

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BASSETT GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Honeysuckle Road, Bassett

Southampton, SO16 3BZ

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 131839

Headteacher: Jan Church

Reporting inspector: Sarah Kiel  
21386

Dates of inspection: 14 – 17 February 2000

Inspection number: 217659

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of children:	4 - 11
Gender of children:	Mixed
School address:	Honeysuckle Road Bassett Southampton
Postcode:	SO16 3BZ
Telephone number:	023 8067 6262
Fax number:	023 8057 0444
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ken Brookes
Date of previous inspection:	Infant – 20/03/95 Junior – 27/11/95

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Sarah Kiel	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			How high are standards?
			How well are children taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Sheila Young	Team inspector	mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to children?
		physical education	
		religious education	
Carol Worthington	Team inspector	design and technology	
		information technology	
		science	
Valerie Marshall	Team inspector	art	
		English	
		under-fives	
Ian Massey	Team inspector	geography	
		history	
		English as an additional language	
		equal opportunities	
Elaine McAllister	Team inspector	music	
		special educational needs	
Geraldine Osment	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its children?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?

The inspection contractor was:

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Education Department – OFSTED office  
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school has only been in existence as a primary school since the amalgamation of Bassett Green Infant and Junior Schools in April 1999. Prior to amalgamation, the junior school was in difficulties and results in national tests were very low. Within the last two years, 21 teachers have left and the school has experienced great problems in recruiting and appointing staff. At the time of inspection, two teachers were on temporary contracts and the post of deputy headteacher was being covered by a senior teacher, due to long-term illness. The site of the previous infant school is being developed and building works were in progress during the inspection.

There are 397 children in the school who are taught in mixed-ability, single-age group classes except in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class. The number of girls and boys is balanced in the reception year but there are, on average, 10 more girls than boys in most other classes. At the time of the inspection, there were 51 children under five in the two reception classes.

The school serves a very specific area of primarily social housing and private rentals on the 'Flower Roads' estate, although the ward includes areas of large private houses and student accommodation. There is a great deal of movement in the area as much of the social housing is suitable for larger families. This, in part, accounts for high numbers coming into, or leaving the school other than at the usual time. There are 38 children from ethnic minority groups and 33 for whom English is an additional language. About 42% of children are eligible for a free school meal. This is well above the national average.

Attainment on entry is typically well below average. Baseline assessment shows that children score well below the Southampton average in all areas of the test. Although some have been to playgroup, many have delayed language development and difficulties in conforming to school routines and expectations. Across the school, 43% have been identified by the school as having a special educational need, which is well above the national average of 20%. This figure rises to 47% when the needs of the new intake of reception children are included. Three children have a statement of special educational needs. There have been 48 instances of temporary exclusion during the last school year.

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

This is an effective and improving school with some substantial strengths. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are excellent. Teaching and learning for children under five is good and sometimes very good. In the rest of the school, teaching is good or very good in 5 lessons out of 10. However, there are too many instances of unsatisfactory teaching in both key stages and the quality of teaching across and between year groups is inconsistent. This is a significant weakness. Children have positive attitudes and enthusiasm for school and relationships are good. Overall, the school provides value for money.

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

- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are excellent and have raised standards and improved teaching significantly.
- Throughout the school, children have positive attitudes and enthusiasm for school, and relationships are good.
- Provision for the spiritual, moral and cultural development of children is good.
- The school cares well for children and monitors their attendance carefully.
- The induction and development of staff are good.
- The school makes good provision for children under five and teaching of children under five is a strength.
- Children's achievement in mathematics is a strength.
- Curricular experiences in art are a strength, and religious education makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual and moral development.

### **What could be improved**

- The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in too many lessons in Key Stages 1 and 2. This limits the quality of provision and standards achieved. It also means children in the same year group do not have the same opportunities to learn and make progress.
- Standards in all aspects of English are below average.
- Information technology: children have far too few opportunities to develop their skills and apply them across the curriculum.
- Opportunities for social development are too few, particularly those for children to take on greater responsibility and gain independence.
- The timetabling and arrangement of the school day restrict opportunities for children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in some subjects, particularly design and technology and physical education.
- The attendance rate is unsatisfactory.

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

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

Bassett Green Primary School has not been previously inspected as it has only existed since April 1999. It is therefore not possible to judge how the school has improved since its last inspection.

However, the previous inspection report for the infant school (March 1995) criticised the condition and fabric of the buildings and play areas. The school has now been demolished. The previous inspection report for the junior school (November 1995) indicated many serious weaknesses. These included standards, breadth and balance of the curriculum, underachievement in relation to children's capabilities, low rate of progress, children's standards of behaviour and the school's management of behaviour, teaching (25% unsatisfactory), whole-school development planning and communication with parents.



## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with	
	all schools	similar schools
	1999	1999
English	E	C
mathematics	B	A
science	C	A

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

When compared to similar schools the standards achieved by 7-year-olds in 1999 are well below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Standards achieved by 11-year-olds in the same year are average in English and well above average in mathematics and science when compared to similar schools.

The performances of the previous infant and junior schools were weaker and there has been considerable improvement in the standards achieved by the age of 11, in particular.

Despite high turbulence and very low attainment on entry, the school is likely to achieve the targets set for 2000 and to improve upon last year's results.

## CHILDREN'S ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good: the children are enthusiastic and positive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory: children generally behave well in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory: children generally form good relationships and have tolerance for the feelings, values and beliefs of others.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory: too many children are taken out of school by parents during term time.

Children's attitudes and enthusiasm are a strength of the school and this is linked to the school's caring and supportive approach to the children and their needs.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of children:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	good	unsatisfactory	unsatisfactory

*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.*

Overall, teaching in about 8 out of 10 lessons (82%) is satisfactory or better. Nearly half of teaching is good and very good. This enables children to make significant progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding. However, about 2 out of 10 lessons (18%) are less than satisfactory and this is a weakness. There are instances of unsatisfactory teaching in both key stages.

Although teachers generally have a good understanding of what they are going to teach and how to help children understand and learn, some teachers are not as confident as they should be in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and the National Curriculum. Others fail to manage children's behaviour and learning effectively or consistently because of weaknesses in organisation, classroom management, and match of activities to what they want children to learn. The school is working hard to address this.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory: despite the good quality curriculum for children under five, there are weaknesses in the organisation and balance of the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2.
Provision for children with special educational needs	Satisfactory: children with special educational needs make steady progress in relation to their capabilities.
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good: these children have their needs well met.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good: spiritual, moral and cultural development are good and social development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its children	Good: the school cares well for its children.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. Parents find the staff open and approachable and the school is making positive efforts to maintain and improve communication with parents. The school provides a range of relevant information, including regular reports on children's progress and newsletters translated into home languages.

There are insufficient opportunities for children to learn and apply new skills in information technology (IT) and physical education (PE), which limit their progress. Organising literacy

and numeracy lessons in the mornings squeezes time and resources for other subjects and causes difficulties in timetabling in the use of the hall for example. The management of withdrawing children with special educational needs (SEN) from the class means they may miss important parts of some lessons.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent: there is a common purpose and determination to raise standards and improve teaching. The school has a clear strategy for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good: governors have a developing role in shaping the strategic direction of the school through their good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good: the school monitors and evaluates its effectiveness very well and has identified appropriate priorities for development.
The strategic use of resources	Very good: school priorities are supported by effective financial planning and action.

