inspectors found that:
 - standards are broadly average for English, mathematics and science;
 - few pupils are attaining at the higher levels;
 - more able pupils are sometimes insufficiently challenged.The school sets its own targets for pupils at the age of nine, which are not always sufficiently challenging for more able pupils. Gifted and talented pupils do not always make the progress they could.
4. When pupils enter Year 1, their attainment is average overall, though there is a wide range of ability. By the age of seven, attainment is generally above average in most aspects of English, due to the effects in the last three years of the National Literacy Strategy and the intervention and booster classes the school has put in place. Attainment in mathematics is also above average and has improved well because of the effort and focus given to the subject by the school. Attainment in science is average and is steadily improving, with the use of investigative work and clear schemes of work. Progress in these subjects is good. Progress in history is good, because of teachers' and pupils' enthusiasm for the subject, and attainment is above expectations. Progress in art and design, design and technology, geography, information and communication technology, physical education and religious education is satisfactory and attainment is in line with national expectation.
5. By the age of nine, standards reached by pupils in English, mathematics and science are average. Levels of attainment are also average in art and design, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education. Overall, progress is not as good as in Years 1 and 2 and is unsatisfactory for most pupils, because it is insufficiently rapid in most subjects. There is also some

underachievement in the development of specific skills, often as a result of planning in topic form, which sometimes leaves too little scope for pupils to develop their own independent research skills and initiative.

6. Provision for special needs was satisfactory at the last inspection. It is now satisfactory overall. Progress made by these pupils is good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. However, inconsistencies in Years 3 and 4 mean that provision for this age group is only satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are well supported by clearly taught concepts and activities which are well matched to their needs. Although more than one in ten of last year's Year 2 cohort were identified as having special educational needs, two-thirds of them attained the same level in National Curriculum tests as other pupils. In Key Stage 2, although progress is satisfactory overall in Years 3 and 4, progress is not as rapid as it might be in some classes and subjects. This happens where identified needs and targets for learning are not sufficiently precise, activities are not well matched to pupils' prior knowledge and teachers' questioning and tasks do not sufficiently involve and challenge pupils. In addition, the disruption in some of the lessons in these years leads to underachievement for pupils with special educational needs. In some subjects, such as music and physical education, teachers include all pupils effectively in activities and pupils with special needs achieve well in these lessons. The progress made by the very few pupils for whom English is an additional language is satisfactory.
7. Positive contributions to pupils' achievements are made by the integration of literacy and numeracy into their work in other subjects, especially in Years 1 and 2.
8. Since the previous inspection in 1997 standards have improved overall by the age of seven in English, mathematics and science. However, the lack of monitoring of teaching and learning in their subjects by subject co-ordinators, together with some disruptive behaviour by older pupils, is holding back the school's capacity to improve standards of attainment more rapidly in all subjects, especially in Years 3 and 4.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Behaviour and attitudes have deteriorated since the last inspection. Although attitudes to school are broadly satisfactory and most pupils enjoy their school life, behaviour is unsatisfactory overall. There are also weaknesses in pupils' personal development and relationships are unsatisfactory. All of the weaknesses are centred in Years 3 and 4.
10. Children in the reception classes have positive attitudes to school. At this early stage in their school life, children are developing confidence, greater independence and good social skills. Already, children play well together, share ideas and resources and become absorbed in stories. They also show respect and consideration for adults and other children. They listen and answer questions to the limit of their ability and are eager to please their teachers with their good efforts. For example, during the inspection, in a numeracy lesson, children responded enthusiastically to a brainstorming session and to very high expectations of their teacher in their measuring and sorting tasks.
11. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 generally have good attitudes to learning. Pupils show good responses to challenge, they are keen to learn, have good concentration levels and answer questions eagerly. Very often the teacher's question results in a sea of raised hands and very little calling out. In numeracy lessons, where the pace of mental arithmetic and questioning is often fast, pupils enjoy counting and using number sticks. In Year 1 pupils were seen avidly using everyday language to describe complex three-dimensional shapes. They were fully engaged, concentrating and working hard, and showed their excitement in good quality learning. There is good conformity to lesson routines and a willingness to observe and to emulate others in order to improve. This was typically seen in art, where pupils painted self-portraits, and in physical education, where the most skilled gave demonstrations for others to follow.

12. In contrast, attitudes to learning in many Years 3 and 4 lessons were barely satisfactory and, in a large proportion of lessons in these years, they were unsatisfactory. This was not confined to any particular subject. These classes were often noisy and low level disruption was tolerated as the norm by teachers. There are a small number of pupils in each class who make a significant impact by making silly comments and disrupting others and who cause lessons to be constantly interrupted. A few pupils are insolent, openly defiant and quite disrespectful. This creates an unsettled atmosphere which leads to the majority of pupils losing interest and concentration. When behaviour is unsatisfactory in the classroom, attitudes to learning are also adversely affected, even for some of the higher ability pupils who enjoy being immersed in work.
13. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, generally have good attitudes to their work. There is, however, a significant minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties in Key Stage 2 who display unsatisfactory attitudes in lessons. This has a negative impact not only on their own achievement but also on that of others. Behaviour in assemblies was not always satisfactory. While younger pupils showed reverence, many older pupils were seen laughing during prayer and reflection time. During discussions with pupils, inspectors were told that assemblies were a 'boring waste of time'. Behaviour in the dining room is generally good and lunchtimes are pleasant, sociable events. Behaviour in the playground was often unsatisfactory when the older pupils were present. In the Key Stage 1 afternoon playtime, behaviour is delightful. Pupils play happily, amusing themselves in a friendly manner. When older pupils are present, there is often a change of atmosphere. Many of the boys play 'up and down tig', where they dash from one side of the playground to the other, with others in hot pursuit, sometimes knocking down others in their wake, with little sign of concern. There are groups of pupils who clearly irritate each other and constantly squabble. Swearing and name-calling are commonplace in some groups of pupils. Pupils seem oblivious of the upset they caused. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
14. Groups of pupils named the same small number of individuals who are responsible for daily verbal and physical nuisance. Higher ability pupils complained about how they were called names for being clever and how they were sometimes under threat while others copied their work. Older pupils are confident but sometimes over-exuberant and loud in their attempts to talk to visitors and they are not always polite. One of the most notable features is the lack of understanding by many of the impact of their actions on others and their inability to show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. This sometimes causes problems in relationships between pupils and relationships between staff. Relationships amongst the younger pupils and staff, however, are always very good and these pupils could not praise their teachers highly enough.
15. The personal development of pupils has some strengths but also some weaknesses. Pupils enjoy helping in school in daily routines and the oldest pupils were seen helping at lunchtime in the dining room by putting away the dining chairs and litter-picking around the school grounds. They were also seen helping younger pupils who were injured in the playground at lunchtimes. They help at assembly time with chairs, the overhead projector and music. They enjoy the clubs and trips the school organises, which extend social development well. They enjoy doing jobs and carry out their duties well. Personal development in Years 3 and 4 is hampered by the lack of opportunities for pupils to develop independence and responsible attitudes in their learning. Pupils have too little opportunity to think for themselves and show initiative, to develop their own ideas and acquire better research skills. In one of the best lessons seen in Year 4, when challenged to find out how effective certain materials are as electrical conductors, pupils responded well and, as a result, the learning was good. Pupils' creative abilities are not often developed and lessons sometimes lack inspiration and richness of experience. The real weakness in personal development, however, is the poor learning brought about by the significant amount of unsatisfactory behaviour and attitudes of some of the oldest pupils.

16. Attendance is very good and is well above the national level. Unauthorised absence has commendably been eliminated by efficient following up of absences. Punctuality on arrival at school is generally good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2 is good and it is satisfactory in Years 3 and 4, but there is significant unsatisfactory teaching in Years 3 and 4. Most of the very good and good teaching takes place in the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. This is similar to the time of the previous inspection.
18. Teaching is good in the Reception classes. The staff are well organised and use stimulating resources that are well prepared. They constantly talk to the children and ask them relevant questions to enlarge their vocabulary and support their efforts. They balance independent activities well with those that need adult support. Teachers have high expectations of achievement and behaviour. Teaching is most frequently tightly structured, with planned, whole class introductory sessions and follow-up tasks for individuals and groups.
19. Teaching and learning overall for pupils up to the age of seven are generally good. Teachers build successfully on the skills acquired in the Foundation Stage. In the best lessons in this part of the school, teachers use time effectively. In numeracy in Year 2, for example, mental sessions proceed with enjoyment and pace. Teachers' management of pupils is good, so that pupils concentrate and work with effort and interest.
20. The strengths in teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 are:
- teachers' good knowledge and understanding;
 - their teaching of basic skills, especially in literacy and numeracy;
 - high expectations by teachers which challenge and stimulate pupils;
 - good teaching methods that allow pupils the freedom under the teacher's direction to learn independently;
 - effective management of classes so that no time is lost and pupils are kept busy and interested;
 - good assessment of pupils' ongoing work and the use of assessment to aid the planning of appropriate tasks for different needs.
21. For pupils aged between seven and nine, teaching and learning are sometimes unsatisfactory, though there are examples of good practice. Where teaching was successful, teachers defined very clearly what they expected pupils to learn and how they would go about learning it and management of behaviour was firm. Aims for the lessons were clear, precise and achievable. In unsatisfactory lessons, there was usually a lack of good behaviour management and significantly disruptive groups of pupils were allowed to dominate the lessons. Pupils were often not clear about what they were doing and why they were doing it. Occasionally, teachers' knowledge of subjects they were expected to teach was insecure. Planning did not always give pupils the opportunities to work independently and to investigate for themselves. Expectations were often low of what pupils could achieve, so that many, especially the more able, were insufficiently challenged. Teaching methods were not always varied enough to keep pupils' interest. Teachers' plans did not always provide well for the needs of pupils of different abilities, so that the pace of work was slowed down by the less able pupils and the more able pupils made less progress than they might. Teachers' marking was not always constructive in showing pupils how they could improve their work. Questioning did not probe and encourage effectively. As a result, pupils do not make consistent progress throughout this key stage.
22. In English, the quality of teaching in the lessons observed was generally good in Years 1 and 2, where the literacy hour is being effectively used. Teachers use lesson time appropriately to ensure that the different areas of literacy are covered well, especially reading, which is given extra emphasis. They understand and use the strategy well enough to be able to adapt it

