

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL

Iford

Essex

LEA: Redbridge

Unique reference number: 102897

Headteacher: Les Stevens

Reporting inspector: Paul Canham
1353

Dates of inspection: 6th –10th November 2000

Inspection number: 225328

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School with Nursery
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Water Lane Seven Kings Ilford IG3 9HF
Telephone number:	0208 590 1496
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ken Sheed
Date of previous inspection:	No inspection since the recent amalgamation

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Paul Canham 1353	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Design and technology; Physical education.	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school; The school's results and pupils' achievements; Teaching and learning; Leadership and management; Key issues for action.
Anthony Mundy 09388	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes and personal development; Pupils' welfare, health and safety; Partnership with parents and carers.
John Collins 8163	<i>Team inspector</i>	Provision for special educational needs.	
Kevin Hodge 18466	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; Information technology.	
Margaret Lygoe 23805	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Mathematics.	Quality and range of opportunities for learning.
Helen Mundy 26292	<i>Team inspector</i>	Children aged under five; Music.	
Gerard Slamon 20063	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Religious education; English as an additional language.	
Wendy Thomas 12764	<i>Team inspector</i>	EnglishHistory; Equality of opportunity.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

South Park is much larger than most primary schools, with 414 boys and 371 girls aged from three to eleven years on roll. In addition, 40 children attend the nursery part-time. The majority of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above 60 per cent, and a significant number of pupils in Key Stage 1 are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. An average number of pupils have some form of special educational need, including those with statements. The attainment of pupils on entry to compulsory education, at the age of five, is below average, with particular weaknesses in literacy and language skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The recent amalgamation has meant that the school has undergone a period of major change. It has successfully met many of the challenges that amalgamation presents. It is a good school, and the large majority of pupils benefit from a good standard of education. The school is very well led and managed, and places a high priority on the support of its pupils, many of whom have English as an additional language. It has considerable strengths in its good levels of achievement in English, mathematics and science, and in the quality of leadership, which sets a clear direction for the work of the school in raising standards. The quality of teaching is good. The school gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave school at the age of 11;
- Very good leadership and management ensure that the recently formed school has clear structures and routines that effectively support teaching and learning;
- There are very good procedures for ensuring the pupils' welfare. Support staff are used particularly well. The very good accommodation provides a stimulating learning environment;
- Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, and reflects the school's strong values. Consequently, pupils have good attitudes to their work, behave well and want to achieve. They enjoy very good relationships with one another, and develop into sensitive and mature individuals by the time they leave school;
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in design and technology and physical education in both key stages;
- The small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching;
- Strategies to improve pupils' reading and writing skills;
- Co-ordination of the Foundation Stage to ensure more consistent lesson planning;
- Pupils' independent learning skills.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was formed in 1999 by the amalgamation of an infant and junior school on the existing site. The present school has not been inspected previously. In consequence, no judgements can be made about improvements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with				<i>Key</i> <i>well above average</i> A <i>above average</i> B <i>average</i> C <i>below average</i> D <i>well below average</i> E
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	N / A	N / A	D	B	
Mathematics	N / A	N / A	B	A	
Science	N / A	N / A	C	B	

The infant and junior schools amalgamated in September 1999 and the report has not referred directly to the performance of pupils prior to this. When the 2000 results of South Park are compared with those of schools having a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, standards are above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics. Inspection evidence broadly reflects these standards. Although the large majority of pupils have language difficulties when they join the school, they achieve well by Year 6. Inspection evidence shows that pupils are currently working at the levels expected in English and science, but above the expected level in mathematics. Standards in art are above those expected for pupils aged 11. Pupils achieve the expected levels in history, geography, music and information and communications technology, and they match the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education by Year 6. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in design and technology and physical education. The school has set realistic targets for English and mathematics for the year 2001, and the most recent results indicate that the school is on its way to achieving those targets in both subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school. In lessons, they are responsive and show good attitudes. They listen well, work hard, and concentrate on their tasks over long periods of time.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils clearly understand what is expected of them. There have been three exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good, although pupils would benefit from more opportunities to develop independence when working in class. Very good relationships are a feature of the school community. The very good relationships are fostered by mutual respect and consideration, and have a significant impact on the school's learning environment.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory, although too many pupils arrive at school after the start of the school day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

The consistently good teaching is the main reason why pupils are achieving so well. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of all the lessons seen. Good teaching was seen in 44 per cent of lessons. Very good teaching was seen in a further 16 per cent of lessons. Teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in 5 per cent of lessons. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen throughout the school, and during these lessons pupils benefited significantly from clearly defined and well-focused tasks which inspired their learning. Pupils are particularly well managed. Detailed planning ensures that they are given tasks that closely match their stages of learning. The quality of teaching in the nursery is good because children are involved in an exciting variety of skilfully structured activities. The large majority of pupils in Years 1 to 6 benefit significantly from good and very good teaching in several subjects, including English, mathematics, science, religious education and information and communication technology. Although the quality of teaching was good in the nursery, it was judged to be satisfactory overall at the Foundation Stage due largely to weaknesses in teaching in the reception.

Careful attention is given to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language who benefit from good teaching. Unsatisfactory teaching was seen mainly in one class in Year 1. Common features of the unsatisfactory teaching are unclear learning intentions, low expectations in writing and the sounds of letters, poor subject knowledge, and a slow pace.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced, and pupils benefit from a good range of learning opportunities. The curriculum places a great emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, and this reflects the needs of the pupils. However, not enough time is given to the teaching of physical education. Good attention is paid to equal opportunities for all pupils and to their personal development. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good. Pupils are given well-planned tasks that closely match their needs. They benefit from effective support and make good progress when working individually or in small groups away from the main class. Their individual education plans are detailed, as a result of very good assessment procedures, and they are used well.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is very well managed. Pupils benefit from effective and sensitive support, which meets their stages of learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for moral development and ensures that all pupils understand right and wrong. The provision for spiritual, social and cultural development is good. Aspects of the school's curriculum enable pupils to reflect on events and on their lives. Pupils are made aware of other cultures and beliefs through the curriculum and a wide range of educational visits.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures to ensure that pupils are well cared for. Staff know pupils well and take great care of them, in a safe and supportive environment. Very good child protection procedures ensure that staff are sensitive to pupils' needs. Systems for monitoring their academic performance are satisfactory, and the information is used well in some subjects to help pupils to achieve.

The school is committed to building a close partnership with parents. The large majority of parents who responded to the parent questionnaire believe the school works closely with them. The parents' contribution to their children's learning and the impact of their involvement in the work of the school is being continually strengthened.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides very good leadership. He has a very clear vision for the work of the school in raising standards, and has established clear and robust structures that enable staff to have a good understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The headteacher is well supported by the deputies and other key staff. Several subjects are very well managed. Pupils are well supported and they achieve well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are well informed, knowledgeable and very supportive of the school. They are highly effective in shaping the direction of the recently amalgamated school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are good systems for monitoring the quality of planning and for helping staff to improve professionally. Test and assessment data are carefully scrutinised and analysed. This information is being used in setting the school's own targets. The school has established sound strategies to identify the value added to its work.
The strategic use of resources	Financial administration and planning are good. The school makes very good use of its resources, and budgets carefully to support the priorities identified for improvement.

The accommodation is good and provides the pupils with a secure and attractive learning environment. The school places a high priority on staffing, and pupils benefit significantly from the additional support in lessons and around the school. Resources are good overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children like school; • the good teaching; • the good progress; • being kept well informed about their children's progress; • the school listens to their concerns; • their children are expected to work hard; • the caring environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homework that is consistently set and marked; • the range of activities outside lessons.

Inspection evidence supports all the positive features expressed by parents in response to the questionnaire and at the meeting of parents with the registered inspector. The quality of the homework seen during the inspection was satisfactory overall, but it was judged to be good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The range of extra-curricular activities is also good. The school organises a substantial number of educational trips to enrich pupils' experiences.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The large majority of children attend the school's own nursery or gain pre-school experience elsewhere. Children join the school's nursery part-time until they transfer to the reception classes, where they are joined by children transferring from other schools and nurseries. Currently, there are no children in the nursery who have been identified as having special educational needs, although the large majority of children have English as an additional language. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment in areas of learning is below expectations for their age, and it is very low in English. Children make good progress in the nursery and satisfactory progress throughout the Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, the children's under-developed English language skills continue to inhibit their achievements. Consequently, standards remain well below national expectations on entry to the reception classes. Children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, except in relation to their personal and social skills, which are closer to national expectations.
2. Throughout the school, pupils made good gains in their knowledge and understanding in 60 per cent of the lessons observed, and satisfactory progress in all but 5 per cent of the remaining lessons. The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is enhanced by the good quality of support they receive from the three teachers employed by the Local Education Authority. When these pupils become proficient in English, usually by the end of Year 4, their progress in all curriculum areas is comparable to that of other pupils of similar ability. School tests and standardised national tests show that these pupils attain appropriate standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs make mostly good progress against their Individual Education Plans and the appropriate National Curriculum programmes of study.
3. The results for the 2000 national tests show that standards at Key Stage 1 were below average in reading, writing, and mathematics. When these results are compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. The proportions of pupils reaching the higher level in these subjects were well below the national average. In science, the performance levels of pupils in the teacher assessments were also below the national average.
4. The results of the 2000 national tests show that standards at Key Stage 2 were below the national average in English, average in science, and above average in mathematics. When compared with schools having a similar percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were above average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics. The proportions of pupils reaching levels above those expected for their age were above average in English, and well above average in mathematics and science.
5. Taking into account the circumstances in which the school works, the school has set realistic targets for English and mathematics for the Year 2001.