There are sufficient staff and satisfactory learning resources apart from IT where there are not enough modern computers and software for the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation is very good as are procedures for appraisal and staff development. The school is starting to apply the principles of best value, and work has been done to assess value for money.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour has improved.</li> <li>• The school is easily approached with questions or problems.</li> <li>• The school works closely with them.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Children like the school and make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The high turnover of staff.</li> <li>• PE: lack of provision and progress.</li> <li>• SEN provision and identification.</li> <li>• The amount of work children are expected to do at home.</li> <li>• The quality of school meals.</li> </ul>

The findings of the inspection indicate that most of the parents' and carers' views are accurate. However, the quality of SEN provision and identification is satisfactory and the school is working hard to improve the quality of school meals through regular negotiations with the catering company.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 The first set of comparative data available since amalgamation is the 1999 National Curriculum tests for the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. This showed that by the age of 7, standards attained by children were very low compared to the national average in reading and writing, and well below the national average in mathematics. By the age of 11, standards attained by children in English were well below the national average. They were above the national average in mathematics and broadly in line with standards nationally in science.
- 2 By the age of 7, standards were well below those of similar schools in reading and writing and broadly in line in mathematics. The number of children attaining the higher level 3 in the national tests or teacher assessments was broadly in line with similar schools in reading and science and above average in writing and mathematics. By the age of 11, standards attained by children were broadly in line with those of similar schools in English and well above in mathematics and science. The number of children attaining the higher level 5 was well above similar schools in mathematics and science and below average for English.
- 3 These results show a significant improvement over the standards achieved by the previous infant and junior schools, particularly when standards attained by the age of 11 are compared with those of other schools in the city of Southampton. In 1997, the junior school results put them 40<sup>th</sup> out of 40 in the city and 5<sup>th</sup> from the bottom of the national league table. In 1999 the school's position had risen to 16<sup>th</sup> out of 40 in the city.
- 4 Analysis of trends in standards from entry to the age of 11 shows the school is very successful in helping children to make progress overall. The most recent baseline data shows that children come into the school with very poor early learning and speaking and listening skills. When standards on entry are compared with all other schools in the city, the school's overall position is 45<sup>th</sup> out of 46. From this very low starting point, the Local Education Authority (LEA) analysis of the school's performance against LEA averages shows that, by the age of 7, children in the school are approximately seven months behind the average level in the progress they make. By the age of 11, children have made excellent progress and are approximately five months ahead of the LEA average level. These achievements are supported by the value-added data for the school, which shows the progress made between Key Stages 1 and 2 in English, mathematics and science is above that which could be expected, putting the school 5<sup>th</sup> out of a sample of 35 in the city and well above the LEA average.
- 5 However, there is significant difference in the achievements of boys and girls by the age of 11. On entry to the school, children are attaining similar levels. The gap widens from Key Stage 1 into Key Stage 2 when girls are more successful in the national tests overall. In 1999, boys' attainment by the age of 11 in English and science was well below that expected nationally and broadly in line in mathematics. By the age of 11, boys' progress is only approximately two months ahead of the LEA Key Stage 2 level, compared to girls who are approximately 10 months ahead.
- 6 The school has set challenging and appropriate targets for performance in 2000 in English, mathematics and science. In 1999 targets in English and mathematics were exceeded in both key stages and, despite below-average attainment currently in key

areas of the curriculum, progress is secure and the school is likely to achieve its targets. The absence in the school improvement plan of any detail regarding specific targets for boys is a weakness since this is an area of the school's work that needs to be improved.

- 7 The evidence from this inspection indicates that by the ages of 7 and 11 children's attainment is below that expected nationally in English, and IT. Children's writing and speaking and listening skills are unsatisfactory in both key stages and their attainment is below expectations in reading. Attainment in mathematics, including numeracy by the age of 7, is in line with expectations and higher than that expected by the age of 11. Children's attainment in science, art, geography, history and religious education (RE) and in the performing element of music is in line with that expected. There is not enough evidence to make a judgement about standards in PE.
- 8 Children start school with very limited abilities, particularly in the early skills of language. Although many make good overall progress during their first year in school, only a few meet the requirements of the desirable outcomes for children at five years of age. In both Key Stages 1 and 2, the evidence from the inspection shows that the school is likely to achieve its targets for this year in English, mathematics and science. Children with a special educational need make satisfactory progress and those with English as an additional language (EAL) make good progress overall. However, progress is not yet secure in all subjects in either key stage. This is linked to variations in the quality of teaching across the school within and between year groups, particularly in science. A lack of basic oracy and literacy skills also hinders children in making satisfactory or better progress. IT is given insufficient emphasis across the curriculum, and design and technology is at an early stage of development.
- 9 Throughout the school, children's attitudes, enthusiasm and interest towards school and their learning are good. This makes a positive contribution to the progress they make.

### **Children's attitudes, values and personal development**

- 10 The children in the reception classes have positive attitudes to school. They come into classes calmly and happily. Most children show good levels of independence and respond well to clear procedures and expectations. In a literacy session the children reacted enthusiastically when their teacher pretended not to know how to use the big book they were sharing.
- 11 Older children have good attitudes towards school. Children across all year groups enjoy coming to school and the majority enjoy their work and want to learn. In a Year 4 PE lesson the children worked hard to place themselves appropriately when practising ball skills. Many children are able to sustain concentration for reasonable periods of time and are keen to please their teacher. During a Year 2 handwriting lesson the children took pride in their own successes and that of their classmates.
- 12 Through the pre-inspection questionnaire, 30% of parents said they do not feel that behaviour in the school is good. However, the inspection team judges children's behaviour to be satisfactory. When teaching is good and lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all, children behave well in classrooms. When teaching is unsatisfactory, disruptive behaviour can surface quickly, children lose concentration and they tend to leave work unfinished. This results in a slower pace of work and unsatisfactory learning. Most children move around the school in a controlled manner and respond readily to the requests and instructions of teachers and classroom assistants. Children are generally polite and courteous to each other, to teachers and

other staff, as well as to visitors. They treat the resources they use with care. The school has very effective systems for identifying and dealing with bullying should it occur. There were 48 fixed-term exclusions from the school during the year prior to the inspection. The school does not use this sanction lightly and uses its procedures appropriately. Although there is no previous report for Bassett Green Primary School, the behaviour of the children in Key Stage 2 has greatly improved since the inspection of the junior school in November 1995.

- 13 The personal development of the children is satisfactory. Personal and social development are sensitively integrated into the under-fives curriculum and the children are being taught to demonstrate self-discipline. The older children generally form good relationships with other children and adults, and show tolerance for the work, ideas, beliefs and values of others. They are beginning to work well as individuals, in pairs or in small groups and are learning to be kind to each other, take turns and help their classmates. The School Council makes a positive contribution to the children's personal development. Children have too few opportunities to use the library for research and they display very little capacity for personal study skills using computers or setting up their own experiments and investigations. There are also very few opportunities provided for children to take responsibility or show initiative in the work of the school.
- 14 The level of attendance is unsatisfactory. The rate of authorised absence is well above the national average and, in the main, is due to children being taken out of school by parents during term time. Through the presentation of Star Attendance certificates, the school is working hard to encourage good attendance. Parents are reminded of their responsibility for their children's punctuality and attendance in newsletters but do not always ensure that their children's learning is not interrupted by absence.

## **HOW WELL ARE CHILDREN TAUGHT?**

- 15 Teaching is at least satisfactory in eight out of ten lessons (82%), and is good or very good in five lessons out of ten (49%). Teaching in two out of ten lessons (18%) is less than satisfactory and this is a weakness.
- 16 There is too much variation in the quality of teaching in different parts of the school and across year groups. This has a negative effect on equality of opportunity for some children and their ability to make progress in their learning, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- 17 In the reception classes teaching is never less than satisfactory and is good or very good in about seven out of ten lessons (71%). This has a very positive impact on how children learn and how they progress from very low starting points. In Key Stage 1 (infants), teaching is satisfactory or better in eight out of ten lessons (84%) and good or very good in five out of ten lessons (51%). However, one in six lessons (16%) is unsatisfactory and these occur in Year 2. In Key Stage 2 (juniors), teaching is satisfactory or better in just over three out of four lessons (77%) and good or very good in four out of ten lessons (43%). Teaching is unsatisfactory in two out of ten lessons (23%) and occurs across all year groups in the key stage.
- 18 Teaching in the reception classes is successful. Children learn well and make good progress from a very low base, including those who have a special educational need (SEN) or English as an additional language (EAL). They work at a satisfactory pace and apply effort and concentrate well. Good examples are seen in language and literacy lessons, where teaching is well planned to challenge and interest children in their own learning, and to develop their concentration and independence. This is achieved

through very good adult involvement and questioning, which also develops children's speaking and listening skills. Activities that are well matched to children's needs and planning meet the requirements of the curriculum.