sensibly and effectively to the needs of their particular pupils. Teachers ensure that pupils are challenged enough in the range of writing undertaken. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and methods, which inspire pupils to learn successfully. Pupils, including boys and girls and pupils of different abilities, are motivated well by the interesting tasks prepared for them. The best lessons proceed briskly. Work is generally well matched to pupils' abilities, so that most make at least good progress. Planning has clear aims and teachers' management of pupils is good. In Years 3 and 4, the quality of lessons seen did not match those seen in Key Stage 1. Although much of the teaching seen was satisfactory, little good teaching was observed. A few lessons were unsatisfactory because expectations of what pupils could do were too low and because some pupils' behaviour was allowed to hinder their own and others' progress.

23. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good in Years 1 and 2 and generally satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Teachers' knowledge is secure and they explain tasks carefully to their pupils. Lessons are well structured, on the National Numeracy model, and mental mathematics is given good priority. Where teaching is less satisfactory in Years 3 and 4, it is because behaviour is not always kept under control or the lessons fail to absorb pupils for more than short periods of time. Insufficient challenge is sometimes offered for more able pupils and work is not always matched to pupils' needs.
24. In science, teaching is at least satisfactory. Teachers understand the subject well and ensure that pupils are given clear learning objectives and know how to use scientific enquiry processes. Teachers attach importance in Years 1 and 2 to helping pupils to challenge themselves to think and to solve problems. Teachers ensure that pupils enjoy and are interested in the science lessons. Questions are often used well to judge pupils' progress. Teaching and learning are good in Years 1 and 2, because teachers are very clear about what the pupils are expected to learn and plan activities well to support this. Teaching for older pupils in Years 3 and 4 is satisfactory, though sometimes too teacher-directed and allows pupils too little opportunity to initiate and carry out their own experiments.
25. In information and communication technology, teaching is developing well in both key stages to help pupils apply their skills effectively and is good. Pupils are therefore becoming aware of the relevant uses of the subject. Activities are usually interesting and have clear objectives. Occasionally, where lessons are too short for pupils to become absorbed or where behaviour is not well managed, lessons are less successful.
26. Teaching in art is satisfactory overall, with good teaching in Key Stage 1, where lessons are well prepared and organised and techniques are clearly demonstrated. In Year 3 and 4 lessons there is often a significant amount of disruption and lack of concentration resulting from pupils' inattention and consequent poor behaviour. There were insufficient opportunities to observe teaching and to make an overall judgment on its quality in design and technology.
27. It was not possible to observe enough lessons in geography to make a judgement on teaching. In history, teaching could only be seen in Key Stage 2, where the disruptive behaviour of a few pupils made it impossible for all pupils to learn as well as they might have done.
28. In the lessons observed in music, teaching was at least satisfactory, though its quality depended greatly on the level of concentration shown by the pupils, especially in Years 3 and 4.
29. Teaching seen in physical education was generally satisfactory and sometimes good. In the good lessons, pupils are given the opportunity to practise a good range of skills and teachers have high expectations of them, especially in Years 1 and 2. Teachers used feedback well to show pupils how to improve their skills.
30. Teaching seen in religious education was satisfactory, and often good in Years 1 and 2. Lessons are planned well and encouraged to participate and share their ideas. In Years 3 and

4, the success of lessons depends on the degree of interest and attention shown by pupils. Teachers do much to help pupils learn about other faiths and beliefs, as well as the value of moral concepts and the realization that they are a part of a large and varied society.

31. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is generally satisfactory across the school. In Years 1 and 2, where the management and organisation of pupils and relationships in the classroom are good in nearly all classes. Pupils make good progress towards the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils' targets are generally well reflected in teachers' planning and appropriate support is given. Teachers ensure learning resources support the activities well and, where possible, provide the additional support of a learning assistant. There is, however, a significant minority of pupils in Key Stage 2 who display very challenging behaviour in lessons and their needs are not always sufficiently addressed. Teachers' management strategies for these pupils are not generally effective and this often results in unsatisfactory learning for the majority of the class. Pupils with statements of special educational need receive good support from classroom assistants. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language receive satisfactory support from teachers. Gifted and talented pupils are not always stretched to their full potential.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

32. The school provides an appropriately broad curriculum for the pupils in the classes for five to nine year olds, which meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Sex education is addressed as necessary through the planned curriculum or during class discussions. The school has a policy covering drugs awareness and this is supported by the visit of the 'Life Bus', which as an educational unit is sponsored by the local community.
33. At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that too little time was allocated to the teaching of science and information and communication technology. There was also an imbalance of time spent teaching different subjects, between one class and another. The school has addressed both these issues and, through an adjustment to the timing of the school day and through a carefully planned curriculum, there is now consistency between classes.
34. Planning is now much more detailed and identifies clear learning goals, which are almost always shared with the pupils at the start of lessons. Apart from English and mathematics, most subjects of the curriculum are taught through a series of topics. For most subjects, these topics are taught as a two-year rolling programme. In science, there is clear progression in the development of skills and knowledge built into these plans, but this progression is not always satisfactory in some of the foundation subjects.
35. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies successfully. Planning and teaching take appropriate account of their recommendations, both for lesson format and for lesson content. Literacy and numeracy skills are developed well in other areas of the curriculum.
36. All pupils have equal access to the subjects of the national curriculum and enjoy equal opportunities in their learning. The school's policy of inclusion, the aim of which is that each child will feel a full member of its peer class and will be fully integrated into all areas of the curriculum is adhered to most of the time, though not always in Key Stage 2.
37. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is inconsistent. In about half the classes, opportunities are provided through 'circle time', a time set aside for reflective discussion, to explore issues and to reflect on feelings and views. In other classes, this time is not set aside and, as a result, important opportunities are missed to make a contribution to pupils' understanding of their responsibilities of being a member of the

community and the effects of their actions on other people. With a significant minority of the older pupils demonstrating lack of respect for other pupils and for adults, it is important that this aspect of their education is fully developed.

38. Pupils with special educational needs have full access to curriculum areas and extra-curricular activities. Their individual education plans are drawn up by the class teacher in consultation with the co-ordinator for special educational needs and external agencies, where appropriate. Tasks are generally well suited to these pupils' needs. Teachers' planning takes appropriate account of pupils with statements of special educational need. Occasionally, the unsatisfactory behaviour of pupils in Key Stage 2 threatens the entitlement of other pupils and diminishes the equality of opportunity and social inclusion offered by the school.
39. Provision for extra-curricular activities is good and all pupils have the opportunity to take part if they wish. There are one or two activities taking place on most days of the week. These include country dancing, library club, tennis and computer clubs and also chess and netball clubs. A recorder club also meets during the lunchtime
40. There are good links with the local community and these enhance the learning opportunities for pupils. Some of these activities are led by members of organisations in the local community. The Luton Town Football Club has involved itself in the life of the school and some of its members teach football skills to Year 4 pupils. The tennis club is managed by a member of the Dunstable Tennis Club. People from the local community are invited to the school to contribute to the curriculum. Pupils are also encouraged to collect for local and national charities.
41. Relationships with other schools are satisfactory. There is a playgroup on site, with which strong links have been formed. The school has also promoted links with a playgroup some distance away from which some pupils transfer. Links with the local middle schools are less satisfactory. Liaison has taken place when coverage of the curriculum has been discussed and a science teacher has visited the school to work with the pupils during their lessons. In physical education, links with the middle school are particularly successful.
42. The overall provision for pupils' personal development is unsatisfactory, largely because of issues of poor behaviour. At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that the planned provision for multicultural education was not satisfactory. This situation has now improved.
43. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils continue to respond with wonder at their discoveries of the world about them. Opportunities are provided for pupils to reflect on things which are important to them. For example, in a Year 2 class, pupils had created a quilt of special memories. In another Year 2 class, the pupils had identified times when they had felt particularly happy. 'Happiness is when my dad came out of hospital'; 'Happiness is when it snows and I can roll in it'. Circle time, when it is planned, also provides opportunities for pupils to express their feelings.
44. The legal requirement for a daily act of collective worship is met, but school assemblies cannot always be described as a spiritual experience. During the inspection period, many pupils were not actively involved and often seemed bored.
45. The provision for moral and social development of the pupils is unsatisfactory. Many teachers tackle issues of right and wrong and provide pupils with opportunities to work together in groups or to take responsibility for tasks around the school. However, incidents occur which indicate that some pupils are not aware of how they should behave towards others. Many classrooms display the agreed 'rules of behaviour', but these are seldom referred to when pupils, for example, are not listening or not taking turns. Some pupils show a lack of thought for others in the way they behave when moving round the school and in the playground. The School Improvement Plan includes a focus on citizenship and also arrangements for establishing a school council. Both of these initiatives are intended to support the moral and social development of pupils.