6. Evidence gathered during the inspection reflects the results of the most recent national curriculum tests, although standards in English for pupils aged 11 match the national expectation. Pupils aged seven are working at levels below those expected in English, mathematics, and science. Pupils aged 11 are working at the levels expected nationally in English and science, but above the expected level in mathematics. Standards in information technology match the national expectation for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils do not make enough progress in religious education to meet the objectives of the locally Agreed Syllabus by Year 2, but they do make sufficient progress by Year 6. Standards in art match the national expectation for pupils aged seven, but they are above the expectation by the end of Year 6. Standards in history, geography and music are at the expected national levels for pupils aged seven and eleven. However, in physical education and design and technology, standards are below the national expectation for pupils aged seven and eleven.

7. The school places a strong emphasis on the development of literacy skills. The school has a high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. Their level of fluency in spoken language affects the written work of these pupils, and it has an impact on overall standards in English, particularly for the younger pupils. By Year 2, many pupils still have a limited range of vocabulary and spoken expression. Planning in both key stages is based on the targets of the national literacy framework, and teaching follows the recommended structure of the literacy hour very closely. The supportive approach used by teachers and other adults encourages pupils to develop their English and, by the age of 11, their attainment is in line with standards expected nationally. This is because pupils' rate of progress increases as they develop confidence and fluency in English. By Year 2, most pupils enjoy reading, though they are not familiar with a range of books and authors. Pupils have a limited range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. By Year 6, pupils have made good progress in reading, and standards are in line with those expected nationally. As they grow older, pupils' enthusiasm for reading increases, and they begin to use reference books with confidence. Pupils take care with their handwriting, which is usually neat and well formed. As they develop their speaking skills and vocabulary, the quality of pupils' writing improves. Whilst many pupils in Year 6 attain the expected standards in English, only a small number attain the level above that expected.

8. The National Numeracy Strategy has now been successfully introduced, and many features are securely embedded, such as mental sessions and the discussion of strategies. Pupils' numeracy skills are used to support work in science, design technology, and information technology. Owing to weaknesses in English language development, many pupils aged seven are not yet fully confident with the language associated with mathematics. As a result, although they achieve average standards in basic number work, they do not always understand what is required of them in tests. Girls did not achieve as well as boys in the national tests at age seven. By Year 2, pupils develop a sound knowledge of numbers to 100. They begin to solve problems using addition and subtraction. By Year 6, pupils have a good grasp of relevant vocabulary, and can accurately identify the key words in problems. They have a good understanding of the number system, and develop a good range of mental skills and strategies. Data-handling skills are also developed well in mathematics lessons, as well as in lessons in science and information and communication technology (ICT). In ICT, pupils word process effectively, preparing work with a well-developed range of word-processing techniques and graphic features. They are beginning to design their own web-site pages using different designs and graphics.

9. Standards in science are impeded by pupils' lack of confidence in language, particularly pupils in Years 1 to 2, which means that they experience problems when explaining their work and in making task-related observations. However, by Year 6, pupils attain standards that are in line with expectations in their knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. However, standards in scientific enquiry are under-developed because pupils are not given enough opportunities to carry out experiments independently of the teacher.

10. In religious education, pupils display a basic understanding of Christianity and some other faiths, although many cannot provide simple descriptions or explanations of related elements in their own experience.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. A high proportion of parents (96 per cent) who returned the parents' questionnaire confirmed that their children like coming to school. This view is endorsed by inspection evidence, including many conversations with pupils. Children at the Foundation Stage learn positive attitudes by observing the good relationships between their parents, carers and teachers. They enjoy meeting other children, and are confident and secure in classroom and school routines. Children relate well to adults, listen to them attentively, and are very well behaved. They are encouraged to complete activities when working alone or in groups.

12. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 come to school enthusiastically, although a significant proportion arrive after the start of the school day. In lessons, they listen attentively to their teachers, and are keen to answer questions and participate in discussions. Some pupils are highly motivated to achieve well in lessons. Challenging and lively teaching, which grasps their interest and encourages them to think for themselves, excites them. Pupils take part with enthusiasm in extra-curricular activities, which are well supported. When given opportunities, they speak confidently in class discussions, and work independently without needing close supervision. Excellent attitudes were observed in a history lesson where an actress impersonating Florence Nightingale captivated pupils in Year 2. Similar attitudes were observed during choir practice, where a group of 50 pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 responded with great enthusiasm and maturity to the compelling, humorous leadership of the music co-ordinator.

13. Pupils work well in groups, readily exchanging ideas and sharing resources. In a physical education lesson, for example, pupils in Year 5 worked well together in pairs when developing their games skills. During a lesson in design and technology, pupils in Year 6 shared resources well and exchanged ideas when building a model. Pupils are confident when talking to adults about their work. On just a few occasions, pupils lacked the maturity to discuss their work and share opinions. For instance, some pupils in Year 6 showed little respect to the teacher and did not value the contributions made by others in the group.

14. Behaviour is good in classes and often very good around the school. Pupils are calm, thoughtful and mutually respectful. Brief behaviour rules agreed by pupils are prominently displayed in most classrooms. Pupils generally conform fully to the rules and respond very

well to teachers' skills in class management. The few children with behavioural difficulties are particularly well managed by teachers and teaching assistants. Discussions with parents and pupils during the inspection confirmed that incidents of bullying or aggression between pupils are rare, and are dealt with effectively when reported or observed.

15. Pupils' personal development is good, although they have few opportunities for accepting responsibilities outside their classrooms. For example, older pupils are not appointed as monitors for the school's many staircases, and plans for a school council are still in development. However, all pupils willingly carry out everyday duties in classrooms and occasionally act as enthusiastic Receptionists and guides, for example at open evenings.

16. Within the curriculum, opportunities for personal development are very good in the nursery. Children are encouraged to organise for themselves and make decisions about the choice of resources. However, opportunities for personal development are not sufficiently developed in Years 1 to 6. For example, pupils are not given sufficient opportunities in science to work independently of the teacher and solve problems for themselves. In English, pupils enjoy listening to stories and joining in when parts are repeated, but they are less confident when reading alone. Pupils are too reliant on the teacher to help them read because they are not taught the strategies to read independently.

17. Relationships are very good in the nursery and throughout the school. Teachers help to cultivate the mutual respect that exists in the school. Each member of the school community is valued, and pupils benefit from sensitive support. Pupils respond politely and confidently to each other and to adults. For example, during a lesson on personal, social and health education, pupils in Year 5 used strong relationships and mutual trust to support each other.

18. Attendance levels are satisfactory, although they are slightly below the national average for primary schools. A small but significant number of parents take their children on extended holidays and do not ensure that they attend regularly. During the inspection, 8 per cent of pupils arrived after the start of the school day. The school has written to parents, explaining how the late start to lessons disrupts the beginning of the school day and affects the learning of other pupils who arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The consistently good teaching is the main reason why pupils achieve so well in Key Stage 2. Teaching was judged to be satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of all lessons seen. Good teaching was seen in 44 per cent of lessons, and very good teaching in a further 16 per cent. Examples of good and very good teaching were seen throughout the school. During these lessons, pupils benefited significantly from clearly defined and well-focused tasks that inspired their learning. Pupils are particularly well managed. Detailed planning ensures that they are given tasks that closely match their stages of learning. The quality of teaching in the nursery is good because children are involved in an exciting variety of skilfully structured activities. The best teaching was exemplified by the teachers' good knowledge of the early learning goals, and the effective use of questions to explore children's understanding and to guide their learning. Teachers spontaneously use opportunities to extend children's learning. The large majority of pupils in Years 1 to 6 benefit significantly from good and very good.

20. teaching in several subjects, including English, mathematics, science, religious education and information communication technology. The standard of teaching is good overall in Key Stage 2, and it is similarly high in Key Stage 1 apart from the significant amount of unsatisfactory teaching in one class in Year 1.

21. The quality of teaching is good in the nursery. It is satisfactory overall at the Foundation Stage, due largely to weaknesses in teaching in the reception. Features of unsatisfactory teaching are poor subject knowledge, unclear learning intentions, a slow pace, and low expectations in writing and the sounding of letters. A general weakness in teaching throughout the school is the lack of attention to pupils' ability to tackle unfamiliar words and the formation of numbers and letters. Some bad habits formed in Reception are not tackled systematically as pupils progress through the school.

22. Features of the good teaching are the effective management of pupils and the clarity of the learning intentions. Teachers sustain good levels of support through incisive questioning to maintain pupils' interest. The use of day-to-day assessment procedures underpins much of the very good quality teaching and learning. Very good teaching uses information from assessments to plan challenging and stimulating activities to capture pupils' attention and encourage them to want to learn more about the subjects. In English, mathematics and science, teachers' expertise leads to high expectations and well-planned lessons, with the result that pupils learn at a good rate and achieve well. For example, the teaching of mathematics was judged to be most effective in Years 5 and 6, where the pace of learning is consistently good. The quality of direct, whole-class teaching is often very high, with clear explanations, demonstrations and probing questioning to ensure that pupils understand. In consequence, most pupils respond very well, enjoy the subject and work hard, and these attitudes have a positive impact on their learning. Pupils' progress is secured over time because their achievement is closely monitored and planning builds closely on their learning. The best lessons in science included a good balance of direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to apply their enquiry skills to finding things out for themselves. Where pupils are challenged by the teaching, they behave very well, concentrate on what they are doing and work hard to overcome difficulties.

23. A particular strength in teaching throughout the school is the supportive approach used by teachers and other adults. This reflects the school's aims in many ways, and all but a few pupils reciprocate the good relationships that have been established. In many lessons, the good relationships are used to raise standards in the quality of pupils' work. For example, the teaching of English was judged to be good due largely to the close match of tasks to pupils' prior learning, and teachers' lively pace and interesting manner. This stimulated pupils' interest, ensuring that they were well motivated and worked productively. In consequence, pupils are motivated by the tasks and activities, which successfully extended their thinking and understanding. In general, pupils would benefit from the development of independent learning skills, such as those used when undertaking independent research in the library and when using computers.