- 19 Where teaching is good or better in Key Stage 1, the skills of numeracy and literacy are well developed and planning is good. Teachers make use of the national strategies to help children gain new knowledge, skills and understanding. Regular assessment is well used to help teachers and learning support assistants teach and support children effectively and sensitively, including those with SEN or EAL. Adults challenge children to develop their ideas and they begin to apply their basic skills effectively.
- 20 In Key Stage 2, there is some good and very good teaching where children are enabled to make significant and secure gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding, including those with SEN and EAL. Older juniors make up for lost time and gaps in their learning caused by disrupted education and poor experiences in the junior school prior to amalgamation. In lessons such as literacy and numeracy, teaching is well planned to ensure all children are challenged appropriately. Questions are well used to extend thinking and understanding: children are praised for their achievements and told what they need to do to improve further. Teachers work hard to raise children's self-esteem.
- 21 Extension groups for English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are effective in meeting the needs of the higher-attaining child, raising their levels of attainment and preparing them to take national tests. However, although the school has rightly identified the marked difference in achievement between girls and boys of all abilities, which widens as children move through the school, teachers' planning does not identify specific strategies and techniques to address these differences. Individual and group teaching of children with SEN in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, but less so in Key Stage 2. Learning support assistants generally give good support to teachers and children and some keep good records of children's successes or difficulties in tackling tasks set.
- 22 The unsatisfactory teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is caused by a number of linked weaknesses and reflects the very poor teaching which existed in the junior school prior to amalgamation, very necessary re-organisation, and current staffing and recruitment difficulties. The most significant weakness is in individual teacher's subject knowledge and understanding. They do not always have a good grasp of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies or the National Curriculum. This means they cannot put planning into practice as effectively as they should. They do not always select appropriate teaching strategies and techniques, or match the tasks and activities to what they want the children to learn. Where teachers lack subject knowledge, they do not always develop children's thinking and ideas effectively. Examples include a science lesson where children were not well supported in grasping a better understanding of evaporation and condensation.
- 23 Some teachers fail to manage children's behaviour and response effectively. Children try hard to please and conform but are sometimes confused by inconsistencies in teachers' response and expectations. In the poor lessons, unsatisfactory organisation and management mean children become reluctant to answer questions or participate as fully as they might. This has a negative effect on their learning and progress, particularly in the areas of speaking and listening.
- 24 In the unsatisfactory lessons, time is not well used and the pace is too slow. Teachers spend too long talking to children and delay moving to group-work activities unnecessarily. This results in children becoming restless and they find it difficult to maintain their interest. Occasionally, this leads to individual children losing interest

altogether and behaviour worsens. In these weaker lessons, learning support assistants are not always used effectively and some spend long periods listening to the teacher or 'policing' children's behaviour. Opportunities for them to make assessments of children's responses or to work with a variety of children are planned but do not always take place. These weaknesses and the use of time during the school day mean some lessons do not enable children to achieve appropriate levels or finish their work.

- 25 The teaching of mathematics is good overall in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2, although there is a significant percentage of good and very good teaching. Teaching in all aspects of English is satisfactory overall in both key stages, and over half of lessons are good or very good. Teaching is satisfactory overall in science although there is too great a variation in Key Stage 2. Teaching is satisfactory in all those subjects where a judgement could be made, except information technology where it is unsatisfactory because children have too few opportunities to learn new skills and apply their understanding. Teaching generally reflects the needs of the full ability range, although more could be done to match the work or task to the needs of lower-attaining children, and tackle the under-performance of boys.

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

- 26 The provision for children under five is good. It provides a range of activities which prepare children well for starting the National Curriculum. Detailed planning informed by regular day-to-day assessment, ensures that all children have continuity and progression in their learning. Although classroom space is limited, opportunities are made for collaborative activities and imaginative play. Whilst play is clearly valued, more could be made of its potential as a vehicle for learning in other subjects.
- 27 In Key Stages 1 and 2 the curriculum is broadly based and, to a great extent, balanced. There is however, insufficient provision of IT and PE. This limits the opportunities for children to achieve high standards and make better progress. The curriculum promotes the intellectual and spiritual development of children and generally prepares them well for secondary education. It fully meets the Code of Practice for special educational needs. Sex education and attention to drug misuse are well covered through an effective programme for personal, social and health education.
- 28 The curriculum is currently being reviewed and subjects are at different stages in this process. The whole-school curriculum plan has been well constructed by the curriculum manager and subjects allotted specific time allocations. These have been weighted significantly in favour of English and mathematics, according to the school's curriculum priorities. In some instances, the provision for foundation subjects is too limited. Whilst it is entirely appropriate to 'block' some subjects, such as geography, history and design and technology, PE should be taught regularly and IT used frequently throughout the week to support and extend learning in other subjects, as well as to develop IT skills. Locating numeracy and literacy lessons entirely in the mornings, squeezes both time and resources for other subjects, and causes difficulties in timetabling lessons of sufficient length for subjects such as PE, music and drama in the hall and music room.
- 29 The design of the curriculum is very good. However, there are exceptions, such as English, PE and IT where policies and planning are not yet adequately developed to support teachers. Planning in many subjects is of a high quality, as in religious education (RE), mathematics and art, where it supports the work of teachers and the progress of children well. Most teachers have good subject knowledge in nearly all



subjects and appropriate training and advice are given when problems are identified. The school has effective strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy but there is a need to ensure better opportunities are provided for writing outside the literacy hour and applying numeracy skills across the curriculum, for example. More could be done to ensure that learning support assistant time is planned and focused in lesson plans for all subjects.

- 30 Provision for children with SEN is satisfactory, but regular withdrawal from lessons means children do not have the same access to learning and activities as others and are not always properly re-integrated into lessons when they return to class. The special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) manages procedures for tracking progress effectively.
- 31 The curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors such as theatre groups and musicians as well as extra-curricular activities, which all have a positive impact on children's learning. The school makes good use of the local area, for both geographical and historical studies, as well as making visits to the local church. Visits have also been made to London, Avon Tyrrell Study Centre and to see a production of Macbeth at the Nuffield Theatre. Children also receive regular football coaching from local football association coaches.
- 32 The school is very successful in promoting the spiritual, moral and cultural development of its children. It provides satisfactory opportunities for social development.
- 33 Spiritual development is good. Collective worship follows a set structure which incorporates the principles of reverence, reflection and response. Time is devoted to all three on a regular basis. Collective worship is also used to celebrate the success of children, which reflects the ethos of the school and furthers understanding of the religious traditions found within the community and the United Kingdom. Within the curriculum, spiritual development is fostered most particularly in subjects such as art, RE, literacy and music. Opportunities are created for children to make a personal response, to reflect on their own values and to encourage respect for those of other people. Children's contributions are always valued in class and in assemblies. Children have a strong sense of belonging. Staff often convey an enthusiasm for learning and love for a subject. They highlight opportunities for awe and wonder in the way they tell a story or convey information about the world. Good examples were seen in a Year 6 class assembly about creation stories, a Year 1 literacy lesson when children were encouraged to empathise with the characters in a storm and a Year 6 science lesson when children considered the wonder of creation when examining seeds.
- 34 Moral development for children is good. All adults in the school are quick to use opportunities to demonstrate right and wrong. Children are often set behavioural targets as part of their weekly targets. Class codes of conduct are highly visible and frequently referred to. Most important is the modelling by teachers to the children of respectful, kindly, courteous behaviour.
- 35 Although social development of children is satisfactory, in that they are taught to share, take turns and co-operate well, opportunities are lacking for children to take on a wider range of responsibilities within school. Also, there are too few occasions in lessons when children are able to make their own work choices, choose their own methods or materials or be more independent.

- 36 Cultural development of children is good and reflects the values of the school well. The national culture is reflected in the curriculum and in trips to visit cultural heritage sites, such as the National Gallery in London. Opportunities to study local culture are more patchy and whilst the local church is visited, an opportunity was not taken to visit the local Hindu temple, whilst studying Hinduism. However, opportunities to appreciate national and local cultural diversity are provided in many subjects and are evident in the range of music, literacy texts, library books and RE texts available. This is most notable in art, where a wide range of cultural traditions is incorporated into the curriculum to develop artistic skills. Examples include Benin bronzes, Aboriginal painting, reflective writing on Renoir's 'Umbrellas' and large wooden sculptures made with an artist in residence to adorn their own school grounds. There is multi-lingual labelling at relevant locations throughout the school. A significant strength is in using the international and intercultural experiences of the staff themselves and their sharing of experiences with the children. The school has good links with local churches. It is working to develop business links and makes good use of its positive relationship with the local secondary school, using staff expertise to deliver INSET on design and technology, for example.