46. Some lessons are over-directed by the teachers, not enabling pupils to explore their own learning, and as a result pupils lose interest in them.
47. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions and are given opportunities to develop an understanding of the diversity of other cultures. These opportunities are promoted through music and dance, stories from other cultures, studies of contrasting communities in geography and the study of other religions in religious education lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. There are strengths and weaknesses in the way the school cares for its pupils. The quality of care is satisfactory overall but not as good as at the time of the previous inspection.
49. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are very good. This has helped the school increase attendance and reduce unauthorised absence. The school is already meeting its new locally set attendance targets and has started to discourage the taking of term-time holidays, which account for a significant proportion of absence.
50. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are unsatisfactory. In Key Stage 2, staff often have difficulty in managing behaviour and sometimes do not have the skills and strategies to stop lessons from being constantly disrupted. Staff have had no recent training in behaviour management and, despite there being class and school rules, these are seldom referred to and are inconsistently applied. Staff were observed tolerating too much noise and silly and immature remarks. The procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are also unsatisfactory. Pupils were able to name bullies who cause persistent nuisance and many felt that the school did not effectively deal with bullies, who were then free to re-offend. The personal and social education programme is not addressing the weaknesses in pupils' personal development. Pupils are not given sufficient guidance on understanding the impact of their actions on others and having respect for their feelings, values and beliefs.
51. Pupils with special educational needs generally receive satisfactory support from teachers and classroom assistants. Pastoral care for pupils with statements of special educational need is good and they are well-supported by external agencies, where appropriate. Pupils in Key Stage 2 identified as having behavioural difficulties are not always supported sufficiently through the action taken. The school's behavioural modification plans are insufficiently effective in addressing these pupils' needs.
52. The arrangements for child protection are good and meet all legal requirements. Staff are aware of their responsibilities. Pupils' medical conditions are well known and are very well catered for. The arrangements for first aid and dealing with sick and injured pupils are also very good. There are, however, a high number who require treatment every day for injuries sustained from bad behaviour during playtimes, when they are knocked over or fall over as a result of others tearing around playing rough games. The management of health and safety is otherwise good and risk assessment arrangements are good. When issues are identified they are subject to swift remedial action. The main issue of pupils' safety, however, can only be addressed when the level of playground supervision and control is increased.
53. Relationships between staff and pupils in Years 1 and 2 are very good. Pupils confirmed strongly that they would not hesitate to ask their teachers for help if they had a problem. Older pupils did not express the same confidence and some were unsure of what to do if they had real concerns. When they complain about the bad behaviour of others they are often accused of telling tales and feel ignored and not listened to. More vulnerable pupils are referred to the school welfare assistant, who counsels and supports pupils who have difficulties coping with school. She clearly has very good relationships with pupils, who respect her and value the help and advice they receive.

54. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory. There are strengths in maintaining pupil profiles that track pupils' performance and attitudes in core subjects. These provide a good information source for school reports and for when pupils move on to their new classes at the end of each year. They help staff set targets for improvement.
55. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. In reception classes, much assessment is based on highlighting areas of learning which are not up to date and are not as precise as the Foundation Stage 'stepping stone' guidance issued to schools nationally. There are strengths in the analytical way the school checks the progress of pupils in terms of National Curriculum levels for core subjects and sets targets for improvement. This assessment system guides aspects of curricular planning to achieve these targets. However, the impact of the assessment is often inadequate. When older pupils do not meet the expected levels there is little rigorous investigation into why standards are not improving at the predicted rate.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The school continues to have a good partnership with parents. Parents' views of the school are mostly positive. Parents are supportive and are generally well satisfied with the education provided and with other aspects of the school. Parents are particularly pleased that their children enjoy school so much and how approachable the school is when there are questions or issues.
57. Parents' responses to the questionnaire revealed that they have slight misgivings about three aspects: the range of extra-curricular activities, the quality of information about their children's progress and how closely the school works with the parents. The inspection team investigated these issues and found that the range of extra-curricular activities is good. The quality of information provided, particularly about progress, is very good. The headteacher and other teachers are always available and ready to discuss problems with parents. Parents are also worried about aspects of behaviour and behaviour management in the large classes and on the playground. The inspection findings indicate that the parental concerns are justified.
58. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The family induction arrangements are generally good and children are able to settle quickly when they start school. There are good links with the pre-school groups and children make the transition to school easily and happily. Parents are given very good information, including a 'sharing books' booklet and a full and well-written prospectus. Other year group letters are also very good and let parents know what their children will be learning. The regular, friendly, school newsletter also keeps parents fully in touch with all other news and information.
59. Parents have very good termly opportunities to discuss their children's work and to share targets for learning. Staff also make themselves available at the end of each day to discuss informally any immediate issues with parents and many parents take advantage of this. School reports fully meet all statutory requirements. Parents are provided with high quality and very individual information about their children's progress over the past year. Weaknesses are identified and advice on how to improve and targets are given helpfully.
60. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is good. Homework is regularly set and forms an important part of learning, particularly for English and mathematics. The advice the school gives for home activities and supporting topic work is very good. Reading records are well used in Years 1 and 2 and give parents an indication of reading progress. Parents' views are surveyed to raise issues and to gauge opinions about school. Parents' views are taken seriously and can often provide fresh and interesting ideas and influence improvements. The huge fund-raising efforts to provide a computer suite for the school came about in this way.

61. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed about their children from the moment teachers raise a concern about possible special educational needs. They are invited to reviews of individual education plans and are consulted on the setting of future targets.
62. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. Parents are regularly asked to help and many volunteer to help each week. They are given good guidance and are deployed well in a number of useful ways. They provide very good help supporting reading across the school, help in lessons and support school trips and swimming when needed. Parents support their children in large numbers when they are invited to the school to share school productions, meetings and sports activities. The Friends of Ardley Hill School is an impressive, well-organised and hardworking group that raises large sums and provides the school with a busy social calendar. The school holds very successful events, such as the recent Christmas bazaar and Chinese meal and, during the inspection, were selling Easter goodies to 'chocoholics' to raise more funds. Parents have ambitious plans to create an activities playground. In this way, parents make a good contribution to children's learning at school and help improve the quality of school life.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

63. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall.
64. The headteacher provides strong leadership. She works hard to steer the school towards its goal of higher standards in core subjects and has succeeded in Years 1 and 2. She has successfully dealt with all of the key issues identified by the last inspection. Working with the governing body, she has implemented a wide range of improvements that have had a beneficial effect on the quality of education provided by the school and the environment in which pupils learn. However, the headteacher and the senior management of the school have not recognised and tackled the problem of behaviour in Years 3 and 4. The school has a good and supportive deputy headteacher, but few management functions are delegated to her, as she has a heavy responsibility in other areas.
65. Subject co-ordinators, however, with the exception of those for English and mathematics, are generally not sufficiently responsible for the monitoring of teaching and learning in their subject areas. Teachers do not receive sufficient or appropriate support and guidance from them to raise standards and there is scope for improvement and the sharing of best practice. Curriculum planning in Key Stage 2 is not consistently meeting the skills and objectives set out in the revised National Curriculum.
66. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching, recognised as essential by the headteacher, have now become regular and ongoing in English and mathematics and are significantly improving the quality of teaching in these subjects throughout the school. . The school has recently been successful in using all available data in evaluating its own performance and is clear about its educational priorities, other than the important issue of behaviour, and what needs to be done to improve standards further. The good use of data collected and analysed has contributed to recent initiatives in the provision of support groups and the targeting of specific classes in order to raise standards, for instance, in English.
67. The management of special educational needs is satisfactory. The co-ordinator for special needs has a good knowledge of her role and is generally a satisfactory influence on provision. There could, however, be more rigour in the way in which pupils are identified as having special educational needs and determining their nature, particularly for pupils with behavioural difficulties. Some of these pupils currently go unidentified because the co-ordinator does not have sufficient release time to carry out classroom observation.