24. The good teaching is based on good knowledge of the subject. For example, careful planning in several subjects, including music and mathematics, is underpinned by a thorough understanding of the subject material. This leads to well thought-out instructions that emphasise pupil involvement, and well-structured activities that guide all pupils in applying and extending their knowledge. For example, during an English lesson in Year 2, pupils benefited significantly from the teacher's very good subject knowledge, which was used

effectively during the plenary session to test pupils' understanding. Good and very good teaching in music reflects the expertise of the subject specialists, whose knowledge underpins their questioning of pupils, which makes them think and tests their understanding. The quality of the evaluative comments helped pupils in Year 2 to make good gains in their learning. They responded by showing a willingness to refine their work. Teachers' depth of understanding is often used to underpin clear explanations and incisive questioning to help pupils extend their thinking. During an art lesson, pupils in Year 5 were highly motivated by the in-depth questioning which helped them to understand the need to make use of different media. In a religious education lesson, pupils in Year 6 were absorbed by the skilful linking of two religions and the depth of knowledge which underpinned the planning.

25. Pupils with special needs are well taught when given specialist help, either within the class or on withdrawal to another area. They take part in a carefully chosen range of activities that engage them mentally, physically and emotionally. As a result, these sessions are productive and happy because pupils realise for themselves that they are learning well. In class lessons, they work with other pupils at a similar level and are given additional support wherever possible. Their progress is carefully monitored, and adjustments made to their Individual Education Plans so that future lessons meet their needs. The teaching of pupils who have English as an additional language is good when they are supported by specialist teaching. Teachers of these groups place a high priority on listening, comprehension and vocabulary skills. The quality of this teaching ensures that these pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum. All members of the support team have a good understanding of how these pupils learn. Class teachers are well supported by the members of the team, who have identified the need to provide further training for teachers new to the school. This will further enhance the learning of pupils with English as an additional language in all lessons.

26. There is a good range of methods and strategies to support learning. Teachers who have established a good rapport with pupils manage groups well, while focusing their attention on individual pupils. The teaching of pupils in similar attainment groups, such as those seen in mathematics, is effective because pupils benefit from well-targeted support. Final summary sessions are used well to consolidate and share what has been learnt. For example, pupils in Year 6 were well managed during a lesson in mathematics that gave pupils good opportunities to work independently. Homework is set to reinforce and extend pupils' learning; regular homework supports achievement in English, science and mathematics.

27. The use of assessment on a daily basis is satisfactory overall. In Years 1 to 3, the practice consists largely of verbal comments and observations to pupils, combined with written comments in books. This often enables teachers to modify work within the lesson. In Years 3 to 6, marking is used very effectively in English and mathematics to give pupils guidance. Individual targets give pupils good direction in improving their work. This practice is most effective in English and mathematics. In mathematics, pupils are tested at the end of each unit of work, and this enables future work to be modified well. However, marking and on-going assessment in science do not focus sufficiently on helping pupils improve their investigative skills. Examples of pupils' work are collected in portfolios in both core and foundation subjects, but, in design and technology, the examples are not matched to National Curriculum levels of attainment.

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

28. The curriculum provides pupils with a suitable range of experiences in all subjects, and pupils generally receive a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. Since the amalgamation, the school has made good progress in developing the curriculum to ensure that subjects are taught systematically across the school. However, the time spent in lessons by pupils in Key Stage 2 is below the nationally recommended teaching time. Standards in physical education are below the national expectation. This is largely due to the lack of time allocated to the teaching of the subject in Key Stage 2, where classes have only one period a week of physical education. Throughout the school, lessons do not always start at the scheduled time. This is, in part, due to the time taken for the very large number of pupils to move safely in from the playground after break and lunchtime.

29. High proportions of pupils have English as an additional language, and standards of attainment in all aspects of English are well below average overall when pupils start school. The school places a suitably heavy emphasis on developing English skills, and pupils benefit from a daily literacy hour. Additional time is spent on handwriting, spelling, reading and writing. The school uses the National Literacy Strategy for guidance, but not enough attention is paid to the teaching of very early writing skills or to teaching reading skills across the school.

30. The National Numeracy Strategy is firmly established, and all classes have a daily mathematics lesson. There is a good emphasis on the development of mental skills and strategies. Work in most classes is well planned to target the needs of different groups of pupils, and progress is good in Years 2 to 6 as a result. In some classes in Year 1, work is not always sufficiently varied to meet the needs of pupils at different stages, and consequently their progress is more limited. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 benefit particularly from being taught in groups organised according to attainment. The arrangements are suitably flexible, and regular assessment ensures that individual progress is monitored and pupils move between groups. Additional help is accurately targeted towards those with greatest need. The school is now working to develop investigative work in mathematics.

31. In science, pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan and conduct their own experiments. The school follows the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education, and draws very effectively on pupils' cultural and religious backgrounds. Teaching is reinforced well by a programme of visits to local places of worship. Most of the school computers have been grouped together in computer suites. All classes in Years 1 to 6 have a weekly information technology lesson, so that skills are developed systematically. Although pupils are unable to use computers during class lessons in other subjects, careful planning ensures that some relevant links are made with most curriculum subjects during information technology lessons over time. For example, work related to science, art and mathematics was observed during the inspection.

32. National guidance has been used well to develop schemes of work, which are in place for all subjects. Teachers often make good links between subjects. For example, opportunities to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are used particularly well in many subjects. There is good provision for personal, social and health education, and all teachers have benefited from a recent training programme. In all year groups, there are planned weekly lessons where the class meet together to discuss topics such as bullying or

playground rules. The teaching programme includes sex education and education against drug misuse. Speakers from outside agencies, for example local police officers and the school nurse, are used very effectively to widen pupils' understanding. A performance by a drama group underlined the message of the danger of drugs.

33. The nursery curriculum is carefully structured to meet the needs of all children and ensure their progress. The reception curriculum is based on practical activities, though inadequate time is allowed for systematic reading and writing. Although teachers at the Foundation Stage plan well together, the work provided for Nursery and Reception children is often too similar and does not consistently match the needs of the older children.

34. There is good provision to ensure that all pupils have equal access to the full curriculum. The needs of the very high numbers of pupils who have English as an additional language are met well. Pupils who are at the earliest levels of learning English are provided with focused attention to their language needs. They have full and equal access to all aspects of school life, and are encouraged to play an active part in all lessons. In the main, the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is broad, balanced and appropriate to their needs. These pupils are mostly well integrated within normal classes and have full access to the whole curriculum. They are generally supported within mainstream classes, although a small proportion of curriculum time is used to extract some for more specialised support. This is closely monitored to ensure access to the full curriculum is maintained. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are mostly very good. In the main, they are based on careful assessment of each child's needs, have well-focused, clear, targets for pupils and helpful guidance for staff. This enables these pupils to make good progress.

35. Pupils benefit from the opportunity to take part in a wide range of activities organised outside school hours. There is an enthusiastic e-mail club, as well as football, netball, badminton, gardening, country dancing, choir, orchestra, and drama. Pupils' experience is also extended through a good programme of educational visits and through visitors to the school. Classes visit museums, art galleries, farms and various places of worship. The immediate locality is used quite well for studies in geography. Pupils in Year 6 benefit greatly from the opportunity of a residential visit to the Isle of Wight.

36. There are good links with the secondary school to which the majority of pupils transfer. All pupils in Year 6 have a 'taster' day, enjoying a sample of the Year 7 curriculum. Last year, pupils in Year 5 benefited from a programme of information communication technology lessons from a specialist teacher from the secondary school. Subject co-ordinators have annual meetings with colleagues from other schools to focus on the transfer to secondary school.

37. Good provision is made for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and a strength of the school. The school has successfully maintained a calm, peaceful atmosphere despite the adjustments required by the recent amalgamation. This supportive, welcoming atmosphere forms a good basis for pupils' spiritual development. Teachers make effective use of assemblies, circle times and areas of the curriculum such as art, music, religious education, and science to support this area of pupils' development. They value pupils' contributions during informal interactions and more formal discussions in personal, social and health education lessons. A good example of the school's provision for 'quiet times' is the thought that went into the building of the 'Play Garden.' A pupil wrote, "I like the play garden because I can quietly read a book there, or speak with my friends." The school meets requirements to hold a daily act of worship, and this makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual awareness.

38. Provision for pupils' moral development is based on concern for the physical and emotional wellbeing of others, and respect for their cultural background. Pupils are all aware of school, classroom and playground rules, and these are consistently applied. Through their caring relationships with pupils, adults promote values of honesty, fairness, truthfulness and sense of citizenship. The very good example set by adults who work in the school effectively supports pupils' moral development. Teachers give a clear lead, showing care and concern for their pupils and encouraging reflection on the consequences of their actions. In most lessons, teachers control behaviour through positive encouragement, stressing principles of fairness and respect. They encourage discussion in circle times, which are sensitively managed so as to deepen pupils' understanding of issues of concern such as the importance and responsibility of the individual within the family. Pupils' achievements and good behaviour are appropriately celebrated and rewarded.

39. The school works hard to promote pupils' social development. The very good working relationships between adults set a good example to pupils. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to work together and co-operate in their work. This results in a harmonious working atmosphere in most lessons. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate and to contribute to the community in which they live. They take part in local music festivals and carol services at the local church, and visit other local places of worship. Pupils are encouraged to contribute to the wider community through fundraising for many charities, such as Comic Relief, Romanian Orphans, Children In Need and UNICEF. Visiting speakers and performers are used well to support pupils' social development. Pupils are provided with some opportunities to take responsibility. The school is considering ways of increasing the range of opportunities for older pupils to voice opinions and to have them acted upon.

40. An appreciation of the richness of other cultures and faiths is a notable feature of daily life in the school, which builds well on the varied backgrounds and experiences of its pupils and visitors. The syllabus for religious education makes a good contribution to their understanding of other faiths. Pupils' own festivals are celebrated within the school community. Pupils perform national dances for others when, for example, they celebrate the festival of Diwali. This celebration of each other's cultures does not yet extend to the many different languages spoken by pupils in the school. Visiting speakers and performers, and visits to places of cultural interest are used well to enrich pupils' experiences. Activities such as Maypole and other traditional dances add a further valuable dimension to pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The safe, caring and supportive environment of the school has a beneficial effect on the standards pupils achieve. Very good procedures are established for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare overall. The teacher nominated as the responsible officer for child protection is conscientious and very well informed. She has provided training for staff, and has allocated a child protection folder to each classroom. All staff, including learning assistants and midday assistants, implement the school's procedures discreetly.