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

- 37 The school's arrangements to ensure children's welfare, health and safety are good. There are good relationships throughout the school and children feel confident that there are sympathetic adults to whom they can go with problems. All staff work hard to maintain positive relationships, they know the children well and are able to monitor personal development both formally and informally, providing information on children's likes and dislikes, attitudes and hobbies, for example.
- 38 The school's procedures for measuring attainment and assessing the children's academic achievements are good. The acting deputy headteacher undertakes extensive analysis of data, produced from the results of National Curriculum tests and the school's own testing week every June, to set targets and raise standards at whole-school level. Targets for the end-of-Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments have been agreed with the local authority and targets are also set for individuals and groups of children throughout the school. Assessment opportunities are identified at the planning stage and the provision for assessment information to be used to inform curriculum planning is good. Detailed analysis is also made of the attainment levels and subsequent needs of children with English as an additional language. Throughout the school the day-to-day marking of work is good. Some teachers provide very useful critical analysis of what children have been doing to challenge them and help them improve their work. However, the school does not do enough to address the weaknesses in the attainment of boys in teaching or in planning.
- 39 The school has an appropriate health and safety policy and staff are vigilant to health and safety matters with suitable arrangements for first aid and qualified first-aiders on site. The school has good arrangements in place for child protection issues.
- 40 There are good procedures for the monitoring of attendance, absence and punctuality. The school monitors attendance registers every day via a computerised system to ensure that instances of unexplained absence are promptly followed up. The school receives regular support from the Education Welfare Service. There are effective procedures for encouraging good behaviour through the behaviour policy, which includes a system of rewards and sanctions. However, it is not implemented consistently by all teachers. Good behaviour and effort are rewarded through praise, merits and the work of 'Stars of the Week' is displayed in the hall. Parents are happy that the school is helping their children become mature and responsible.

- 41 The children with statements of SEN have their annual reviews conducted on time and realistic and achievable targets are drawn up. However, Individual Education Plans (IEPs) are of variable quality, sometimes with the same targets being repeated for a second term, or with targets that are far too general. The school works well with the support service for children with EAL to monitor and assess children's needs and progress. The governing body is properly involved in the exclusion process, which is a sanction the school does not use lightly.

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

- 42 The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents, who are supportive of the new school. In response to the pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting, many parents and carers indicate that they have satisfactory views of the school. Most parents (91%) would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems and 71% feel that the school works closely with them. A significant number of parents (32%) do not feel that they are kept well informed about how their children are getting on. However, the school uses a number of appropriate ways to inform parents about the progress their children are making. In the autumn term, parents are invited to meet their child's new class teacher and discuss the curriculum for that term. In the summer term, work display evenings are held when parents can see their children's work and talk to teachers if they wish. The headteacher and teachers are also willing to meet parents at other times. During the spring term, the school is introducing parent/child/teacher conferences when progress and targets will be shared. Annual reports to parents clearly inform parents of how well their children are achieving in English, mathematics and science and how they can improve their performance in these subjects. The brief reports for parents, which are produced in the autumn term, show children's attitudes in each subject and are helpful indicators of how a child is settling into their new class.
- 43 There are some parents (32%) who do not feel that their children get the right amount of work to do at home. In consultation with parents a homework policy has been produced and the school expects teachers to set homework regularly. This happens in most classes.
- 44 Regular newsletters keep parents up to date with the day-to-day life of the school, many of which are translated into other languages to ensure communication between home and all families is possible. Year-group topic grids are sent home and the prospectus also provides information on the curriculum. Parents are invited to class assemblies and actively encouraged to be involved in the life of the school, although not all have returned signed home/school agreements.
- 45 Parents of children with SEN are informed appropriately of any concerns and the SENCO ensures that parents are regularly informed of their children's progress and given any information they may need, through informal discussions at the beginning or end of a school day.

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

- 46 Leadership and management are strengths of the school. The headteacher demonstrates excellent leadership, and management of the school is carried out very well by the headteacher and senior staff. There is an excellent partnership between the headteacher and the acting deputy headteacher. Teaching and support staff are committed to promoting the school's positive and supportive ethos leading to children's positive attitudes and behaviour in class and about the school. Following

amalgamation, the school has been successful in establishing good relationships, improving children's behaviour and raising their self-esteem, and these continue to be key priorities. There is a shared determination to raise standards and there has been a significant improvement in results, particularly at Key Stage 2. This has been achieved through monitoring, evaluation and targeted training to improve the quality of teaching. However, weaknesses in the quality of teaching remain. These include gaps in individual teachers' subject knowledge, some teachers not selecting the most effective activities or ways of teaching, and instances of poor time management and ineffective use of support staff. Although the school is aware of the differences in the achievements of boys and girls, teaching staff do not use specific strategies to involve boys more fully in their learning.

- 47 Senior teaching staff carry out their delegated roles and responsibilities effectively. In particular, the acting deputy headteacher gives a strong lead to colleagues in improving classroom practice and planning thoroughly. She models very good teaching and is working hard to improve standards of teaching and learning across the school. Other staff work well in teams and as individuals to plan and develop curriculum subjects and the school is moving forward in many areas at an appropriate pace. However, the relative inexperience of a significant number of staff and difficulties with recruitment mean some teachers have too great a responsibility. The school also lacks some specialist knowledge and this is having a negative impact on standards and the ability of the school to improve further. This is most apparent in literacy where senior teaching staff share the role of literacy manager in addition to their other responsibilities.
- 48 The school improvement plan reflects the difficult situation prior to amalgamation and the need to establish a new school team and community focused on raising standards and improving learning opportunities for all children. The core elements of raising standards, leadership and management and improving children's behaviour and attitudes (emotional literacy), and the specific targets relating to these are understood and shared by staff. The headteacher has established effective monitoring procedures through classroom observation, sampling teachers' planning and analysis of numerical targets and pupil performance data. There is also good support for newly qualified teachers. These arrangements are part of an effective overall strategy to address identified weaknesses in teaching that is linked to intensive support from the LEA and teacher appraisal and target setting. However, the school improvement plan is not yet an effective tool for measuring best value because it lacks accurate costings and specific success criteria based on outcomes for children.
- 49 The governing body of the new school is developing its role as a critical friend and has established an effective structure to manage its work. For example, the finance committee has ensured systematic financial management linked to key priorities such as improving children's behaviour and raising the quality of teaching. Systems to ensure governors get a monthly view of expenditure and can forecast likely costs are securely in place. Governors know the school well and work closely with the headteacher and key staff in providing clear educational direction. They share the commitment to raising standards and establishing a supportive and positive environment for learning. They undertake their statutory duties effectively and are taking more and more responsibility for influencing strategic development and communicating effectively with parents. However, the governing body has yet to ensure the provision for IT meets statutory requirements.
- 50 There is a sufficient number of teachers to cover the demands of the curriculum. Most are well qualified in the primary phase, though since the amalgamation of the two schools, some teachers who are now responsible for a different age range are

experiencing difficulty. Furthermore, not all teachers are experienced in the Programme of Study for English, nor are they fully trained in literacy and numeracy, which is having a negative effect on learning. Support staff are generally well qualified but not always deployed efficiently, sometimes being used as minders for children who misbehave. Consequently, their role in assessment during whole-class sessions is not always carried out which prevents progress being recorded. The role of the learning support assistants in helping children with special educational needs is usually carried out well. The SENCO has responsibilities which allow little time for her to fully meet the role of improving, managing, monitoring and directing the work of support staff and their utilisation by teachers.