68. The chairman and his colleagues on the governing body are hardworking, supportive and dedicated and fulfil their statutory duties well. They do not, however, have a full understanding of the school's weakness in relation to pupils' behaviour. They have sought to monitor the school's curriculum and they have initiated and supported appropriate action, particularly in the provision of computers.
69. The school's educational priorities are supported through good financial planning. The headteacher, governors and administrative staff have a clear understanding of school finance and work well together, bringing complementary skills to bear on the financial planning and management aspects of the school's work. The management plan contains criteria by which to judge the success of spending decisions. All budget decisions are analysed to ensure that they are designed to improve standards for pupils and the budget is driven by the plan. There is not always sufficient flexibility in the planning, however. It does not always take account of the priority needs of classes, especially the very large ones in the current Year 4.
70. All funds received for specific purposes, such as funds to support pupils with special educational needs, are appropriately managed and used. Ongoing expenditure is carefully monitored and spending patterns are suitably explored. The school makes satisfactory and growing use of information and communication technology in financial planning and management and in its general administration. The school ensures the best possible value when making purchases of supplies and equipment or employing services.
71. Staffing levels in the school are good in most age groups. They are generous for the Foundation Stage and for Years 1 and 2. Here, teachers and support staff are deployed effectively and contribute to the good standards of learning in all classes, including those of pupils with special educational needs. In Years 3 and 4, the level of support staff is lower and class sizes are much larger in Year 4 than in the rest of the school. Teachers are suitably trained and have the expertise and knowledge to teach the Foundation Stage and the National Curriculum. There has been a recent initiative to promote teachers' skills in information and communication technology; these skills were weak at the time of the previous inspection and indications are that they are now improving.
72. The school has good procedures for the induction of new staff and contributes well to the training of new teachers and ancillary staff. It regularly welcomes nursery nurse students and is supporting the training of a member of staff as part of a graduate teacher programme. The school places a suitably high priority on the continuing professional and personal development of its staff. There are good procedures for the performance management of teachers. Many staff attend courses that are linked closely to the school's development priorities, national initiatives and their individual needs. Increasingly, members of the team of learning support assistants are able to take advantage of local training courses to develop their expertise further.
73. Accommodation is good. Classes are taught in spacious rooms that benefit from useful adjoining storage and teaching areas. The area assigned to children in the Foundation Stage is large and well equipped. An outdoor play area for this age group has been improved and the former weakness in resources for children in the early years has been overcome. A library/music room and a computer room have been developed and enhance teaching and learning. There are attractive and extensive grounds that enable pupils to take part in a full range of outdoor activities, including swimming in the summer months. The site and buildings are generally well maintained and reflect the dedication of the site manager. However, the condition of the flat roof is poor, especially affecting the hall and computer room, and causes staff and pupils considerable inconvenience in wet weather. In heavy rain during the inspection, leaks at a number of points resulted in dangerous surfaces, and areas became 'out of bounds' for safety reasons. Windows are gradually being replaced, but some remain in poor condition.
74. Levels of practical resources for learning are good in most subjects; they are accessible and of reasonable quality. There has been considerable recent investment in computers that has

benefited pupils. While the computers in the specialist area are used well, those in classrooms are used much less regularly and this aspect of information and communication technology resources does not represent good value for money. The resources for pupils with special needs have been improved and are now satisfactory. There are enough books for most of the curriculum, except in religious education, an area of shortage identified by the previous inspection that has not been sufficiently improved.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

75. In order to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff should seek to:

- (1) Improve the quality of teaching and standards of pupils' attainment in Years 3 and 4 by:
- ensuring that teachers maintain the level of expectation and challenge found in Years 1 and 2;
 - keeping pupils' answers to questions focused on the learning intentions;
 - developing and fostering independence, interest and initiative in the pupils by teachers.
(Paragraphs 3, 5, 6, 15, 17, 21, 22, 23, 31, 45, 90, 93, 94, 96, 99, 101, 110, 115, 116, 139, 149).

- (2) improve behaviour in Years 3 and 4 by:
- developing a consistent and effective approach to behaviour and discipline;
 - giving training in behaviour management to teachers;
 - improving the provision for pupils' moral and social development.
(Paragraphs 3, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 31, 37, 38, 42, 45, 50, 57, 64, 101, 136, 137, 142).

- (3) improve management of the school by:
- ensuring that there is more rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching methods;
 - further developing the management roles of the deputy headteacher and the subject co-ordinators;
 - ensuring that pupils make steady and appropriate progress between Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 and 4;.
(Paragraphs 3, 5, 6,, 8, 64, 66, 71, 90, 96, 98, 99, 102, 104, 115, 118, 143, 163, 165).

The governors should also consider the following issues:

- ensuring the optimum use of curriculum time in the teaching of some non-core subjects ;
- ensuring the consistent progression of skills specific to some foundation subjects in Years 3 and 4 when they are taught in topic form.
(Paragraphs 5, 34, 117, 142, 160).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	24	22	5	0	0
Percentage	0	11	42	39	9	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	248
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	25

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	5.0	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.6	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	26	22	48

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	26
	Girls	22	21	22
	Total	46	46	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (99)	96 (100)	100 (99)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	26	26
	Girls	22	22	22
	Total	46	48	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (99)	100 (99)	100 (99)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	211
Any other minority ethnic group	3

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 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	24.7

Education support staff: YR– Y4

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	154

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	525,723
Total expenditure	524,629
Expenditure per pupil	2,223
Balance brought forward from previous year	-922
Balance carried forward to next year	172

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	248
Number of questionnaires returned	94

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	28	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	40	6	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	49	6	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	49	6	2	4
The teaching is good.	44	49	3	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	53	16	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	38	4	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	37	4	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	28	51	14	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	52	41	2	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	56	2	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	44	14	0	0

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

76. Children are admitted to school at the age of four. They attend part-time at first, then full-time. Attainment on entry varies from year to year but is broadly average. The provision for children in the Foundation Stage¹ (the Reception classes or '4+ Unit') is good and has improved since the previous inspection. Since that time, this stage of education has been a focus for development in the school. The teacher in charge of the unit leads a committed and able staff team who work well together. Adults meet daily to review the children's progress and to plan the next stages of learning. The school gives its youngest children a good start.
77. Children achieve well in all areas of learning. The teachers and support staff liaise well and plan a curriculum that covers all the nationally recommended areas of learning. There is a good balance between carefully planned tasks where adults work closely with the groups or with individuals and freer activities that include an element of the child's own choice. Each child is assessed regularly, both when starting school and on an ongoing basis thereafter. These assessments are used to plan lessons that are suited to the needs of individuals and groups, especially in the key areas of literacy and numeracy. They are not yet recorded systematically to show how children move through the 'Stepping Stones' that make up the curriculum for each area of learning; this is an area that the staff have rightly identified for further development.
78. Accommodation levels are generous. The indoor area is spacious and equipped adequately. All children now receive their entitlement to daily outdoor play in a well-resourced area adjacent to the classrooms. This aspect of provision was criticised by the previous inspection report and is now much improved.

Personal, social and emotional development

79. Children are on course at least to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning and they achieve well. This is as a result of good teaching in this area of their learning. Adults encourage children to mix well, to learn about other people and take responsibility at a suitable level for their age. The children have a rota of jobs, such as looking after the pets and tidying the book stock. Teachers organise activities that encourage independence, sociability and concentration.
80. The children are interested in activities and are eager to learn. They settle well to activities, listen well to adults and maintain concentration for a reasonable length of time. Teachers use registration periods and snack times well to show children how they are expected to sit quietly when this is appropriate or to listen to others. 'Circle Time' sessions take place regularly, where all children are expected to listen carefully to what each one in the group has to say and where good social habits are developed in an atmosphere of trust and respect. While some children are shy and reluctant to speak, most are developing good levels of confidence. They work well as part of a group and take turns when needed. Children are handled sensitively by adults if they are upset and a warm and welcoming atmosphere prevails in the unit.

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

Communication, language and literacy

81. Most children are likely to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in these areas by the end of the Foundation Stage and a minority should exceed them. Many already speak in full sentences and initiate or join in conversations. They enjoy listening to stories and most are attentive when adults speak to them. They handle books correctly. While few read texts by themselves, they follow and join in stories. They can identify the initial sounds in words and know the names of many letters. Most write their names independently and copy an adult model of writing. A few of the higher attainers attempt simple sentences on their own. Teaching and learning are good. Literacy has a high priority in the unit. There are daily activities that have a literacy focus and many other activities include an effective language component. Adults encourage the children to use their language to express their needs and to communicate with others. They offer a good model for speaking. They use skilful questioning to encourage children to express their ideas and increase their vocabulary. The children develop confidence in their work, have positive attitudes and behave well. They often choose to 'read' a book when they have some free time.