42. The school's health and safety policy follows local authority guidelines, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out-of-school visits. Very good health and safety practice is supplemented by regular site surveys and risk assessments. Good supervision ensures pupils' safety in the playgrounds at break times and lunchtimes. Several members of staff are qualified in first aid, and all staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils.

43. Teachers and other adults know the pupils well, and are skilled in assessing their needs. At consultation evenings, teachers note parents' views of their children's progress. Pupils receive very good individual care and support from class teachers and the head teacher, who is accessible, genial and reassuring. Details of pupils' personal development are recorded formally and, though this is a large school, many teachers maintain relationships with pupils in classes other than their own. Most of the school's learning assistants are skilled in curriculum and social support, and all learning assistants develop good relationships with pupils. An excellent programme of varied activities is provided at moderate cost for pupils in Year 6 who do not participate in the school's annual residential visit.

44. The school pays good attention to the support and guidance given to pupils with English as an additional language. Regular reviews take place to monitor their progress in language acquisition, and formal and informal meetings take place between teachers and the support team to ensure that all are informed. Members of the team keep thorough records of pupils' achievements, and use information from the school's tests to support their work. They are setting up a database to track the achievements of all pupils with English as an additional language. Similarly, the school pays good attention to the support and guidance for pupils with special educational needs, with the help of the learning support assistants working closely with teaching staff.

45. A nursery prospectus is part of the warm welcome offered to parents when their children join the nursery class. Most pupils joining the Reception classes and other year groups settle quickly and happily into the school's routines. Individual support is provided whenever necessary.

46. The school has very good procedures for promoting positive behaviour. The behaviour policy promotes good behaviour in classes, in the open areas of the school, and in the playgrounds. Specific rules are displayed in most classrooms, and pupils conform to the high expectations of behaviour. The school has an agreed policy on the use of force by staff, and has adequate procedures for noting incidents of restraint of pupils. The anti-bullying policy is not displayed, but the provisions of the policy are implemented consistently and thoroughly. Pupils have few concerns about bullying. They know that discussions and a reconciliation process effectively counter the few reported incidents. The school functions

very well as a happy and orderly community. The school has a cumulative system of merit awards, and staff acknowledge good behaviour and good work by awarding attractively designed merit certificates. Each week, pupils have opportunities to display their work and receive awards in achievement assemblies. Photographs of award holders are displayed prominently in the main corridors of both buildings. Midday assistants award tokens for helpful or improving behaviour at lunchtimes. Tokens are entered in regular draws for small prizes, which are greatly valued by pupils.

47. Systems for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Class registers conform to statutory requirements. Attendance figures are scrutinised regularly by the educational welfare officer, but the school does not monitor attendance by year group or by class. The school recognises the need to monitor pupils' punctuality more rigorously, although it continues to use its good relationships with parents in gaining their support.

48. Assessment procedures are co-ordinated by two staff, and they have reviewed procedures since the amalgamation. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall, though assessment in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. Current procedures are complex, unsystematic and of limited use. There are weaknesses in the range and quality of information provided by the nursery to support the transition to the reception classes, although the recently appointed nursery co-ordinator is developing a new programme for the nursery. Assessment procedures are not co-ordinated within the Foundation Stage, and there is no overall policy. Currently, when children enter the nursery, their knowledge and skills are assessed through observation of practical and verbal abilities. Nursery staff use the information to identify children with special educational needs and to ensure that suitable lessons are planned for all children. In the reception class, pupils are assessed through the local authority's baseline assessment programme. Parents are notified of the results and encouraged to help their children at home.

49. Throughout the school, there are sound procedures for assessing progress in English, mathematics, and science. Pupils have clear records, for reading for example, and pupils throughout the school have responsibility for taking these home to record their reading progress. In addition, in-depth assessment of pupils' reading abilities is made before they enter Year 3 classes. In Years 3 to 6, optional tests for English and mathematics are used effectively to identify weaknesses in understanding and to diagnose particular difficulties. In mathematics, for example, this analysis helps teachers decide teaching group arrangements. This policy also helps pinpoint pupils who may need to change groups. In science, the co-ordinator has recently devised appropriate tests for pupils in Years 3, 4, and 5 to help assess their knowledge and understanding. In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, pupils' progress is recorded to inform yearly reports and to amend long-term planning. However, formal assessment procedures have yet to be introduced in other subjects, such as physical education and design and technology, so that the information can be used to help with planning.

50. Assessment guidance, provided through clear policies and checklists, usefully outlines the types of assessment to be carried out in each year group. In Year 1, for example, there are specific times when assessments are carried out in English, such as a focused writing task. Assessments are also carried out in mathematics and science, to identify pupils' attainment in terms of national curriculum levels. In Year 2, additional tests in reading are used to provide information for the end of key stage assessments, alongside the National assessments. There is a clear outline of the timing and nature of the National testing procedures that have to take

place. As pupils move through the key stage, their progress continues to be monitored effectively. Optional tests are used to help form teaching groups and set individual targets for pupils. These targets aid discussion at parents' meetings, and any observations are noted in pupils' personal records. End-of-year reports provide a good overview of pupils' progress and achievement. In their last year, pupils use previous national test material to become familiar with the testing process, and the information is used to assess pupils' weak areas before the actual tests in the summer term.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school is committed to building a close partnership with parents. Parents registered their strong support for the school in their response to the questionnaire and at the meeting held before the inspection. The large majority of parents who responded to the parent questionnaire believe the school works closely with them. The small number of parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting made many appreciative comments about all aspects of the school's work. Similar views were expressed by a group of parents interviewed during the inspection. The inspectors endorse the views expressed by parents.

52. The school has good links with parents, who are welcome to visit at all times. The inspection confirms good two-way communication and very good relationships with class teachers and other members of staff. Parents and friends provide regular and valuable preparatory help to class teachers, and work closely with groups of pupils and individuals in lessons. The skills and interests of parents are noted and used to enrich the curriculum. Some parents and friends who are salaried classroom helpers choose to work extended hours as unpaid volunteers. A number of parents have contributed their childhood toys to the school's toy museum.

53. The parents, teachers and friends association (PTFA) is led by a small group of parents, who seek constantly to increase the number of participants from ethnic minorities. The PTFA organises many social and fund-raising events, which contribute significantly to the school's budget. Recent purchases have included overhead projectors and classroom games for use during rainy lunchtimes and playtimes. Currently the PTFA is accumulating money to help fund the development of information and communications technology in the school. The PTFA receives very good support from the staff, and good co-operation is established with the governing body.

54. The quality of information for parents is good. All newsletters and other notes from the school are neatly designed and clearly written. Parents receive regular details of school successes, events and important dates. Advance warning of curriculum topics is provided to enable parents to help their children at home. Some curriculum information is displayed at open evenings. The school prospectus is outstandingly well designed. The prospectus and the most recent governors' annual report to parents conform to statutory requirements and include much additional useful information for parents.

55. Parents are informed of their children's progress at three consultation meetings each year. In addition, the reports on pupils' progress paint a good picture of what they have learned and the progress they have made. Parents value these reports because they are much improved; the information is clearly written, with details of attainment and steps for improvement.

56. Parents are well informed of the school's routines and expectations when their children enter the reception classes or join other year groups. Parents of pupils in Year 6 are well informed about secondary transfer. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed of progress, and they understand the school's procedures for support and discipline. They value the school's sensitive and supportive approach. Every effort is made to ensure that both the parent and the pupil are involved in setting targets to help the child improve. The school encourages participation by ethnic minority families in aspects of school life such as parents' evenings, assemblies and curriculum events. Members of the team attend these meetings, keeping parents informed about their work and the progress their children are making.

57. Many parents want to be involved with their children's learning and to help them at home. Parents confidently ask teachers for advice on general or particular issues related to their children's work. However, a quarter of the parents responding to the pre-inspection questionnaire were dissatisfied with the amount of homework provided. A new policy for homework has been implemented, and parents interviewed during the inspection confirm that homework is now provided and marked consistently in Years 3 to 6.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

58. The headteacher has been in post for just over one year, following the amalgamation of the junior and infant schools on the existing site. He was appointed to lead and manage the new school through a period of disruption and significant change, and through his very effective leadership, a strong commitment and a sensitive approach to staff, he has successfully overcome the problems brought about by the amalgamation. With the keen support of well-informed governors, his approach has been to focus on developing the individual strengths of the two previous schools. Soon after his appointment, specific targets for improvement were identified in the effective school improvement plan, although the plan does not yet identify clear criteria against which the school's progress can be judged. This is because the initial targets focused, of necessity, on the development of a new set of aims. This required the involvement of all staff and governors, to develop a strategic overview and agree on a common set of goals to maintain standards and raise them further. Staff work as a cohesive and caring team, committed to the welfare of the pupils and the whole community. This gives the school a clear sense of purpose and, as a result, relationships are generally good throughout the school. The school's aims are reflected in its daily work; it is a friendly, supportive and purposeful community; pupils are confident and respectful of one another; expectations are high. The governors have been actively involved in setting up a strong management team, which includes three deputy headteachers. They have very clear roles, which include whole-school responsibilities that reflect the school's current priorities. These are closely linked to raising levels of achievement and standards. For example, standards in mathematics have improved, and pupils' extended writing opportunities have been given a high priority.

59. The headteacher delegates well, and staff value the levels of responsibilities given to them. Subject co-ordinators are responsible for their own resources, and help in shaping the direction of the school through their own action plans. Subject co-ordinators have a clear understanding of their role, and provide colleagues with helpful support and advice. Some use time away from the classroom to work with staff on planning. The targets set by the

school for English and mathematics are achievable, and reflect the school's realistic commitment to high standards. Several subjects, including information and communication technology, religious education and music, are particularly well managed. There is a co-ordinator in each key stage for English and mathematics, but the partnership which manages English has yet to be fully developed.