- 51 Procedures for appraisal and staff development are very good. All staff are given an annual professional review and both their personal and professional training needs are met in line with priorities identified in the school improvement plan. Staff bring their new expertise back to the school to aid further development. Induction procedures for all new staff are very good. Newly qualified teachers are allocated an induction tutor and are given support for all activities – inside and outside the classroom - as well as time to follow courses outside school. They do not always receive complete support from their experienced year partners, although their induction tutor is always available.
- 52 Accommodation is very good. The junior school was completely refurbished for the amalgamation, and its imaginative design now provides for children from 4 -11 years. All classrooms have access to the wide, carpeted corridor which is useful for withdrawing groups during literacy and numeracy, and provides areas for cooking and art. The two school halls allow separate dining, keeping the other free for lunchtime activities, such as the dance club. The well-stocked library is situated at the end of a corridor and is not easily accessible to all children. The music room, placed in a similar position, ensures that sound disturbance is kept to a minimum. Outside is a very attractive wild area, which is used well for environmental studies, such as pond-dipping. Children have been given a sense of pride in their new school by planting daffodils in this area. A wood sculptor has helped children design and make figures of birds and animals, some of which are displayed appropriately in the wild area. This involvement of a professional artist also enhances children's self-esteem. Children under five do not yet have their own play area. The re-development of the grounds will provide a good range of new facilities including sports pitches and an amphitheatre.
- 53 Resources are mostly satisfactory. These are very good in RE, with many artefacts from all faiths. When the two schools amalgamated, a good stock of science resources was pooled. Resources are good in history and geography and satisfactory in most other subjects. However, there are inadequate resources in all year groups for IT and music at Key Stage 2. There is insufficient modern hardware and software to meet the needs of the IT curriculum and not enough variety in the range of musical instruments available to children.
- 54 There is insufficient use of IT to support learning across the curriculum. The very old hardware has prohibited the purchase of suitable software. Older children have few opportunities to use the computer to further their studies, particularly in literacy and numeracy, although Year 6 children receive some useful tuition at a local business training centre for half an hour per week. Although there are not enough CD-ROMs to enhance learning, children have some opportunities to use the Internet for research of a simple nature. Younger children use tapes and the computer for talking stories.
- 55 The school plans expenditure and the budget well to reflect priorities identified through self-evaluation. The over-spend in the financial year 1998-1999 was properly agreed

with the local authority to cover for long-term sickness. Good use is made of school and LEA data on baseline assessment, end-of-key stage results and value added and the school has a clear understanding of likely future attainment by children. It uses this information to set challenging and appropriate targets and plan spending. It is starting to apply the principles of best value appropriately, such as using a £50,000 under-spend inherited from the former junior school to improve accommodation and basic resources, and the use of intensive support funding from the LEA to improve teaching and learning. The school uses questionnaires to consult with parents on major issues, such as their views on amalgamation and school uniform. Good use is made of technology to support the administration of systems, such as recording and monitoring attendance.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to enable the school to continue to improve, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

Improve the quality of teaching to ensure that all children receive equal opportunities in their learning and achieve higher standards by:

- helping teachers develop secure subject knowledge and understanding of the full curriculum (*paragraphs: 22, 29, 47, 80, 81, 92*)
- providing teachers with training in practical teaching strategies for organising learning, making the best use of other adults, managing difficult behaviour and raising the attainment of boys (*paragraphs: 16, 21-25, 29, 87, 92*)
- continuing rigorous and regular monitoring and evaluation of teaching to include feedback and target setting for individual teachers. (*paragraphs: 46, 95*)

Raise the standards achieved in English by children in both key stages by:

- developing a focused strategy to increase the rate of progress in speaking and listening across the school (*paragraphs: 67, 72*)
- ensuring teachers are confident in using the literacy strategy. In particular, giving children better opportunities for extended writing and more relevant and challenging tasks which are matched to children's levels of attainment and their interests (*paragraphs: 21, 22, 70*)
- giving children better opportunities to use and further develop their oracy and literacy skills in all areas of the curriculum as they currently do in art. (*paragraphs: 21, 67-69, 72*)

Ensure information technology is developed so all children have access to the full programme of study and improve the standards of their work by:

- providing access to new hardware and software matched to the demands of the curriculum and the needs and interests of the children (*paragraphs: 53, 54*)
- deciding how these resources will be deployed to improve quality and standards (*paragraphs: 98, 99*)
- ensuring all staff have the necessary skills and confidence to use new technology and teach IT effectively. (*paragraphs: 81, 96, 98*)

Ensure the length, organisation and timetabling of the school day enable children to better develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in the foundation subjects by:

- considering a more flexible arrangement for the way in which literacy and numeracy lessons are timetabled (*paragraphs: 28, 87, 105*)
- clarifying the time available for teaching in each key stage and deciding how resources are most effectively timetabled to improve quality and standards (*paragraphs: 28, 45*)
- providing more time for physical education and the use of IT across the curriculum to ensure children make better progress and achieve higher standards. (*paragraphs: 28, 54*)

Improve the rate of attendance by:

- continuing to promote and encourage regular attendance and children's positive attitudes towards school (*paragraphs: 14, 40*)
- working closely with parents to emphasise the disadvantages for children's learning when frequent holidays are taken during the school term. (*paragraphs: 14*)

In addition, the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

Increase the opportunities for children to take on greater responsibility and gain independence in their learning by:

- developing children's skills in independent research, such as library and Internet use (*paragraphs: 13, 80*)
- planning for the use of research skills in the classroom and across the curriculum (*paragraphs: 13, 76, 90, 95*)
- giving children greater opportunities to be involved in decision making during lessons, activities, and in the life of the school. (*paragraphs: 13, 35, 76, 80*)

Ensure full and equal access to the curriculum for children with special educational needs by:

- improving the re-integration of children into lessons when they return from a withdrawal session (*paragraphs: 30*)
- improving the quality of IEPs to ensure targets are SMART - specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-related. (*paragraphs: 41*)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	97
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and children	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	24	25	33	14	3	1

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

### Information about the school's children

Children on the school's roll	Y R – Y 7
Number of children on the school's roll (FTE for part-time children)	397
Number of full-time children eligible for free school meals	158

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y R – Y 7
Number of children with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of children on the school's special educational needs register	172

English as an additional language	No of children
Number of children with English as an additional language	33

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of children
Children who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	78
Children who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	63

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.8
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 children in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	36	39	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	12	26
	Girls	30	23	33
	Total	44	35	59
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	59	47	79
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	26	26
	Girls	31	30	26
	Total	44	56	52
Percentage of children at NC level 2 or above	School	59	75	69
	National	82	86	87

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Number of registered children in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	33	19	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	23	23
	Girls	15	16	18
	Total	30	39	41
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	58	75	79
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of children at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	24	18
	Girls	16	18	26
	Total	33	42	44
Percentage of children at NC level 4 or above	School	63	81	85
	National	68	69	75

### ***Ethnic background of children***

	No of children
Black – Caribbean heritage	4
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	7
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	6
Chinese	0
White	313
Any other minority ethnic group	10

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	46	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y 7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of children per qualified teacher	24.4
Average class size	27.9

#### **Education support staff: Y R – Y 7**

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1030

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	98-99
	£
Total income	835636
Total expenditure	906770
Expenditure per pupil	2273
Balance brought forward from previous year	67061
Balance carried forward to next year	-4073

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	301
Number of questionnaires returned	46

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	49	2	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	43	12	2	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	45	18	12	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	44	20	12	0
The teaching is good.	39	43	8	4	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	31	27	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	26	4	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	45	47	4	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	36	38	18	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	43	39	8	4	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	53	6	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	30	28	22	8	12

### Other issues raised by parents

#### POSITIVE:

Behaviour has improved. The school is easily approached with questions or problems. The school works closely with them. The school is well led and managed. Children like the school and make good progress.

#### NEGATIVE:

The high turnover of staff. PE: lack of provision and progress. The amount of work children are expected to do at home. SEN provision and identification. The quality of school meals.