Mathematical development

82. Most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals as a result of good teaching in this area of their experience. Most count forwards and backwards to and from 10 independently and, in a lesson seen, began to calculate 'two more' or 'two less' than a given number. They carry out simple addition and subtraction problems using real objects. They begin to identify common shapes and use terms such as 'long' and 'short' correctly. The oldest and most capable children can make towers of bricks or strings of objects that are longer than or shorter than a given length and begin to compare the lengths of items in the classroom. They have experienced simple data handling, for example, when compiling a chart of eye colours. The teachers plan well-structured activities that build systematically on the children's previous learning. They identify several attainment groups for numeracy and this enables them to ensure that they cater for the full range of capabilities by varying the activities provided. They ensure that children have many opportunities for practical learning. The children show enjoyment and enthusiasm in their work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

83. Most children are on course to reach the expected levels by the end of the Reception class. In their early science activities, they show interest and curiosity. They investigate objects, such as windmills, mobiles and kites in their work on air and wind. During the inspection, they learned about food ingredients and how these changed in cooking when they made pancakes. Adults encourage the correct use of language in such activities and this promotes good progress. The children ask sensible questions about the world around them and have produced simple maps on the computer. In their work in the computer room, they were seen placing symbols and text on a weather map of the British Isles. Their computer skills are developing well. They know how to load a program and use the mouse to drag and drop the symbols they need. Their early history skills develop satisfactorily when they talk about the passage of time in their own lives and look at pictures of when they were babies. They learn about other cultures such as the Chinese New Year from the role play area that is set up as a Chinese restaurant and offers a good range of displays and activities.
84. Teaching and learning are good. Adults create a stimulating environment that engages the children's interest. They ensure that all children have regular experiences in the key areas of science and information and communication technology. Resources and books are carefully chosen and give the children good levels of first-hand learning.

Physical development

85. Progress in children's physical development is satisfactory and they are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is good. For example, the older children in a hall dance lesson, showed good progress in the quality of their movements when interpreting a weather theme as a result of good input from their teacher. Good use is made of the outdoor area to give daily opportunities to play with games equipment and wheeled toys. The children move about this area with due regard to their own and others' safety. They control apparatus well. Both the indoor and outdoor areas are safely organised. Activities are linked well to the children's language development; adults encourage children to use correct vocabulary to communicate their experiences and to speak to other children, for example, when negotiating a turn on a piece of equipment.
86. Children control their movement well in the classroom. Most can dress and undress themselves with minimal adult help. They explore a range of materials such as dough, sand and water and use tools like scissors, brushes and pencils satisfactorily.

Creative development

87. Children are likely to attain the Early Learning Goals in this area of their development by the end of the Reception year. They make good progress as a result of good teaching. In their work, they use a range of media and techniques, paint good self-portraits and have made clay starlings and bird mobiles. Children sing a range of songs from memory and experiment with percussion instruments. They play imaginatively in the role-play area and outside in the playground, displaying lively ideas for their play, and often plan what they will do with others.
88. Teaching is good in this area of learning. The staff are well organised and use stimulating resources that are well-prepared. They constantly talk to the children and ask them relevant questions to enlarge their vocabulary and support their efforts. They balance independent activities well with those that need adult support.

ENGLISH

89. The standards reached in reading and writing by seven year olds in the National Curriculum tests in 2001 show a significant improvement on the time of the previous inspection, when they were average. Since the previous inspection, there has been the introduction of the literacy hour, as well as other initiatives in the subject. These have helped to maintain high standards. Inspection findings show that standards of pupils' attainment at the age of seven are:
- well above average for speaking and listening;
 - above average for reading;
 - above average for writing.
90. The standards achieved in English by nine-year-olds are average when compared with all schools nationally. Standards of speaking and listening are good and standards in reading and writing are average. In this age group, pupils make less progress than they might in relation to their progress in Years 1 and 2, largely because of a significant amount of disruptive behaviour and because pupils have a less positive attitude and approach to their work than those in the lower part of the school.
91. Pupils with special educational needs generally make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory progress in Years 3 and 4. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress. No significant difference was seen in the attainments of boys and girls.
92. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils throughout the school to develop their speaking and listening skills. They use the introductory part of lessons so that pupils have time to share

what they know and they use the vocabulary associated with the topic. A very good example of this in Year 1 was where pupils enjoyed a familiar story of 'The Three Little Pigs', quickly picking up the rhythms of the language and joining in the reading with animation and expression. Pupils in Year 3 discussed the activities associated with whaling with understanding and made good contributions of their own experiences of spouting water. In Years 3 and 4, however, discussion is sometimes inhibited by the silly, chattering behaviour of a significant group of pupils. Throughout the school, teachers encourage pupils when working in pairs or small groups to discuss their work with each other and to take each other's views into account. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on teaching correct terminology in other subjects, such as science and history. This emphasis on speaking and listening positively promotes the pupils' oral and listening skills and raises their self-esteem.

93. Pupils' reading skills on entry to the school are broadly average and they attain good standards by the age of seven. In Years 1 and 2, they build upon their experiences of phonics learned in reception. Pupils take real pleasure in reading. Average and less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, quickly develop their knowledge and understanding of letter sounds through the structured teaching that they experience in the literacy hour. This phonic work enables them to tackle new and unfamiliar words with ease. More able pupils demonstrate enjoyment and interest in reading when, in Year 2, they answer questions on poems of a multicultural nature, such as 'Chapatti in Your Hand'. By the end of Year 4, however, the standard of pupils' reading is broadly average. Although many pupils read with improving fluency and accuracy, few can discuss a range of authors or show a wide experience of reading. School reading record books are used well in the infants and show good progress and regular monitoring by class teachers, providing a good form of communication with parents. They are less well used in the juniors. The older pupils are beginning to learn to find information from information and communication technology sources. The reading skills of the majority of Year 4 pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most texts appropriate for their age.
94. The standard of writing of pupils aged seven is above the national average. Many pupils enjoy using a wide range of vocabulary and make good progress in their writing skills. A good example of this in Year 2 was the lesson observed on reading a simple chart on the digestive process, in which pupils used words new to them with enjoyment and relevance in their own work. In another Year 2 class, pupils wrote humorous poems about food, using repetition and rhyme well. In Years 3 and 4, many pupils are capable of sustained writing, using good quality vocabulary. There is, however, a wide variety in pupils' application, with over half the class working productively, but the rest working slowly and with little concentration. This was clearly to be seen in a Year 4 lesson, where John Masefield's poem 'Sea Fever', was used as a model to illustrate the significance of word order in changing meaning. The majority of pupils worked with interest and genuine desire to compose their own sentences, but others worked at a very slow pace and with little involvement with the task. More able pupils in Years 3 and 4 are sometimes not challenged sufficiently and the work expected of them is not of a high enough standard. Less able pupils often work more assiduously and with greater effort, taking care with spelling, punctuation and presentation. Presentational skills vary throughout the school. Standards of spelling and grammar, including punctuation, are often good, but the quality and consistency of handwriting often need strengthening. Pupils know how to write sequels to traditional stories, such as 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. Some use different forms of writing appropriately; for instance, when producing a news report. The skills of writing are not, however, sufficiently transferred to the wider curriculum. The use of computers to improve pupils' writing is improving satisfactorily, as seen in an anthology of poems by older pupils.
95. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good. It is good overall in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. In Years 1 and 2:
- teachers' overall planning is effective;
 - teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils should achieve;
 - teachers use questions to draw out meaning and develop pupils' understanding effectively.

- In literacy lessons, where pupils of different attainment are grouped together, teachers plan work that matches pupils' abilities. As a result, pupils are challenged to learn and they respond by working hard and productively, making good progress. Less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well supported by teaching assistants.
96. In Years 3 and 4:
- teaching is sometimes too over-directed;
 - expectations are set too low, so that the more able pupils make only satisfactory progress;
 - teachers do not always assess pupils' progress closely and effectively in lessons;
 - pupils' behaviour is allowed to detract from the quality and quantity of work achieved.
97. In the best teaching, individual pupils are set challenging targets for improvement. Where teachers share the learning objectives, pupils are clear about what they should know and do, such as when using rhyme and rhythm to write poems. Assessment of work within the lesson also identifies clearly what is needed to improve standards. There is evidence of the use of homework in English, but its use is not always consistent.
98. The co-ordination of English is good. The co-ordinator has detailed, good knowledge of the Literacy Hour. She carries out supportive monitoring of planning and teaching. As a result, teachers have, overall, competently adopted the Literacy Hour. The co-ordinator brings enthusiasm to the subject, attending update courses and then passing on their content to staff in school. The co-ordinator has gathered together a portfolio of graded work that gives teachers a secure base for their assessments. She ensures that pupils' work is regularly monitored in key stage meetings, looking at progress and at parallel classes. The number and quality of books, especially in the library, have improved, helping to stimulate pupils' interest in reading. Teaching assistants attached to less able groups and pupils with special educational needs work well with the class teachers, affording them the opportunity to focus on other ability groups in rotation. All this results in an effective focus on improvement in English in Years 1 and 2, but this focus is insufficiently developed in Years 3 and 4.