60. Provision for pupils who have English as an additional language is well managed. The team of teachers employed for ethnic minority achievement has a very good overview of provision. There is a clear action plan for the future development of this aspect of the school's work. The team is committed to equality of opportunity, and it is producing an 'Education For All' policy which will combine the school's bilingual, multicultural and equal opportunities policies. The management of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The recently-appointed co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of this aspect of the school's work. She is strongly supported by a well-informed and committed governor, who reports the progress of this aspect back to the full governing body on a regular basis. The school and governors have established appropriate procedures for monitoring the resourcing of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs, and for ensuring the appropriateness of the weighting given to financing appropriate resources. The school fulfils its statutory responsibilities for special educational needs and complies with the official Code of Practice.

61. The knowledgeable and committed governing body has been instrumental in the development of the new school and the substantial improvements to the accommodation. Members of the governing body are very much involved in shaping the direction of the new school. Key governors are active, conscientious, well informed, and highly supportive of the headteacher and the work of the school. Parents value the improvements brought about since the appointment of the headteacher, and the capacity for further improvement is good. The school is meeting all statutory requirements.

62. The vision of the headteacher and governing body for the school's development is based upon a thorough audit of the current position. The development plan is a clear, useful working document, and the educational priorities identified in it are highly relevant. Targets are set for each year, and very efficient procedures are in place for monitoring and evaluating the extent to which these priorities are achieved. The governors provide very good support, and have clear systems in place for monitoring the effectiveness of spending and its impact on learning. The development plan provides a secure framework upon which the school can plan effectively and judge value for money. Educational developments are well supported through high quality financial planning. There are very good structures in place to ensure the strategic management of resources. Funds for pupils with special educational needs, those who speak English as an additional language and booster classes are clearly designated and pupils receive very efficient support. Excellent financial control is complemented by efficient school administration. Funds are closely targeted for pupils with special needs in providing high quality support.

63. Educational activities are planned carefully. These link clearly to the financial resources available. The most recent financial audit, carried out last year, recommended only two minor points for action, and these were quickly addressed. Twice-termly meetings of the finance committee examine the financial management report and agree any budget changes. This close support is good, and the governors' expertise is used to advise and challenge

proposals that the school makes. The headteacher and financial secretary monitor the day-to-day budget closely, and computerised systems are used to maintain the records of the school and produce clear financial statements and summaries.

64. Teachers audit their subject and responsibility areas to bid for finances. These allocations vary appropriately, according to the priorities in the school improvement plan and allowing for unforeseen expenditure. Grants are well targeted and used: for example, the funds for pupils with special educational needs enables a full time co-ordinator to oversee this work and to provide support to pupils within classes. Another example is the use of government funds combined with parental support to provide very good computer facilities. Other funds provide additional literacy support, both for specific groups of pupils and for additional classroom assistants to support more pupils.

65. The principles of 'best value' are applied in several areas of the school's procedures, although not yet in a systematic and routine way. Competitive quotes are obtained for major items of expenditure, usually with help from the local authority, which has its own procedures. For minor expenditure, different sources are compared for the best price. For example, a price for additional benching and seating in the computer suite is being sought from different suppliers. The school compares costs to seek best value, such as recent changes in a cleaning contract, but systems for doing so consistently across more areas of expenditure are insufficiently developed. There are well-developed routines for consulting internally about changes proposed by the school. Staff have effective decision making arrangements, and priorities are incorporated into longer-term school developments. Governors are involved in helping to decide priorities in the school development plan at an early stage. Proposed developments are examined to see if they are the best way forward in terms of finance and educational need. The provision of a computer suite and additional classroom assistants are areas where the school challenged its established ways of working. Another decision, such as employing a part-time technician to maintain the computers in the suite, was considered better value than a maintenance agreement with the manufacturer, for example.

66. There were a significant number of staff changes following the amalgamation. However, there is a good match of the number of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum. The teaching staff are highly qualified, with a wide range of experience, and the special needs staff are exceptionally well qualified. Teachers with responsibilities for managing curriculum areas have good subject knowledge. The good mix of appropriately trained staff enables specialist teaching in English, information technology, art, design and technology and music. The engagement of subject specialists helps the school to focus on enriching and developing the creative aspects of the curriculum. The engagement of a well qualified, part-time information technology assistant also contributes to high standards achieved by pupils and the quality of the information provided for parents. Some learning support assistants are well trained and enthusiastic, and provide good support to teachers by working independently with individuals or small groups of pupils. However, where learning support assistants are inadequately trained or are poorly directed by teachers, their work is unsatisfactory.

67. The three deputies have classroom responsibilities, but they have been able to support staff and deal with some of the difficulties caused by the recent amalgamation. Their support, along with that of the headteacher and other adults, has helped the school to maintain and improve standards. The school has good arrangements for the induction of new staff, and

the programme follows the guidelines given by the Local Education Authority. Teachers new to the school are given good support by the headteacher and deputies. The school's appraisal and performance procedures are good. Information from professional development interviews is used to set manageable targets, which are incorporated in the school development plan. Teachers are encouraged to attend in-service training, some of which takes place in the school. For example, the information communication technology co-ordinator provides regular training for classroom assistants. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are well met by a highly qualified co-ordinator and other part-time teachers with expertise in special learning difficulties. Classroom assistants work effectively under the direction of the class teacher, making a significant contribution to the quality of education provided. Midday supervisors work as a team with specific duties and contribute effectively to the management of behaviour. The school is well served by the administrative and clerical support staff, as well as the site manager. All staff work together to support the aims of the school and provide pupils with an efficient and effective working environment that encourages them to learn.

68. The school's accommodation is good, and provides a secure and attractive learning environment for pupils and staff. The site and buildings are commendably clean and well maintained. The main school buildings are made up of two two-storey buildings, which provide pupils with an interesting and, in many areas, a stimulating learning environment. In addition, a separate building houses two dining rooms, and this facility allows the halls to be timetabled for lessons throughout the day. Good quality displays reflect the rich range of activities experienced by pupils. Some of the displays are informative and interactive, and they include examples of pupils' poetry, work in art, design and technology and information technology. The school has substantially remodelled several areas to improve efficiency and effectiveness. For example, an information communication technology suite has been built, and there is a new, spacious staff room. However, the remodelling has reduced the number of indoor areas available to hold assemblies and teach physical education. Currently, no area provides sufficient space for the effective teaching of gymnastics to pupils in Years 3 to 6. The carpeting of communal areas of the school helps to reduce noise and substantially improve the learning environment. The buildings are in good decorative condition, and classrooms and communal areas feature many attractive and informative displays of pupils' work. Most classrooms are adequate in size for the numbers of pupils. However, in some classrooms, pupils are cramped when engaged in practical group work or when changing for physical education lessons. The school has two libraries, one in each building. The library for pupils in Reception to Year 2 provides a quiet learning environment, and includes a good selection of fiction and non-fiction books. The school does not have a discrete library area to allow pupils in Years 3 to 6 the chance for personal research as books are currently located in a corridor space.

69. The playgrounds are well marked out to facilitate co-operative and competitive games. An attractive quiet garden area has been developed with the help of outside agencies. Accommodation in the separate nursery building is good, although the outdoor play area is underdeveloped and too small. The reception classrooms provide children with good accommodation.

70. The school's learning resources are good overall. The range and quality of books and resources is good for the core curriculum subjects of English and mathematics, and satisfactory in science. In foundation subjects, resources are never less than satisfactory. Resources for special educational needs and personal, social, health and citizenship education

are of good quality, but their quantity is unsatisfactory. Library provision is satisfactory overall, although many books are worn. Resources for teaching literacy are very good, but the school lacks a wide range of fiction for pupils' independent reading. At the Foundation Stage, the range of learning resources is satisfactory overall, but the nursery does not have enough non-fiction books. The number of computers in the information technology suite is adequate to teach full classes, but the number of computers throughout the school is low.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. To improve standards of work and the quality of pupils' learning, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- review the time allocated to design and technology and physical education in both key stages so that they are taught in enough depth for pupils to reach the expected standards.
- address the small proportion of unsatisfactory teaching by:
 - * raising the expectations of some teachers in Reception and Year 1;
 - * increasing their range of teaching methods;
 - * strengthening their subject knowledge in the teaching of basic skills.
- improve pupils' reading and writing skills by:
 - * increasing the range of strategies to enable pupils to tackle unfamiliar words without adult support;
 - * introducing more opportunities for pupils to write independently in English and other subjects.
- strengthen the co-ordination of the Foundation Stage to ensure more consistent lesson planning by:
 - * reviewing the leadership and management;
 - * developing an early years policy;
 - * strengthening assessment procedures.
- Develop pupils' independent learning skills (as identified in the school improvement plan) by:
 - * giving pupils more opportunities to carry out investigative procedures in science;
 - * providing pupils with a range of opportunities in all subjects to plan, research information and work independently of the teacher.