## **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**

- 56 The school carries out a careful analysis of children's capabilities on entry using the Local Education Authority's baseline assessment. Results show that when the children enter school their attainment is well below expectations. Very few children attain scores above the average level on any aspect. By the end of the reception year, although children make good progress overall, few have met the desirable outcomes for children's learning. This is primarily due to their poor language development. The curriculum is carefully planned using the six areas of learning. These are personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics, understanding and knowledge of the world, creative development and physical development.
- 57 Many children have poor social skills on entry. In the reception classes they learn to work independently and to co-operate with other children. The majority arrives happily each morning and settles well to the planned activities. They use a planning board to select activities and some children record what they have done by writing their name on the board. Although many lack confidence and have low self-esteem they respond well to the secure, friendly environment provided.
- 58 The children's vocabulary is limited and many have delayed language development. Through sensitive teaching, they listen carefully to each other in circle time and many are developing the confidence to speak up when it is their turn. They enjoy looking at books, recognise that print carries meaning and some are beginning to read simple words. They join in rhymes and are beginning to recognise initial letter sounds. In their emergent writing, they use some letter shapes and the higher-attainers produce letter strings and write their names unaided.
- 59 In mathematics they recognise and use numbers to 10 and are familiar with larger numbers from their everyday life. They draw the correct numbers in a set and are beginning to record numbers for sets and show awareness of addition.
- 60 Children explore and select materials and equipment. They use their developing skills of cutting and sticking to make textured fantasy creatures. Their limited vocabulary makes it difficult for them to talk about the world around them. They use computer programmes to support their reading.
- 61 During physical education (PE) lessons children develop their skills of throwing and catching. They join in class games, listen carefully and take their turn. Opportunities for outdoor activities are limited. Although the school has a satisfactory range of outside play equipment it is not used as often as it should be as there is no suitable space attached to the reception classrooms where children can play outside during the day.
- 62 The school's art curriculum ensures that reception children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their creative skills. In their current work on materials they are being given opportunities to explore colour and texture.
- 63 The quality of teaching in the reception classes is a strength of the school. It is always satisfactory, and is often good or very good. The teachers have a good understanding of the needs of young children and they are sensitive, caring and enthusiastic. This enthusiasm ensures that children are interested in their work and well motivated. Lessons are well planned and carefully matched to the academic and emotional needs of the children. Teachers provide an interesting range of practical, firsthand activities

and talk to the children about the purposes of their work to ensure they are clear about what they are expected to do. Their questions are well focused and ensure that all children participate at their own level.

## ENGLISH

- 64 The poor language and literacy skills identified through the baseline assessment have a negative impact on the children's progress in Key Stage 1. By the age of 7, attainment in the national tests, and also when compared with other similar schools across the country, is well below average. By the age of 11, attainment in the national tests is again well below the average although, when compared with other similar schools, standards are broadly average. Trends over the last few years, both before and since amalgamation of the infant and junior schools, show that by the ages of 7 and 11 there has been a steady improvement in overall standards.
- 65 There is a marked difference between the attainment of boys and girls in both key stages and boys' attainment is significantly lower than that of girls. Although there is a slight difference between the two on entry, the gap widens by the end of the infants and remains unchanged throughout the juniors.
- 66 Although attainment is below national expectations in two-thirds of lessons seen during the inspection, standards gradually improve from the low baseline on entry as the children move through the school. The school is likely to meet and may even surpass the targets set for the next tests at the end of Key Stage 2.
- 67 Lack of basic oracy and literacy skills prevents many children from making satisfactory progress. Their speaking and listening skills are unsatisfactory in both key stages. They have a narrow range of vocabulary and find it difficult to express their ideas. Many children do not have the confidence to take part in discussions. However, in those lessons where children are given appropriate opportunities and where teachers are good at developing children's self-esteem and confidence better progress is made. For example, in the plenary sessions for a small number of literacy lessons, children are encouraged to reflect on and talk about what they have learnt during the lesson or to make presentations to the class. Year 6 children articulate what they have learnt in religious education (RE), geography and history using subject-specific language.
- 68 In the infants, children make reasonable progress in reading. However, standards by the end of the key stage are below national expectations. Although they enjoy reading, the children lack confidence and read with little expression. They are beginning to use their developing phonic knowledge to decode unknown words. Children continue to make reasonable progress in the juniors but only the higher-attaining children are meeting national expectations. As in the infants, although they enjoy reading they often lack confidence. Their reading lacks expression and they do not correct themselves when they read a word incorrectly, even if what they have read does not make sense. Children enjoy both fiction and non-fiction books, including poetry and play scripts. They have favourite authors and can identify familiar features in their books. The school encourages children and parents to share books at home and children take books home regularly.
- 69 Standards in writing are unsatisfactory throughout the school. Too much of the children's written work is based on inappropriate worksheets, with little opportunity for extended writing or writing for a purpose. Their work is careless and often unfinished. At all levels, handwriting is untidy and poorly formed. In the infants only the higher-attaining children are able to use full stops and capital letters correctly and

common words are often mis-spelt. In the juniors, children do not use punctuation correctly and spelling is poor. Children are given little opportunity to develop their literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum. Although children sometimes demonstrate understanding orally in lessons, they are unable to present their ideas in writing. The only exception is in art, where children's written responses to paintings show that they are capable of satisfactory work. Their writing is well presented and neat, and they are able to express their thoughts and feelings about the paintings.

- 70 In both key stages teaching is satisfactory or better in eight out of ten lessons. Over half of these are good or very good. In Key Stage 2, over a third are very good. However, teaching in a significant number of lessons across the school is unsatisfactory. In the better lessons, teachers have good subject knowledge, their presentations are lively and interesting, and lessons move at a good pace. They manage children's behaviour well and keep them interested, involved and motivated with activities, which are well matched to their academic and personal needs. The purpose of lessons is shared with the children who are then encouraged to reflect on what they have learnt. In the unsatisfactory lessons the planned activities are undemanding and fail to engage children's interest. Teachers spend too long managing low level disruptions. Consequently, children become bored and disinterested, more disruptions occur and time is wasted.
- 71 The children behave well in lessons where teaching is good. They join in with enthusiasm and work sensibly and quietly when required. When given appropriate opportunities they co-operate well and help each other. In too many lessons children find it difficult to settle and spend too much time chattering. This escalates when teachers are over-directive and do not use the most effective strategies to manage difficult behaviour.
- 72 The school is at an early stage in developing a curriculum for English. The literacy hour is planned using the National Literacy Strategy. The school is piloting the use of a commercial scheme of work over the next two terms. However, assessment and record keeping systems for all aspects of English are not yet fully in place. The school is aware of the need to improve the children's oracy skills and is developing speaking and listening through drama. The co-ordinator for drama has already produced useful guidelines for drama lessons, even though she has only been in post a short time. The school is currently without a subject leader, so English is being managed by the headteacher, and acting deputy. They both have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. A considerable amount of work has been done since amalgamation to address the issues. This includes in-service training for staff and demonstration literacy lessons by the headteacher.
- 73 Since amalgamation many new resources have been purchased for the teaching of English. The school is building up a satisfactory range of reading books, which include fiction and non fiction books. They have also purchased a series of resource books for teachers. The library is adequate but not easily accessible by all children for independent study.

## MATHEMATICS

- 74 Mathematics is a strength of the school. In the 1999 tests, standards were just below the national average by the age of 7 and above by the age of 11. However, when compared to similar schools nationally, children aged 7 attained expected standards and those aged 11 achieved standards much higher than expected. For the most part, these results are reflected in the standards seen in classes during the week of the inspection. As opportunities for mathematical investigation and problem solving are more recent additions to the curriculum, standards in these are less secure than in number, shape, measures and data handling. Children with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in mathematics, as do those children who have English as an additional language. Across the school, with the exception of Year 6 children, the higher-attaining children are not sufficiently challenged. Over the last three years, overall progress in this subject has been outstanding.
- 75 Infant children learn to count and order numbers up to 20, count in twos, tens and fives, add and subtract numbers with up to two digits, recognise regular two-dimensional shapes and begin to learn to tell the time. Junior children generally calculate accurately and have a sound grasp of number facts. They recognise and extend number patterns and sequences, have a sound knowledge of place value and use tables and charts to record and interrogate data. The oldest children are able to measure precisely, using graduated weighing scales and the most able among them confidently create their own 'loop' quiz about measurement facts. Although the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) has made a positive impact in the school, there is still too much of the work which involves children completing commercially produced worksheets, and this inhibits the development of their skills in setting out and presenting their own calculations.
- 76 The teaching of mathematics is sound overall, but ranges from very good to very poor. Teaching in infant classes is satisfactory in 80% of lessons seen, and 60% of lessons are very good. In junior classes, 73% of teaching is satisfactory or better, and 45% of lessons are good or very good. Good lessons are exemplified by secure subject knowledge and well-planned lessons in which all the elements are closely linked and tasks are closely matched to the abilities of the children. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, teachers lack adequate class control, and are either too high or too low in their expectations for the children, so work is poorly matched to their needs and abilities. The majority of children are enabled to apply effort to their mathematics and concentrate well, although their production of work is not always as fast as it could be. Children are not given enough opportunity to make decisions about their own work, its organisation and its presentation within the numeracy hour. This means that they are slower to develop the skills needed in problem solving and investigating work. There is high quality training for teachers in mathematics, led by the subject leader. Although most teachers understand and fully implement the NNS, and planning and teacher knowledge of the subject are good overall, individual teachers lack understanding and experience of the NNS. There is insufficient evidence of numeracy skills being extended in other areas of the curriculum.
- 77 Children have a very positive attitude to the subject and are enthusiastic contributors to lessons. Both boys and girls are keen to answer questions and take pride in what they accomplish.
- 78 Mathematics is extremely well managed by an efficient and enthusiastic subject leader. The subject is a high priority in the school improvement plan and this has had a significant effect on standards in the school. Teaching is monitored, the subject is well



resourced and teachers and children are well supported by an effective recording and tracking system. The school is likely to achieve the challenging targets which it has set.