MATHEMATICS

99. Inspection findings for the current pupils are that, by the age of seven, pupils achieve well and attain above average standards as a result of effective teaching. However, this momentum is not sustained in Years 3 and 4, and the standards of nine-year-olds are only average. In most of the lessons seen during the inspection, the progress made by these older pupils was satisfactory, but evidence from their previous work indicates that they have not built well enough on the high performance they achieved in the tests at the age of seven. Pupils throughout the school do better in number work than in other aspects of mathematics. The findings of this inspection represent an improvement in the standards of seven-year-olds compared with the previous inspection, while standards for nine-year-olds have been maintained. There is no significant difference in the overall performance of girls and boys. Pupils with special educational needs make progress that is in line with their classmates.
100. By seven, pupils have a good grasp of number. They manipulate two-digit numbers well and were observed rounding numbers to the nearest ten and counting accurately in odd and even numbers up to 100. The more able pupils work confidently with three-digit numbers. Pupils are independent and flexible in their use of numbers and explain their thinking well. They begin to use standard units of measurement, such as centimetres and grams and to recognise and know the features of different shapes. They work well independently and enjoy solving problems. The attitudes of this age group are positive. They are keen to learn and excited by their work. They behave well in lessons.
101. By the age of nine, pupils have consolidated their skills in number satisfactorily and most work with four-digit numbers accurately, showing a reasonable speed of mental recall of number facts such as multiplication tables. They use simple decimals, for example, when working out

bills and have a sound understanding of shape and measurement, as well as graphs and bar charts to display and interpret data. The more able pupils show a good understanding of complex line graphs. The attitudes of this age group are not as positive as in Key Stage 1. A substantial minority appear to lack interest in their work and their concentration is poor. There are frequent instances of low-level disruptive behaviour that inhibit progress. The school increasingly uses the results of tests in Years 3 and 4 to check pupils' attainment. It sets satisfactory predictions for pupils' performance, but these are not ambitious when compared with the results the same pupils achieved at the age of seven.

102. In Years 1 and 2, teaching and learning are good and in Years 3 and 4 they are satisfactory. In both key stages, teachers' subject knowledge is secure, they have clear objectives for their lessons and explain tasks well. They practise basic number skills with their pupils regularly and give these a high priority. Reasonable targets for individuals are set by teachers and discussed with the pupils, with an indication of how the pupils can improve. Lessons have a clear structure that reinforces pupils' previous learning, introduces and consolidates new topics and summarises what pupils have learnt in the session. There is a satisfactory programme of homework that supports pupils' progress. The main reasons for the variation in the quality of teaching between the key stages are that:
- the younger pupils are more excited and challenged by the activities their teachers prepare;
 - work in Years 1 and 2 is matched more closely to pupils' capabilities and stretches the more able pupils more effectively;
 - teachers do not control pupils' behaviour well enough at times in Years 3 and 4;
 - teachers in Years 3 and 4 do not give as much praise and encouragement to their pupils;
 - sometimes the main numeracy lessons follow on from other number practice sessions and the overall sessions are too long to maintain pupils' interest.
103. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy in Key Stage 1, where it is having a positive impact on pupils' performance. Teachers in Key Stage 2 use the main guidance of the strategy in their lessons, but it is yet to have the impact on results that has been seen with the younger pupils. Teachers have recently improved the ways they integrate information and communication technology into the mathematics curriculum. Sessions in the computer room introduce pupils to aspects such as data handling and pupils practise number skills using classroom machines. This is particularly effective when used with the small groups who are identified for extra support. The school identifies groups of pupils who need extra learning support or who will benefit from booster lessons. This aspect of mathematics provision is effective and enables these pupils to make good progress in their work.
104. The co-ordinator's management of the subject is satisfactory. She monitors lessons and planning and checks the quality of work in pupils' books. She works closely with her colleagues in analysing the school's performance in tests and the staff have set up good procedures for tracking pupils' progress across the school. These procedures link well to the day-to-day assessment systems that teachers use with their classes. They have, for example, identified aspects of pupils' mathematical development that need extra attention, such as provision for more able pupils in Key Stage 1. However, they are not yet effective in dealing with the slow-down in pupils' progress that happens in Key Stage 2.

SCIENCE

105. By the ages of both seven and nine, pupils attain standards which are in line with national expectations. This level of attainment has been maintained at the standard reported at the previous inspection.
106. The work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils undertake a range of appropriate science activities which cover all strands of the subject. Through a two-year rolling programme

of topics, the pupils study life processes, materials and physical processes. There is a good emphasis on investigative science and this approach has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils are expected to use simple apparatus and equipment correctly, ask questions about their science work and use focused exploration and investigation to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding. They are encouraged to make predictions, to explain their discoveries and to draw conclusions, using scientific vocabulary.

107. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 1, pupils made good progress in their learning. In Year 1, the pupils had visited the 'Life Bus' and were able to recall that 'if you haven't got good food inside you, you won't be able to work and run as well'. When they exerted themselves by physical exercise, they recognised the effect on their heartbeat; 'It is beeping faster'. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils were actively involved in designing an investigation to find out if sight helps in doing simple tasks. They enthusiastically suggested the equipment required and how they could record their results. By the end of the lesson, the pupils had all experienced a range of simple tasks, with eyes open or covered, and using a minute timer to ensure accurate results. They were able to draw conclusions from their results which sometimes did not match their predictions.
108. In Key Stage 2, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In the lessons seen, pupils in Year 4 were carrying out an investigation to find whether certain materials were good or poor thermal conductors. During discussions, they demonstrated their knowledge of thermal insulators. Recalling previous work, they were able to identify which materials were the most effective insulators. The pupils carried out an investigation to find out why saucepans have wooden or plastic handles. They made predictions and recorded their results accurately. A few more able pupils proceeded to another investigation into which materials are good electrical conductors. In both these examples, pupils were using scientific terminology accurately and recognising the need for a fair test. Where pupils' behaviour was at its best, it was as a result of good teaching, where the teacher showed enthusiasm and actively involved pupils in making decisions. Pupils enjoy science and are keen to make discoveries. In one Year 4 lesson, they accidentally discovered that the lead in a pencil is a good conductor of electricity. This caused a great deal of excitement and interest.
109. The work produced by pupils during the current school year indicates that pupils are making satisfactory progress in the development of their scientific knowledge. In Key Stage 1, they have investigated sound and light and they have carried out simple investigations. In Key Stage 2, pupils have studied forces, including magnets and friction. When carrying out an investigation into springs, they recognised that 'when Jack pushed the spring, he felt the spring pushing back against his hands. As he stretched the spring, he could feel it pulling back'. Using a force meter, they have investigated various forms of friction, including air and water resistance.
110. In most lessons seen in Key Stage 1, teaching was good. It was generally satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teachers show confidence in their subject knowledge and through effective questioning they encourage participation by the pupils. Medium and short term planning has been improved since the last inspection and lessons now have very clear learning objectives, which are shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson. The recently introduced system for assessing pupils' progress in science has led to more accurate assessments and has provided teachers with information which should inform their future planning. This is also an improvement since the last inspection. There is still a lack of opportunity for pupils in Key Stage 2 to use their initiative in planning and organising their investigations. These are still very teacher-directed and many pupils are capable of greater independence.
111. The role of the co-ordinator has been developed to the extent that she now examines teachers' plans and is able to offer support and guidance when required. The portfolio of examples of assessed work is a useful resource and is an indication of the progress being made by pupils in each year group. The school has been using the nationally recommended curriculum plans for two years. These have been wisely adapted to meet the needs of the school and have had a

positive benefit on teaching and pupils' learning, ensuring progression from one year to the next. The school has identified the need for the co-ordinator to monitor the implementation of these plans by observing, and working directly with, teachers in all year groups. Information and communication technology is beginning to be used profitably in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

112. By the ages of seven and nine, the standards attained by pupils are average and remain in line with those identified at the time of the previous inspection. Two lessons were observed in each key stage during the inspection. In Years 1 and 2, the teaching was often good, while in Years 3 and 4 it was satisfactory. Further evidence was obtained from examining pupils' previous work and from the work on display throughout the school. In both key stages, pupils make at least satisfactory progress over time, including those with special educational needs.
113. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a sound range of materials and techniques. These have been used to particularly good effect in recent work on portraits with paint and pastel. This topic has also presented pupils with opportunities to work in three dimensions, such as in the good examples of sculptures in Year 2 that reflect the style of Picasso. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 also experience a satisfactory range of activities. For example, they have used clay to represent Viking designs and made printing blocks for repeating Celtic patterns. Such lessons often contribute to pupils' cultural development and to their knowledge of how artists and craftspeople work. The multicultural perspective has recently been a focus of work in Key Stage 1, linked to the Chinese New Year. Pupils increasingly use computer programs to compose pictures and to carry out research linked to topics.
114. Where teaching and learning are effective, the following features are often present:
- teachers have good subject knowledge and expertise in different artistic styles;
 - pupils' interest and enthusiasm are engaged by the creative activities provided;
 - lesson objectives are clearly explained, such as the use of clay in making 'Picasso' statues;
 - teachers manage pupils' behaviour well;
 - individuals are supported well by adults to develop good techniques, whether in paint or pastels;
 - classrooms are well organised and have good practical resources;
 - teachers encourage careful observation of such features as Celtic patterns by pupils
115. Weaker features of teaching and learning in the lessons observed were:
- a lack of interest and excitement by pupils in the subject matter;
 - teachers allowing too much chatter and low-level disruptive behaviour;
 - inconsistencies in the quality of work between parallel classes in year groups.
116. In general, pupils in Years 1 and 2 express more positive attitudes to learning than in Years 3 and 4. Their behaviour in lessons is better and there is more attention to the quality of the finished pieces of work; these characteristics are not seen to the same extent in the older classes.
117. There are weaknesses in the way that the curriculum is planned which mean that pupils do not always achieve as well as they could, especially in Years 2 and 4. Lessons are planned on a two-year rolling programme and this avoids duplication in the coverage in each key stage. However, teachers do not always give enough consideration to how the lesson will need to be tailored to each year group if the development of pupils' learning is to be systematic and build on what has gone before. This has a greater impact on the progress of the upper year group in each key stage. Lessons in art are often based on other topics being studied, for example in history. This makes useful links across the curriculum but results in too few lessons that concentrate on the skills, knowledge and understanding needed for the subject itself, as opposed to how the subject is applied to other areas.

118. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use sketchbooks in their work. This acts as a record of their first drafts but the books are under-used as banks of ideas and the work is often not dated to indicate how well pupils are progressing over time. The subject is well managed. There is an able co-ordinator who has recently been appointed. She is well qualified and has a clear and relevant vision of how the subject can develop in the school. At present, her monitoring is informal and she has few opportunities to see her colleagues teach. Assessment procedures are at a very early stage and rarely support any drive to raise standards by identifying pupils' attainment or supporting teachers' planning. Standards of display vary considerably across the school. In some classrooms and communal areas, there are attractive displays that celebrate and demonstrate pupils' achievements but the displays in a few rooms are not stimulating or encouraging for the pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

119. Due to timetabling arrangements during the inspection period, only one lesson in each key stage was observed. However, examples of pupils' work, an examination of planning documents and discussions with teachers indicate that attainment in the subject meets the expected standard by the ages of seven and nine. This is a similar picture as that reported at the last inspection.
120. In both key stages, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Through a programme of planned topics, pupils are introduced to a range of activities that cover structures, joining techniques, mechanisms and food technology. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know how to make a simple mechanism for making things move. For example, they have made a hinge using paper or card and a brass paper fastener. They develop this idea into human and animal figures with moving limbs. Pupils in Year 1 learn about the benefits to their diet of eating fruit and vegetables and they make decisions when designing a fruit salad or fruit sandwich.
121. In Year 2, pupils use their cutting and folding skills to use paper for various purposes. For example they can fold, curl and quill paper and use these techniques for different purposes.
122. By Key Stage 2, pupils develop all these techniques and use them to design and make a range of products. For example, they develop their knowledge of mechanisms to make sliding mechanisms for use in storybooks. Pupils accurately fold paper or card to make a pop-up greetings card. They learn about structures and have investigated stability when designing a picture or photograph frame, as well as using other techniques when designing the style of frame which they are making. When designing products, pupils are encouraged to evaluate commercially produced items in order to provide them with ideas.
123. There were insufficient opportunities to observe teaching and to make an overall judgment on its quality. However, the indications are that teaching is at least satisfactory in both key stages.
124. The teachers are currently basing their work on nationally recommended units of work and these are to be evaluated shortly. This will lead to decisions being made for a revision of the current policy document and long-term plans. There is now a greater emphasis on designing and making skills. Originality is encouraged through the choice of materials to be used and these are both improvements since the last inspection.
125. The recently appointed co-ordinator is keen to develop the subject and her role in supporting other members of staff. The resources for design technology are of good quality and are easily accessible in well-labelled storage units.

GEOGRAPHY

126. Because of timetable arrangements and the cycle of planned topics, only one geography lesson could be observed during the inspection period.
127. Scrutiny of the available examples of pupils' work, the school's planning documents and discussion with teachers and pupils suggest that standards are at least average at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the age of nine.
128. At the time of the last inspection, it was reported that the study of places beyond the United Kingdom was not sufficiently emphasised. This has been rectified in Key Stage 1 through the study of the 'travels' of Barnaby Bear to different countries, and in Key Stage 2 by the inclusion of a study of India.
129. The two-year rolling programme of topics adequately covers the requirements of the National Curriculum programme of study for geography although progress in the development of geographical skills needs to be identified more clearly. For example, teachers should consider the development in mapping skills from Year 1 to Year 2, and the use of aerial photographs to investigate locality between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
130. Pupils in Year 1 produce their own maps of routes round school to their classroom. Maps are accurately labelled and coloured to identify particular features. In Key Stage 2, there are good examples of cross-curricular links. In science, pupils had drawn very detailed plans of their classroom when measuring temperature variations and in history they had drawn an accurate plan of a Roman town using a key to identify the main buildings.
131. Pupils in Year 2 have a satisfactory understanding of where places are on a map of the United Kingdom and a map of the world. They can identify the position of countries within the United Kingdom and they recognise that fruit is imported to this country from all over the world. They can identify places that are near and far and can describe hot and cold countries. Pupils also recognise that in aerial photographs, objects on the ground look much smaller. Many are confident in giving directions and identifying features in the local area.
132. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, but there is little opportunity for monitoring teaching and learning in the subject.

HISTORY

133. There was no opportunity to observe lessons in Key Stage 1, and so there is insufficient evidence to make secure judgements on the quality of teaching and learning in the infant classes. Other judgements are based on the scrutiny of pupils' past work, work on display and teachers' planning, and discussions with staff.
134. Standards are broadly average in Years 3 and 4 and this is a slight decline from the previous inspection, when they were above average.
135. In Years 1 and 2, standards, judged on pupils' past work, are above average. Pupils link their work in history to their work in science when they trace sources of light from Roman oil lamps through candles to the use of electricity. They study the life and works of famous people such as Louis Braille and Florence Nightingale and use their new knowledge and understanding to write thoughtful letters home from the hospital at Scutari. This also enables them to make considered comparisons of the similarities and differences between hospitals old and new. They also develop an understanding of the historical significance of Remembrance Sunday and begin to appreciate a sense of chronology in their work on how they themselves have changed since they were babies.

136. In Years 3 and 4, pupils' work includes Roman Britain and the use of artefacts seen on their visit to Sutton Hoo. They also carry out some independent research comparing the similarities and differences between Romans and Celts. Although the scrutiny of completed work showed some empathic writing in their diary entries as Roman soldiers, there was little of the extended writing which could be expected. They compare stories about King Arthur, deciding which is fact and which is simply opinion and their sense of chronology is encouraged by teacher's exhibits of time-lines from 8000 BC to 2000 AD, with specific events studied by pupils placed in sequence. They reinforce their knowledge and understanding of the conflicts between Viking and Anglo-Saxons in their reflective writing about the Viking attack on the abbey of Lindisfarne and when they try and recreate the Battle of Maldon. This was particularly useful in reinforcing their new learning about the use of eye-witness accounts. They also display their understanding of Viking culture in the clay tiles which illustrate how runes were used.
137. Although the range of work covered in Years 3 and 4, as seen in the scrutiny of work and of work on display, is appropriate, in the two lessons observed the teaching was unsatisfactory. This was largely due to the very challenging behaviour of a small but significant minority of pupils whose disruptive activities slowed the pace of the lesson and limited the achievement of all.
138. The co-ordinator has a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of her role, but the management function is not currently exercised effectively in terms of monitoring and evaluating provision and classroom teaching because of a lack of non-contact time. Teachers' displays celebrate pupils' achievements and enhance the learning environment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

139. By the ages of seven and nine, the standards attained by pupils in lessons are average. They have improved since the last inspection when pupils were judged not to be making enough progress. This is mainly due to the opening of a new computer room that enables all classes to have access to good quality hardware and software. All pupils currently receive regular 'hands-on' experience that is promoting good progress. Teachers have also undertaken relevant training that has improved their subject knowledge and expertise. These improvements are fairly recent and pupils have not yet covered all the required aspects of the National Curriculum for each age group but teachers' plans indicate that this should gradually take place at a satisfactory rate.
140. Most pupils are keen to learn and they use their lesson time well. They handle the equipment carefully and co-operate with others when they need to share a computer or work on a joint project. A significant minority, however, do not seem interested or engaged by tasks and their concentration is poor. A few become very noisy or excitable. This is in spite of very good quality equipment and well-chosen activities being planned by their teachers.
141. The quality of teaching is now good in the lessons that take place in the computer room. Teachers plan an appropriate range of activities. In Year 1, for example, pupils presented data they had collected about their favourite foods in a tally chart that the computer also converted to a column graph. This lesson contributed well to the development of pupils' numeracy skills. In Year 2, pupils gained familiarity with the keyboard by typing lists of foods and setting out a passage of dialogue. They used 'return' and 'delete' keys correctly and inserted punctuation marks with the shift key. Their literacy skills and layout techniques were promoted well in these lessons. In Year 3, pupils were seen exploring an adventure simulation and understood how a computer can respond to their choices and questions. In Year 4, pupils created sequences of instructions to draw and change geometric shapes on screen, another lesson that promoted mathematical skills well. While such experiences are contributing well to pupils' more rapid progress now, teachers do not yet plan enough activities that use computers in their own classrooms. Pupils do not yet apply the skills they learn in the computer room to their day-to-day work in the classroom and classroom computers are underused. Activities in English,

mathematics, science and art in particular are supported by the use of ICT but its use is not yet widespread in other subjects.