72. Other weaknesses that the governors should consider for inclusion in the school's action plan are:

- Improve the effectiveness of planning and self-evaluation by ensuring that the school development plan includes clear, measurable targets for improvement, and criteria for judging the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- Build on the relationships with parents so as to help them understand more fully their role in supporting their children's learning and improving their punctuality.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	126
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	16	44	34	5	0	0

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 pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR- Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	22	785
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	162

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	135

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	513

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	58
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	40

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	56	44	100

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	45	46	48
	Girls	35	38	36
	Total	80	84	84
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	80	84	84
	National	83	84	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	45	49	45
	Girls	35	35	34
	Total	80	84	79
Percentage of pupils At NC Level 2 or above	School	80	84	79
	National	84	86	88

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	64	57	121

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	43	50	54
	Girls	47	43	47
	Total	90	93	101
Percentage of pupils At NC Level 4 or above	School	74	77	83
	National	75	72	85

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	44	42	47
	Girls	44	47	48
	Total	88	89	95
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	71	72	77
	National	70	72	79

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	30
Black – African heritage	48
Black – other	6
Indian	245
Pakistani	113
Bangladeshi	13
Chinese	4
White	164
Any other minority ethnic group	54

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	1	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	1	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	3	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	35.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	30

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	299

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	59

Number of pupils per FTE adult	7
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Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1405557.00
Total expenditure	1564042.00
Expenditure per pupil	1906.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	111145.00
Balance carried forward to next year	97227.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Percentage of responses in each category

Number of questionnaires sent out	805
Number of questionnaires returned	238

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	29	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	50	3	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	47	1	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	43	16	10	3
The teaching is good.	52	39	5	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	42	9	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	31	3	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	35	3	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	49	41	5	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	53	40	3	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	43	4	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	37	11	5	12

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

73. Provision for children at the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. At the time of the inspection, there were 44 children attending part-time in the nursery, and 83 children attending full-time in the reception classes. Children may enter the nursery at the age of three years, but many do not begin until they are aged four. They attend part-time until they transfer to the reception classes, where they are joined by children transferring from other schools and nurseries. Currently, there are no children in the nursery who have been identified as having special educational needs, though the large majority of children have English as an additional language. On entry to the nursery, children's attainment in areas of learning is below expectations for their age, and it is very low in English. Their speaking skills are particularly weak, and many children are unable to speak in complete sentences.

74. Inspection evidence indicates that children make satisfactory progress overall throughout the Foundation Stage, and good progress in the nursery class. However, the children's under-developed language skills continue to inhibit their achievements. Consequently, standards remain well below national expectations on entry to the reception classes, and children are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year, except in relation to their personal and social skills, which are closer to national expectations.

Personal and social and emotional development

75. Personal, social and emotional skills are well taught, and children make good progress. The majority of children speak confidently to each other and to adults. In the nursery, they are consistently stimulated and encouraged to try new activities. They select their own activities and work independently. All children learn positive attitudes by observing the good relationships between their parents, carers and teachers. Their concentration is good, and during the inspection, children in the reception classes sat quietly during an assembly, although they could not fully understand its content. The warm welcome extended by teachers each day gives the children confidence, and they successfully perform classroom and school routines. For example, at a morning registration during the inspection, children in a reception class required no settling-in period before changing their clothes for a physical education session. The first golden rule in the Foundation Stage is that every person and every group is special, and staff take every opportunity to reinforce the rule. For example, the nursery teacher celebrates the traditions and cultural expectations of different faiths represented in the class. Relationships are good. Children learn to wait patiently for their turns in activities. Older children in the nursery help younger children, for instance by making milk shakes at snack-time and helping to put on aprons for messy activities. They amicably share equipment and, when arguments do occur, adults quickly and effectively intervene. In the reception classes, there is less emphasis upon children's independence as learning is more directed. Children with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs participate fully. Consequently, they quickly learn established routines and make good progress in this area of learning.

Communication, language and literacy

76. The overall quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory, but it is more effective in the nursery. Most children have very poor vocabulary and speech when they enter the nursery. They are unable to verbalise their ideas and emotions, although their comprehension skills develop quickly. They respond to questions with one-word answers, though a few of the oldest children converse well with each other. The nursery teacher stimulates the vocabularies of all children by reminding them of previous events and talking to them about current activities. In the reception classes, teachers do not allow sufficient time for children to explain their activities, although many are capable of doing so, and others would develop the skills, given the opportunity. Children listen attentively to their teachers' stories and instructions. A few older children in the nursery can turn the pages of a book and remember the sequence of the words. However, these skills are not developed soon enough in the reception classes. A few higher attaining children in the nursery and reception classes can recall some elements of a story previously heard. Older children in the nursery can identify a few sounds. Phonics teaching is good in the nursery, but it is sometimes unsatisfactory in the reception classes. Most children in the Foundation Stage understand that the printed word conveys meaning. In the nursery, children can recognise their names and the names of some of their friends. Higher attaining children in one reception class can recognise and read the days of the week on a wall display of the story of the "*Hungry Caterpillar*". The individual teaching of reading has not been given enough focus in the Reception classes, although children take home library books to read with their parents. In the nursery, many children can write their first names. With the help of adults, children in reception practice writing their first names on one day each week. During these sessions, children correctly use capital and lower case letters. However, as they are not required to write their names correctly at other times, their work is frequently headed with names in random upper and lower case. Similarly, teachers do not have consistent expectations of how children should hold their pencils to enable them to write clearly. All home languages are valued equally. For example, in a reception class, a child was praised for identifying the moon in the Punjabi language. Children with English as an additional language observe how their home languages and cultures are valued by the staff, through the provision of interpreters for their parents and carers.

Mathematical development

77. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall, but stronger in the nursery. Children in the nursery and in the reception classes sing and understand simple number rhymes. A few older children in the nursery can count objects accurately to ten, and recognise figures from 1 to 10. In the reception classes, a few older children can count accurately to twenty, and recognise figures from 1 to 20. Nursery children understand and demonstrate correct measures for making milk shakes. Most children in the nursery can copy a simple pattern, although children in the reception classes have difficulty in repeating patterns of coloured pegs on a board. The teaching of pattern work has been underdeveloped in the Foundation Stage, though it now features in the scheme of work. Reception children understand language such as 'more' and 'take away', but do not understand 'less than'. Higher attaining children in one reception class know that six objects require one more to make seven. However, worksheet activities sometimes fail to reinforce learning or widen knowledge. A few children in the nursery know the meanings of 'full' and 'empty' when playing with water and containers, but they do not know the meaning of 'half full'. Children in the reception classes recognise simple two-dimensional shapes, such as triangle, square

and circle. Higher attaining children can draw the shapes freehand. Children confidently use many words to describe shape and size, such as 'wide', 'narrow', 'thin' and 'thick'. Reception aged children identify 'smallest' and 'tallest'. Children in the nursery are encouraged to solve simple practical problems outside the confines of mathematics lessons. For example, they count the number of drinks at snack time, and learn the order of numbers when lining up. All adults in the nursery make good use of tidying-up time to teach mathematics. In the reception classes, however, teachers miss opportunities to integrate mathematics with other subjects. For example, children answer the register without understanding the number of children present or absent. Reception-age children are formally taught to write numbers, but their mistakes sometimes remain uncorrected.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children's language deficiencies prevent them from achieving the early learning goals in this area. However, it is generally well taught through interesting activities, so that children make good progress. For example, children in the nursery were asked to describe objects in a 'feely box'. The nursery teacher encouraged children to use fingertips for maximum sensitivity. During this session, when a child asked, "What makes the noise of hands clapping?" the teacher involved children in experimentally clapping loudly and softly. In a reception class lesson, individual children describing properties of a partially hidden object were excited when their observations were subsequently confirmed. Children in the nursery can name parts of their bodies, such as arms, legs and eyes, whilst children in the reception classes identify individual bones. All children have visited the park to collect autumn leaves, conkers and twigs. Children in the nursery and reception classes enjoy playing with construction toys, and nursery children plan and build complex structures with bricks. Children use a variety of methods of joining materials together. Teachers in the reception classes make good use of the school's toy museum. They discuss old photographs with the children to increase their awareness of past events. Children in the Foundation Stage learn about various cultures. However, few relevant information books are available in the nursery. Most children in the Foundation Stage are interested in computers. Older children in the nursery perform simple operations with the mouse, and can print their work with assistance from adults. These skills are not sufficiently developed in the reception classes.

Creative development

79. This area is satisfactorily taught. Most children do not know the names of colours when they enter the nursery, although, they make rapid progress and soon identify the colours on a patchwork elephant. Reception teachers successfully develop children's colour awareness. Teachers ensure that children experiment with paints and collage from a wide variety of materials. During the inspection, children were making collages of rainbow fish to illustrate a story they had heard. However, most drawings in the Foundation Stage are not sufficiently developed. Children have a good repertoire of songs to help develop their knowledge and understanding. For example they sing a simple song about the parts of the body. The school's music coordinator has taught children to co-ordinate words and actions, and to

loudly and softly. Not enough emphasis is given to role-play in the Foundation Stage. Children do not have the experiences or language skills necessary to assume characters without guidance from adults, and sometimes adults miss opportunities to participate in these activities. However, in a very good session in the nursery, children were expressing their ideas whilst making a brick construction of Aladdin's castle, supported by good questions from the teacher.

Physical development

80. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory. Children in a reception class dance lesson expressed happy and sad feelings whilst responding to music. Nevertheless, they did not make enough use of the space, and the teacher did not demonstrate the meaning of her frequent requests to 'find a space'. Opportunities for physical development are limited in the nursery. In the outside area, children climb enthusiastically on a simple frame, often reaching the top bars. With good coaching from the nursery teacher, they make good attempts to throw a small ball through a basketball hoop. In a reception class lesson, children showed good co-ordination during balancing activities. Reception classes have access to a complex climbing frame in the playground, but these sessions are not effectively taught because too much emphasis is placed on the management of the activities. Children in the Foundation Stage satisfactorily develop finer skills, such as rolling play dough and cutting it accurately with plastic knives and pastry cutters.

ENGLISH

81. In the national tests in summer 2000, pupils aged 11 achieved standards below those found nationally, but above the results of pupils in schools having similar proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils attaining the level above that expected was close to the national average. The results of National Curriculum tests for seven-year olds show that standards in reading and writing were below the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards in reading were close to the national average though standards in writing were above the national average. The performance of boys at the age of seven is better than that of girls in both reading and writing. As the school was newly formed in September 1999, no information is available about trends over time.

82. Inspection evidence shows that by the age of seven, pupils have made satisfactory progress in speaking and listening but their skills remain below average. Their attainment in both reading and writing is below nationally expected levels. When pupils leave the school at the age of 11, they have made good progress in speaking and listening and attain the nationally expected standards. They also make good progress in reading and writing and attain the expected levels. However, only a small proportion of pupils are working at the higher Level 5 in reading and writing. Overall, pupils' attainment in English shows steady improvement.