## SCIENCE

- 79 When compared with similar schools, the 1999 national test results show that attainment at Levels 4 and 5 was well above average by the age of 11. This shows a great improvement over the results achieved by the previous junior school. Results of teacher assessments for 7-year-olds show that attainment was below average. In both key stages, girls performed better than boys. This was particularly so in Key Stage 2. During the inspection, standards in the two Year 6 classes were noticeably different. In one class, children's achievement is average, in the other achievement is below average. The standard of children's written work since the beginning of the year is remarkably low in both classes. Verbally, however, many children show above-average understanding. For example in a question and answer session, Year 6 children showed knowledge of the structure and function of the human circulatory system and the parts of flowering plants commensurate with above-average knowledge and understanding for their age. However, the general standard of literacy is an impediment to their progress. Standards are raised in Year 6 by the provision of a revision and extension course after school in which the higher attainers are given help with subject knowledge and understanding, and insight into examination techniques to enable them to reach a higher level. This takes place across approximately one third of the year. Results in end-of-Key Stage 2 tests have risen dramatically since the introduction of this course, and on the evidence of the extension workshop seen, the school is likely to achieve its targets for this year.
- 80 The standard of work seen throughout the school is overall just satisfactory, although often dependent upon the expertise of the teacher. Where a teacher has good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject, this motivates the children well, as seen, for example, in a lesson in which children were making parachutes in order to test the effect of air resistance on small and large canopies as they fell. The brisk introduction brought them quickly back to the point they reached at the end of the previous lesson, and the pace allowed no time to slacken their efforts to meet the teacher's deadline for parachute testing. Children were keen to make this a fair test and the teacher managed this very well through very good pupil management and organisation of the way in which timing of the parachute descent was to be measured. They learned that air slows down the parachute by producing an upward force to balance gravity. Children in other classes, however, were not often well motivated by their teachers, some of whom do not have sufficient scientific knowledge to challenge the children adequately. For example, emphasising the process of testing fairly and requiring the children to write up their findings in a structured, and too laboured way. This results in children getting bored and misbehaving. In Year 5, children spent their science lesson watching the teacher boil a kettle so that the water turned to steam. They then watched her write up the account of this on the board, thus missing the opportunity to see condensation and to discuss the water cycle in nature. Towards the end of the lesson, children reluctantly copied the teacher's account into their books. Many did not finish, nor did they fully understand the point of the exercise. Teachers do not allow children the freedom to work out their own ideas. Even young children spend a long time listening to the teacher talking, as exemplified by a Key Stage 1 lesson, when they were given a lengthy introduction before investigating and testing their own ideas on how objects could be made to move.
- 81 The quality of children's learning is entirely dependent on the teaching they receive. Whilst there are many good teachers, three out of eight lessons seen in Key Stage 2 were unsatisfactory to poor, and two were very good showing too wide a range for

learning to be consistent. Whilst teachers in corresponding year groups plan to cover the same material, the activities are not always consistent between classes. There is also some inconsistency about appropriate levels of work. Some Year 4 work, for example, was above that in Year 5. Expertise in teaching scientific skills, particularly those related to investigations, is often very limited, with the result that the processes of investigating by making a fair test, tabulating results and drawing conclusions are often given prominence to the extent that the focus for the investigation is neglected. Teachers do, however, emphasise scientific vocabulary as a matter of course. Information technology is not used sufficiently to aid learning. Although children have access to the Internet and use it to research gases, for example, this is of too general a nature. All children are engaged in finding the same piece of information, indicating they are not independent users yet. There is little evidence of information technology elsewhere in science, for example data handling and the use of sensors to monitor the course of investigations.

- 82 The scheme of work is taken from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) document, and the appropriate modules are allocated to each year group. These are well resourced, with materials being stored in specific module boxes ready for use. At the moment, however, the scheme still has to be adapted fully to the school's purpose. The subject leader has only recently taken up the post following the amalgamation and she has already satisfactorily audited the resources, devised an appropriate action plan, and set into motion the effective mental and oral science sessions which enable children to gain scientific knowledge quickly. She has not yet had the time to monitor progression across the school, nor to ensure that the prescribed assessment is taking place. As she is infant trained, she is making every effort to develop her knowledge and understanding of work in Key Stage 2 and particularly that concerned with raising standards.

## **ART**

- 83 There was limited opportunity to observe art being taught during the inspection. Evidence was gained from children's work on display, teachers' planning and samples of work. Standards in art are satisfactory with children making good progress throughout the school. They work in a range of materials including paints, pastels, and clay.
- 84 The children's work in art makes a good contribution to their spiritual development and cultural understanding. They are given opportunities to respond to a range of art from different cultures and times. Infant children describe what they see and develop arguments to support their ideas. Some of the best written work seen is in response to works of art. For example, in infant children's written responses to a Faith Ringgold painting of a wedding, there is evidence of them discussing the painting and being able to give reasons for their opinions. In the juniors, children's written work about the effect of the use of fruit and vegetables by Arcimboldo is of a higher than usual standard.
- 85 Children use sketchbooks to experiment with different media and to make sketches of natural and made objects. They identify visual elements such as line, tone, pattern and texture. A whole-school display shows the progression made in drawing figures from reception to Year 6.
- 86 The subject leader has been in post for less than a year. In that time a good framework for the teaching of art has been developed, which details the skills to be taught in each year and with links to appropriate works of art. The framework also contains detailed lesson plans. The curricular experiences provided in art are a strength of the school.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 87 No design and technology lessons were seen. The subject is very new in the amalgamated school, but the subject leader has good vision for its development, and has been working with the local authority to implement the development plan. Assessment and recording are also at an early stage of development and are being adhered to. Only one project has so far been carried out using the QCA scheme: making a torch in Year 4. This was well done as a first attempt. Children had examined commercial torches, decided how they were made and with which materials. All made their own torches, and evaluated them through a questionnaire on purposes. Satisfactory use was made of circuit work from science, as well as many other elements of the design process, though there was little individuality in the end product. Children in Year 2 have undertaken some practical tasks to aid their understanding of wheels and axles. Many are adept at constructing vehicles from kits in their free play-time. Many of the design skills are enhanced by the high quality of art work which is a strength of the school. However, there are currently too few opportunities in the timetable for children to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in this subject.
- 88 Each class has designed and made an attractive panel for the One World Quilt, which is colourfully designed and carefully stitched, using appropriate textiles. Children enjoy having their work displayed, giving them a satisfying sense of achievement and pride in their new surroundings.
- 89 A significant emphasis is placed on control and mechanisms in the planning, but children's skills in computers are too limited to be able to realise this. The subject leader has drawn up a satisfactory curriculum map and policy; she has audited resources and reorganised them satisfactorily for practical purposes. She has made good use of the expertise at the local secondary school in holding a workshop to enhance teachers' skills, led by the secondary school head of department.