142. In the lessons seen the main strengths in teaching and learning were:
- interesting, well-chosen activities at the right level for pupils' capabilities;
 - clear objectives for lessons and explanations of tasks so that pupils know what to do;
 - the use of adult help to support pupils, including those with special needs;
 - good relationships between adults and pupils that encourage good behaviour by pupils;
 - teachers' sound subject knowledge;
 - effective use of introductory sessions to present new material and summary sessions to evaluate what has been achieved.
143. The weaker features of lessons were:
- too little control by teachers of the noise level or of poor behaviour;
 - lessons that are too short for pupils to consolidate new learning.
144. The management of ICT is satisfactory. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and has begun to monitor the subject through the examination of teachers' planning and pupils' work. He has not yet seen lessons being taught at first hand. The staff have outlined how they will use recent national guidance on the curriculum to support their lessons but have not yet identified agreed procedures for assessing attainment and pupils' progress. The considerable expenditure on resources is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards, although 'teething troubles' with equipment and Internet access have led to the expenditure of considerable time and energy by staff. While the hardware and software now available to pupils are of good quality, the seating in the computer room is cumbersome and does not ease access to the machines by pupils.

MUSIC

145. There was insufficient evidence available in Key Stage 1 to make judgments about standards, since only one lesson was observed. Standards attained by pupils at the age of nine are in line with national expectations.
146. Opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills, knowledge and appreciation occur both in the planned curriculum and incidentally in the daily life of the school. In the Foundation Stage, pupils sing rhyming games as part of their numeracy lessons. In both key stages, pupils are introduced to a range of music through the planned series of topics. In geography, for example, music from other cultures is used. In assembly, a piece of music is played as the pupils enter and leave the hall. This is referred to on Monday morning as the 'Music for the Week'. During the inspection, no further reference was made to this music and pupils were not encouraged simply to sit and listen.
147. Pupils join in singing during assembly, and although they can sing in unison, this sometimes borders on shouting. The displayed words for assembly songs are not always clear and could be improved by the use of new technology.
148. In Year 2, pupils explore a range of pitched and un-pitched percussion instruments to make long and short sounds. They relate these sounds to everyday noises such as a clock ticking, a door slamming, a running tap or a door creaking. Percussion instruments are chosen which best replicate the particular sound and then refine their ideas to get the best effect.
149. In Key Stage 2, pupils learn how to compose an ostinato accompaniment to a simple song. They are able to describe pulse and rhythm and they use their knowledge to good effect in their performances. They are able to evaluate their own performance and that of others, identifying good points as well as possible improvements. Pupils in Year 4 have a 'choir' lesson when they come together to sing a range of songs in unison or in parts. Most pupils are competent singers and the music teacher provides very competent demonstrations of phrasing and pitch.

150. In the lessons observed in Key Stage 2, teaching was always at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The pupils were not always interested in the lessons however, and some talked when the teachers were giving instructions.
151. There is a good range of musical instruments and good use is made of them in the small music room. The Dunstable and District Lower School Association organises events for pupils at Christmas and in the summer when there is a themed event. Groups of musicians visit the school during the year to demonstrate particular instruments and styles of music.
152. During the last inspection, it was reported that music was 'an integral part of the school's ethos'. Opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their musical skills in the choir, in musical performances, in the recorder club and also through the teaching of peripatetic staff. Overall, during this inspection, music did not play as large a part in the life of the school as it might have done. The co-ordinator has a well-planned scheme of work for the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

153. The standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and at the age of nine are line with national expectations. Through a comprehensive programme of planned activities, pupils cover all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study for physical education. During the inspection lessons were observed in dance, gymnastics and games. At other times of the year pupils will be involved in swimming, athletics and outdoor adventurous activities.
154. At the time of the last inspection, athletics and games were taking place. During this inspection, neither of these could be seen and therefore it is not possible to make direct comparisons with the standards attained previously.
155. Progress is satisfactory from one year group to another. The carefully designed yearly programme of activities includes clear objectives and is designed to ensure pupils' progress. Recently published units of work have been incorporated into the programme as required.
156. In Year 1, in gymnastics pupils explore ways of travelling on the floor using different parts of their bodies. They vary the speed and direction of their movements and they are able to link these into a simple sequence. They transfer their ideas when using apparatus, balancing well and completing their movements safely.
157. In a Year 1 dance lesson, pupils enjoyed the rhythms and movements of pre-recorded music and accurately kept time by clapping and moving their bodies. They develop these skills in Year 2 when dancing to traditional music and learning specific dancing patterns and movements. This theme is continued in Year 3 when pupils learn more intricate movements and they have to work together as a team. Pupils in Year 4 develop their control of a racquet and ball. They learn how to hold a racquet and to control the speed and direction of their shots. These skills were to be developed into a simple game of tennis on a future occasion.
158. In all the lessons seen, teaching was at least satisfactory. In two lessons, the teaching was good. On these occasions, the teachers had high expectations of behaviour and of the pupils' achievements. Clear instructions were given, teachers selected pupils to demonstrate their skills and good feedback was given to pupils in order for them to improve. Teaching staff have regular training to increase their confidence and to share ideas for teaching particular aspects of the curriculum.
159. The school provides a good range of activities for the pupils. The school hall is quite small but is used well for many of these activities. Teachers remind pupils of the need for safety at the start of lessons. The school has good outdoor areas and there are plans for substantial

developments, which would enhance provision even further. Pupils' enjoyment of lessons is helped by activities such as line dancing, the Charleston and the jive.

160. Curriculum liaison with the local middle school has been successful and there has been an exchange of staff and of equipment. There are also successful links with Luton Town Football Club and Dunstable Tennis Club who send staff to work with pupils in developing their interest in sport. Co-ordination of the subject is good, though there is little monitoring of teaching and learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

161. Standards of attainment in both key stages are broadly in line with the recommendations of the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus. There is, however, a lack of recording of the range of topics covered and this limits the achievement of pupils, especially in Key Stage 2, since there is no means of judging what has, or has not, been covered earlier.
162. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection and resources have been improved so that they are now adequate to teach the subject.
163. Pupils in Year 1 are becoming more familiar with the life of Jesus. Teachers use stories well to extend pupils' knowledge. Pupils are developing a good idea of the qualities required in a good friend through reflection on their lives, actions and attitudes towards others. Year 2 pupils are learning to appreciate the points of view of others through their reflection and discussion on the life and motives of Zaccheus and why Jesus chose to have supper with him. Scrutiny of their past work shows that pupils are beginning to understand the function of celebrations in faith communities; for example, in their work on Diwali, Christmas and the Chinese New Year.
164. Pupils' satisfactory achievement in Key Stage 1 is not built upon in Years 3 and 4. Among these older pupils, only a small minority displayed knowledge of how Christians believe Jesus to be the Son of God, and explain that this is why Christians address God as 'Our Father.' Only higher attainers know that the stories of Jesus are called parables and that they are stories with meanings for the everyday life of believers. Almost all know that the Bible is a special book and that the stories of Jesus are found in the Gospels. Most have a ready understanding of the emotions of the elder brother in the story of the Prodigal Son and higher attainers explain that the parable means 'God loves everyone, saint and sinner.' Since so much work in religious education is oral or subsumed into personal and social education, the scrutiny of past recorded work is rather thin. It does however show that teachers are a little too reliant on the use of worksheets, with few examples of independent writing or personal research. There is also little reflective writing, so that the subject makes only a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
165. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall, although in the lessons seen, it was good. Teachers plan their lessons well so that pupils can share some good information about friends and friendship and about Jesus' friends. Their calm quiet approach gives rise to a good response from pupils who wish to please their teachers and live up to their expectations, both academically and behaviourally. Pupils were encouraged to share their thoughts so that could use this knowledge and understanding to explain how they would help new pupils and what their expectations were of having, and being, a friend. At Key Stage 2, teaching and learning are also satisfactory overall, although in one of the lessons seen, the teaching was unsatisfactory and pupils achieved little. In the better lessons, teachers read stories with great expression so that pupils are allowed to display thoughtful comments, because the teachers pause frequently to check understanding and vocabulary. They use questioning effectively to provoke reflection and considered answers. Their high expectations of behaviour are generally met and many pupils are keen to offer answers and contributions to discussions, because they know their teachers value their contributions. Where teaching is less successful, the teacher's planning was very brief and the content of the lesson was at too high

a pitch for most pupils. In this Year 3 class also, there is a significant minority of pupils with very challenging behaviour who showed considerable disrespect for both the subject and the teacher. Pupils enjoyed searching their Bibles but all used the same version, so there was no adaptation of the task to individual needs. The teacher stopped frequently to check comprehension and vocabulary but pupils were bored and inattentive because opportunities were missed to involve them in discussion.

166. The co-ordinator for religious education has a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of her role and the subject, but is not yet effectively exercising her management role of monitoring and evaluating provision and classroom practice because of a lack of non-contact time. Resources are adequate only when supplemented by loans and donations from faith communities, usually Christian.