83. The school has a high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. This has an impact on overall standards in English, particularly of the younger pupils. When they enter the nursery, children's speaking and listening skills are very low. They make good progress in the nursery, but many children have not attained the Early Learning Goals for language and literacy by the time they complete the Foundation Stage. Standards in speaking

and listening, reading and writing are still well below average. Although pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in English through Years 1 and 2, standards are still below those expected nationally by the time they are seven. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are not confident or articulate in speaking in class or in assemblies. Many pupils rely on non-verbal communication or give one-word answers to questions. However, pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress in English so that their attainment is in line with standards expected nationally by the age of 11. This is because pupils' rate of progress increases as they develop confidence and fluency in spoken English.

84. Teachers provide structured opportunities for pupils to practise their speaking skills. For example, in Year 6, pupils work in small groups to prepare short presentations on aspects of their work in history and religious education. They then present their work clearly and confidently to the class. Some of their presentations are recorded and used for further discussion and evaluation of their work. In religious education pupils had worked well in small groups to tell their classmates about some of the celebrations important in their own religious traditions.

85. By Year 2, pupils attain lower than national expectations in reading. Most pupils say that they enjoy reading, but they are not familiar with a range of books and authors. They take books home regularly to read with adults, but do not bring them back to school each day. Pupils have a limited range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. They have a good sight vocabulary, but do not sound out words or break them into smaller parts. When pupils make mistakes in their reading, they often do not correct themselves to establish meaning. They enjoy listening to stories in class and joining in when parts are repeated, but they are less confident when reading alone. Some of the younger pupils who are not yet fluent readers enjoy looking at books, though they do not use the pictures to tell the story.

86. By Year 6, pupils have made good progress in reading, and standards are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils in Year 3, which includes pupils who have joined from other schools, are beginning to read aloud with expression. They are becoming more fluent, but many still do not have a range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words. Pupils enjoy reading the shared texts in their literacy lessons, and this is helping them to become more fluent. As they grow older, pupils' enthusiasm for reading increases and they enjoy a wider range of books and stories. In discussing their favourite books and authors, pupils referred to a small range of popular writers for children, such as Roald Dahl and Dick King Smith. Pupils are beginning to use reference books with confidence to find information, and are familiar with the way in which libraries are organised. A small number of pupils read with technical competence, but, when asked about their reading, they do not show the deeper levels of understanding that is characteristic of higher attainers.

87. By the time they are aged seven, many pupils still have a limited range of vocabulary and spoken expression, which has an impact on their writing skills. Pupils try hard to present their work well, but their handwriting is not well developed. Pupils' use of spelling and basic punctuation is below levels expected of pupils of their age. Many pupils find writing a chore, which hampers their progress in other areas of the curriculum. There is little evidence of activities to promote pupils' independent writing skills in English and in other subjects.

88. The work of older pupils shows an emphasis on grammar exercises and on practising skills, but these skills are practised in isolation and are not sufficiently transferred to pupils' independent writing. Pupils take care over their handwriting, which is usually neat and well

formed. Again, pupils' level of fluency in spoken language influences their written work. The quality of pupils' writing improves as they develop their speaking skills and vocabulary. In one Year 6 lesson, pupils were using a range of lively expression, which made their writing interesting and engaged the reader's attention. Whilst the majority of 11 year olds attain satisfactory standards in English, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level (Level 5) is small. Pupils are beginning to use the drafting process to review and improve their work. They work well in pairs to discuss their work, and make evaluative comments about each other's writing.

89. Teaching is good across the school, although there are variations in teachers' skills. Teaching was judged to be good in almost 50 per cent of lessons seen, and very good in a further 21 per cent. Nevertheless, teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory in 10 per cent of lessons. Teachers have a secure understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and implement it well. They identify clearly the learning intentions in each lesson and share these with pupils. This means that pupils understand and can explain what they are learning. Teachers work hard to develop pupils' oral skills and develop their vocabulary. In some of the lessons observed, a teacher funded through the Ethnic Minorities Achievement Grant was working alongside the class teacher. Teachers collaborated very well and this greatly benefited the pupils. Teachers make good use of pupils' own writing to show good examples of a written introduction.

90. Teachers match tasks closely to pupils' prior learning in most lessons, which helps pupils to achieve well. The best lessons proceed at a brisk pace, with work being presented in a lively and interesting manner. This stimulates pupils' interest and ensures that they are well motivated and work productively. Teachers have appropriate expectations of pupils. There are some weaknesses in the teaching of reading as opposed to listening to pupils read. For example, there is no consistent teaching of phonic skills, in order to enable pupils to develop strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Pupils are not helped to use picture and context clues to help them understand their reading. This means that many of them rely on their sight vocabulary and wait to be told new words. There is also limited teaching of early writing skills. Pupils' lack of phonic awareness means that they are reluctant to attempt spellings for themselves, and they rely on copying beneath an adult's writing. This slows their progress in the lower part of the school. The school has established a new marking policy, and this is beginning to be effective, particularly in Key Stage 2. Teachers' comments on pupils' written work are evaluative and give guidance on how they can improve their work. Teachers also give pupils positive feedback about their work in lessons. Teachers set targets for pupils and often refer to these in lessons.

91. Co-ordination of English is shared between the key stages. The school has begun to analyse results and monitor standards, but this process is not fully developed. There are regular formal assessments and the school uses a range of standardised tests for reading and spelling. Resources for teaching literacy are very good, but the school lacks a wide range of fiction for pupils' independent reading and has to rely on pupils bringing in books from home.

MATHEMATICS

92. In the national tests in summer 2000, pupils aged 11 achieved standards above those found nationally, and well above the results of pupils in similar schools. Inspection evidence reflects these results, and pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school. Pupils aged seven achieved standards well below those found nationally, but they matched those found in similar schools. A significant number of pupils have English as an additional language and, at the age of seven, many of them are not yet fully confident with the variety of language associated with mathematics. As a result, although they achieve average standards in basic number work, they do not always understand what is required of them in tests.

93. Girls did not achieve as well as boys in the tests at the age of seven. The school has identified this as an aspect to improve. Although some girls do not readily offer to answer questions, there was no evidence during the inspection of girls under-achieving. Teachers are careful to encourage girls to answer questions and all groups are mixed, with girls and boys working confidently together at all levels of attainment.

94. Analysis of pupils' work shows that the pace of learning is good from Year 2 onwards. Work in Year 1 is not always matched well to the needs of pupils, and activities lack interest and variety. Many pupils do not write their numbers correctly when they begin Year 1. Not enough attention is paid in the Foundation Stage, or at the start of Year 1, to establishing correct number formation. The presentation of work in all other year groups is often good. Pupils are taught how to set out their work so that they can check their working easily.

95. By the age of seven, pupils are developing a sound knowledge of numbers to 100. They begin to solve problems using addition and subtraction, although some pupils are confused at times by the use of different words. Once they understand the type of 'sum' involved, most cope well with demands of the actual number work. Teachers' explanations and demonstrations are always very clear, and pupils are encouraged to understand and to use the correct mathematical terms. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6, they have a good grasp of relevant vocabulary. In lessons in Year 6, most pupils could accurately identify the key words in problems.

96. By the age of 11, pupils have a good understanding of the number system. They work confidently with fractions, and many know their multiplication tables. In Years 5 and 6, all pupils benefit significantly from working for three days each week in groups organised according to attainment. Teachers are able to focus on a somewhat narrower range of work, and pupils enjoy working with others at a similar level. The arrangements are flexible, so that pupils move between groups when assessment indicates that they would gain from increased challenge or greater support. By the age of 11, pupils develop a good range of mental skills and strategies. They become increasingly confident in explaining their thinking to the whole class. This is the result of systematic teaching and the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Many pupils enjoy the mental number practice at the start of lessons. In Years 3 and 4, the most successful lessons start with interesting activities that involve and motivate all pupils. A short and very competitive Bingo session in a Year 4 class encouraged pupils to recall multiplication facts quickly.

97. All aspects of mathematics are covered thoroughly. Most pupils in Year 2 describe the properties of basic two and three-dimensional shapes. With guidance, they collect data to create block graphs, and then use these to compare information about their favourite

playground equipment. By Year 6, most pupils can find the perimeter and area of squares and rectangles. They know the angle properties of triangles, and work confidently with metric units of measurement. Most pupils enjoy mathematics, and lessons are usually interesting and relevant. In a very good lesson in Year 6, lower attaining pupils made very good gains in understanding as they estimated and then measured the capacity of containers, such as a milk bottle and wine glass. Data-handling skills are also developed well in mathematics lessons and also in science and information technology lessons. By Year 6, pupils construct and interpret line graphs and pie charts. They understand and use terms such as mode and median. Information technology is suitably used in this aspect of mathematics.

98. The quality of teaching is good overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed, although the scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that there are shortcomings in some Year 1 classes. There is not enough challenge for some pupils in Year 1, and others are set tasks that they do not understand. Almost 25 per cent of teaching observed was very good, and very good lessons were seen in all year groups from Year 2 to Year 6. Almost 50 per cent of lessons were good, and the remainder were satisfactory. Most teachers have a good knowledge of the National Numeracy Strategy, and their use of correct vocabulary in all lessons ensures that, over time, all pupils learn to explain their work correctly. Teaching is most effective in Years 5 and 6, where the pace of learning is consistently good. The quality of direct, whole class teaching is often very high, with clear explanations, demonstrations and probing questioning to ensure that pupils understand. All pupils are fully involved. One teacher in Year 6 has a very good rule, insisting that every pupil answers at least one question. All teachers have high expectations of good behaviour, and little time is wasted during most lessons. Most teachers have established good systems for ensuring that pupils begin written activities promptly. In a few lessons, time is lost as books are given out and pupils move to their places. Teachers set good homework activities, which are directly related to work covered in class, and as a result learning is effectively reinforced. In a Year 5 class, the homework sheet included valuable advice to parents, recognising that parents may be unfamiliar with some of the methods used in arithmetic. The high quality of mathematics displays in most rooms, and in one of the halls, extends pupils' learning.