## GEOGRAPHY

- 90 Although little geography was seen during the inspection, evidence from lessons observed, scrutiny of work and discussion with children would indicate that by the ages of 7 and 11 the children's attainment is in line with national expectations. Children across the ability range make satisfactory progress. From the reception year, children are introduced to the wider world through the travels of 'Barnaby Bear' and begin to develop the necessary language for development in geography. In Year 1 most children begin, with guidance, to map their playground, locating features correctly on their maps and using some symbols. By Year 2 children talk about features of their local environment and how it could be improved. They have undertaken traffic surveys of roads and express their findings orally and through graphs. Higher-attaining children also offer good ideas on improving safety in the local area. Older children in Year 6 use atlases correctly, and use compass directions and co-ordinates to find a range of places. They have a good understanding of river systems and can name parts of a river as well as the causes and effects of erosion. However, there is often too little written work demanded of the children and so much of their learning fails to develop important skills. There are limited opportunities for older children to ask challenging geographical questions and to use their skills in more independent and investigative ways. There is also a lack of clear progression in mapping skills.
- 91 Children enjoy the subject and respond well, especially to the active learning opportunities in the local area and trips out. Too few lessons were seen during the

inspection to form an overall judgement about the overall quality of teaching.

- 92 The subject is well managed by a relatively new subject leader. A scheme of work has been developed, which meets the current requirements for the subject. The action plan is well focused and progress has been made on the identified priorities. This includes resource reviews, collation and some monitoring in classrooms. This aspect needs to be further developed with a focus on standards of attainment. In addition children and teachers would benefit from greater clarity on the ways in which geographical skills and knowledge are to be developed through each year group and the contribution the subject can make to literacy work. This should also include opportunities for writing and recording their work. There is currently insufficient attention paid to ways of formally assessing children's learning in the subject.

## **HISTORY**

- 93 Standards of attainment and progress meet the national expectations for Key Stages 1 and 2. By the age of 7, children recall facts of events such as 'The Great Fire of London'. Their basic historical vocabulary, such as 'old and new', 'past and present', is developed and they are aware that many events were a long time ago. They also explain changes over time. From Year 3, they are aware of the importance of evidence in history and make deductions about artefacts. They are also aware of what is meant by research. By the age of 11 they not only recount key events in a period, such as Ancient Greece, but also know about ways of life at the time, such as beliefs, the theatre and Olympic games. They have developed appropriate historical skills by looking at evidence and can identify which sources are more reliable than others. They are aware of different interpretations of the same events through their study of myths such as 'Theseus and the Minotaur'. The opportunities for children to develop extended writing through their topics and other links to work in literacy are not as developed as they should be. This can result in too much description in their investigative work. Children need more opportunities to pose their own historical questions if standards are to rise to the level found in other successful subjects, such as art.
- 94 Children show an interest in the subject and generally work well in pairs. They are often willing to speculate about the past and enjoy historical enquiry into a events using a variety of historical sources such as artefacts and written accounts.
- 95 Only a small amount of teaching was seen during the inspection and an overall judgement about the quality of teaching is not possible. The subject is well led and a good scheme of work is in place. There are, though, quite lengthy gaps in children's experience of the subject, especially between Years 1 and 2 and Years 5 and 6. The amount and frequency of history teaching is not well enough monitored to ensure balance and coverage of the curriculum. The action plan has concentrated on developing the subject and some monitoring has taken place. This needs to focus more on children's standards, especially children's writing and the quality of investigative work. In addition there is a need for greater clarity in the development of historical skills through the school and the ways in which they may be assessed.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 96 Children's attainment is below average. Children in Year 6 go to the Ford Training Centre where they are learning to use modern computers to store information on spreadsheets, for example, though they have not gone any further yet in modelling. They have done a little word processing of poems and stories, and show basic ability in changing font and style to make attractive labels for display. They are not yet able to

manipulate text and graphics, as in desktop publishing. The few examples of word-processed work displayed around the school show children have little experience of information technology in either key stage. Children in the reception classes use taped stories satisfactorily, which they set up for themselves.

- 97 All children use the Internet from Year 1, but since standards in literacy are low, many cannot read the information well enough to be able to make much progress. Older children cannot distinguish the appropriate parts of a text, and print far too much material to make sense of their study, for example gases in science.
- 98 No teaching of information technology was seen in school. Year 6 receives instruction at a local industrial training centre, arranged by one of the governors, and children's experiences are logged as a record of their achievement. Since the amalgamation, the school has had many other priorities, for example coping with behaviour and implementing literacy and numeracy teaching, so has not yet had time to address information technology in sufficient detail. However, the development plan is sound and the school is implementing QCA schemes of work for the subject. The subject leader's analysis of teachers' skills shows that the majority are competent in using modern computers, but have little expertise in old-fashioned hardware. She has had little time to take control of the subject, having only recently taken up the post.
- 99 At present not enough time is devoted to information technology. The computers are seldom seen switched on. They were not in use during literacy, numeracy or science lessons and no talking phonics programmes, developed to help children with special educational needs, were seen.

## **MUSIC**

- 100 During the inspection week, only two lessons of music were observed in Key Stage 2. It is therefore not possible to make a judgement about standards achieved by children in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, the standards of singing, composing and performing, using their voices in unison and in a round, are in line with expectations. Opportunities to experiment with a range of tuned and untuned instruments have been limited. This is related to the lack of suitable resources available, and few musical opportunities provided in the past.
- 101 The co-ordinator has a music background. She is developing teaching, through a thorough and comprehensive scheme of work, aimed to improve class teachers subject knowledge and confidence in teaching music. This is part of a very good action plan to develop music throughout the school, which includes planned monitoring of the implementation of the new scheme of work in one year group. There is also the intention to form a choir. Planned support from the county music inspector to assist with the development of the subject has been scheduled. Where music teaching was observed, it is judged to be good. The teaching is effective, and the high expectations and good demonstrations by teachers improve children's learning.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 102 Observations were limited to a small number of lessons and of those observed, none were in Key Stage 1. It is therefore not possible to make secure judgements about all aspects of physical education throughout the school. Evidence drawn from planning documentation suggests that the curriculum is balanced and meets the statutory requirements.

- 103 In the lessons seen, games skills are well taught, with children being encouraged to improve their catching and throwing techniques by evaluating their performance, observing good examples and incorporating what they learn into their own practice. Teaching is sound and teachers' subject knowledge is good. Children maintain consistent effort and concentration and make significant progress within the short time allowed. Gymnastic skills are less well taught, with children not being given the opportunity to evaluate their own work or that of other children.
- 104 Children are enthusiastic about these lessons and are keen to do well. Many are involved in a range of sporting activities after school, particularly in the summer months. These include 'high five' netball, football, athletics and 'kwick-cricket'.
- 105 The curriculum for PE is in the process of being reviewed. There is good accommodation and facilities are currently being built including new basketball and football pitches, which will increase provision considerably. At the present time, however, not all classes have PE on a regular basis and the time set for lessons is too short – often only 20 or 30 minutes each week. Because of this, children are not given adequate time to participate in the lesson itself, once the necessary warm up and cool down activities have taken place. Appropriate attention is given to safety precautions in all physical activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 106 Only four lessons of religious education (RE) were observed during the week of inspection. Evidence from teachers' planning, work sampling and discussion with children indicates, however, that by the ages of 7 and 11, children's attainment is in line with the requirements of the local education authority's Agreed Syllabus for RE, Vision and Insight. Progress made through the school is satisfactory and sometimes good.
- 107 Infant children re-tell stories told by Jesus, such as that of Blind Bartimaeus and the Good Samaritan, with interest and accuracy. They know creation stories from different traditions and have a good understanding of why some books are special to us. They show respect and reverence for the holy books of different faiths, such as the Bible and the Qur'an. Junior children re-tell stories from both Christian and Jewish faiths. They relate the symbolism both to the stories and to the ritual of the religious celebrations. The oldest children have excellent recall of the stories related to Divali. They discuss the symbolism of good and evil as represented by the triumph of light over darkness and reflect on this within their own lives. They speak confidently and with evident enjoyment about these lessons.
- 108 There is a good relationship with the local church and vicar and collective worship complements and supports the teaching of RE within the school. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally sound and sometimes good and they are supported by good planning and very good resources. The children's good levels of concentration and conceptual understanding are evident in the conversations about the subject, which include accurate, subject specific vocabulary.
- 109 The subject is well managed. The very effective subject leader has high quality planning in place, which ensures that all aspects of the subject are covered. She monitors both teaching and lesson planning. Children's learning is enhanced by access to an extensive range of books and artefacts from the main religious traditions. RE makes a significant contribution to children's spiritual and moral development.