99. The quality of additional classroom support is usually good, and helps to ensure that all pupils learn at a similar rate. Additional support is provided for pupils with English as an additional language and for pupils with special educational needs, as well as some general classroom support. Occasionally the support time is not used well, for example where a classroom assistant watches the start of the lesson, with no clear role. By contrast, during the whole class session in one class, a very effective support assistant observed the pupils, made notes, and discreetly redirected a pupil whose attention strayed.

100. The school has two subject co-ordinators and a homework co-ordinator. The co-ordinators have begun to work together, and they have both had time to observe teaching. Subjects management is strongest in Key Stage 2, where assessment procedures are good because results of tests are carefully analysed. The new marking policy is used consistently, and good marking is contributing to pupils' learning. For example, pupils check back in their books to read comments by teachers. Mathematics has been a priority on the school development plan, and pupils are now achieving well. In the national tests at age 11, the school achieved results well above the modest target that had been set in 2000. There is scope for revising the target for 2001.

SCIENCE

101. Results of the national tests in summer 2000 for Year 6 pupils show that standards were comparable with those of all schools nationally. When the results are compared to those of schools with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, they were above average when pupils left the school at the end of Year 6. The number of pupils attaining above the expected level was above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Teachers' assessments of pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2000 show that standards were below average compared to those of other schools nationally.

102. Standards attained by pupils currently in Year 2 are below those expected for their age. Because a very high proportion of pupils enters the school with little or no English, a significant number in Year 2 experience problems when explaining their work and in making task-related observations. Pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are in line with expectations in their knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes. However, inspection evidence shows that pupils' attainment in scientific enquiry is below average. Pupils in Year 6 lack skills in conducting the whole process of independently planning and carrying out experiments. The school has identified this weakness in provision, and there is now a greater emphasis on investigative work throughout the school. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to provide staff training to increase teachers' confidence in this area of their teaching.

103. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. In the best lessons, interesting tasks are well chosen, with a good balance of direct teaching and opportunities for pupils to apply their enquiry skills to find things out for themselves. Of the lessons seen in Years 1 and 2, teaching is very good in 29 per cent, satisfactory in 57 per cent, and unsatisfactory in 14 per cent. The very good learning seen in a Year 1 lesson was the direct result of the teacher challenging pupils to recognise and name a range of natural and man-made sources of light. The pupils were highly motivated by the teaching, and this resulted in very worthwhile group discussions. In all lessons where pupils are challenged by the teaching, pupils behave very well, concentrate on what they are doing and work hard to overcome difficulties. These good attitudes make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning. Another very good example of high quality science teaching was seen in a Year 2 lesson, where pupils were thinking about breaks in electrical circuits. They went on to gain a good understanding of conductivity by using a range of materials within a circuit. In the unsatisfactory lesson seen in Year 1, pupils spent the lesson sitting on the carpet and were not given opportunities to find things out for themselves. In consequence, pupils lost interest and the pace of their learning was too slow.

104. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning observed was judged to be good in 70 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 30 per cent. The influence of teaching on learning in Year 6 is weakened because pupils' investigative skills have not been systematically developed year on year. Teaching in this year group is satisfactory, and pupils make good progress in gaining scientific knowledge and an understanding of how to plan an investigation. However, activities are too directed, and teachers lack confidence in pupils' abilities to explore independently. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are making good progress in scientific enquiry because of the increased emphasis on this area of their learning. In Year 3 lessons, pupils were successfully using their senses when comparing the properties of everyday materials, such as their hardness and strength. Higher attaining pupils went further to gain a good understanding of flexibility and transparency. The teachers, having planned well together, had devised a range of interesting teaching strategies such as guessing 'what

am I' after describing an object in terms of its properties. Pupils were well motivated to contribute, and this ensured a good pace to their learning. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils were making good progress in using thermometers to measure temperature. By the end of the lesson, most pupils were able to explain temperature changes using correct scientific vocabulary. In this lesson, the teacher worked well with groups of pupils, getting them to explain their observations as they worked. The classroom assistant was used well to support the learning of pupils with special educational needs. Work on display shows that Year 4 pupils have a good understanding of the functions of the main organs of the human body and of the need for a healthy lifestyle. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils showed a good understanding of the need for fair testing. The class teacher built effectively on pupils' understanding to move them forward as they devised an experiment to investigate evaporation.

105. Throughout the school, teachers plan well in year-groups. Learning intentions are clear, and these are shared with pupils so that they are aware of what they are to learn. The good quality provision made for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language ensures that they have full and equal access to the curriculum. As a result, these pupils make progress that is comparable to that of other pupils. Apart from the weakness already mentioned, all aspects of science are given appropriate consideration. Teachers expect work to be neatly presented, and the quality of their marking is good, with comments that challenge pupils to think about how their work can be improved. Opportunities for pupils to record their work independently, as seen in a Year 5 lesson, and the teaching of the correct scientific vocabulary, mean that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' literacy skills. The development of pupils' numeracy skills is also well supported, as pupils measure temperature, mass and capacity, and record their findings graphically. The school gives pupils many opportunities to gain an understanding and appreciation of the wonders of nature. Visits to Epping Forest, Hayes' Hill Farm and visits from the community farm, enhance the curriculum as well as pupils' spiritual and social development.

106. The recently appointed co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. She has a good action plan for the future improvement of investigative science and of teachers' confidence in developing this aspect. Tests for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 have been introduced to measure their progress as they move through the school. Assessment information is not always well used by teachers to plan work for individual groups of pupils. When practical investigations are planned, for example, some teachers do not fully consider the needs of the higher attaining pupils.

ART AND DESIGN

107. Art plays a prominent role in the life of the school. The very high standard of displays in corridors and public areas creates a visually exciting and stimulating environment for pupils, staff and visitors. Most classroom displays, particularly at Key Stage 2, are also very effective. By the time pupils are aged seven, their attainment is generally similar to that expected for their age. Pupils make good gains in learning skills and techniques so that their standards are above the national expectation by the time they are aged 11.

108. Pupils benefit significantly from the systematic teaching of skills and techniques. Many begin Year 1 with immature drawing skills. Sketchbooks are used well in all year groups for pupils to plan work and experiment with different skills and techniques. By Year 2, pupils explore and compare effects, for example drawing fruit with pastels and a computer drawing program. Pupils become aware of the styles of different artists, producing work in the style of Jackson Pollock and Mondrian. Average and higher attaining pupils understand terms such as 'collage', and comment on the artist's intention as they look at prints of a work by Matisse. Pupils work with care and are able to look at their work critically and suggest improvements.

109. Pupils make good progress in understanding visual elements of art, such as colour, pattern, line and tone. The effects of mixing colours are explored thoroughly, and often presented in a very pleasing way. Pupils in Year 3, for example, combined their work on primary colours with paper weaving. Drawing skills are developed systematically, and pupils benefit from direct teaching. Pupils in Year 4 used shading confidently when they drew Roman artefacts in pencil. Pupils in Year 5 work enthusiastically and sensibly with pastels, charcoal and a range of drawing pencils, discussing the effects of smudging, shading and blending colours. They experiment purposefully, understanding that the lesson is a preparation for producing a still-life drawing. Although the time allocated to art is relatively limited, pupils remember the relevant vocabulary and use it confidently. In a very good lesson in Year 6, pupils made significant gains in learning as they were taught some basic skills of drawing the human form. They began to understand the relative proportions of head, body and arms. Pupils were excited at the thought of developing their work into a three-dimensional model. In general, there are limited opportunities for three-dimensional work, and there is scope for the school to develop this aspect further.

110. Pupils in Year 2 gain from working with a visiting artist, and pupils in Years 2 and 5 enjoy visiting the National Gallery. Teachers also regularly refer to examples of work from established artists. As a result, by Year 6, pupils can talk about the effects achieved by different artists, comparing Seurat with Monet, and Van Gogh with Turner. They also gain experience of art from non-western cultures, learning about aboriginal art in Year 4, and also exploring aspects of Indian art and Islamic patterns.

111. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and teach the relevant skills very well. They have high expectations, and behaviour management in practical lessons is very good. Teachers are skilful in praising individual effort and achievement so that pupils of all abilities try their best, confident that their work is valued. Pupils whose first language is not English, and those with special educational needs (and indeed all other pupils), benefit from the very clear practical demonstrations and examples given at the start of lessons. As a result, all pupils progress at a similar rate. Classroom assistants give useful support to teachers, particularly in monitoring the work of pupils with challenging behaviour. On occasions, however, they give too much direct help to pupils, for example doing their cutting out for them rather than encouraging independence.

112. The subject makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The two co-ordinators have begun to work closely together, and the school benefits from having enthusiastic and talented display co-ordinators. Resources are good, and pupils benefit from using good quality materials. The school has appreciated the new kiln provided by the parents' association.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

113. Pupils achieve standards in design and technology that are below the national expectations for pupils aged 7 and 11. Aspects of design and technology are integrated into other aspects of the curriculum, and enhance pupils' understanding in several subjects, including science and art. Evidence from displays shows that pupils' skills in designing, making and evaluating are developed to a limited extent, and there are examples of good practice in both key stages. Displays included toys that make use of moving parts, and models that support pupils' knowledge and understanding in their science work. For example, levers using pneumatic forces are used to assemble models, and pupils investigate how the strength of paper can be increased when formed into different shapes. Pupils in Year 5 make musical instruments and analyse types of packaging for different biscuits.

114. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 used a small range of materials and simple tools to assemble a vehicle. They examined the use of different holders for the axles, approaching the task with enthusiasm and talking about their work in simple terms. The small proportion of higher attainers explained their choices with some confidence. However, the large majority of pupils had insufficient knowledge of materials and components, and were unable to suggest ways of improvement. Pupils in Year 6 were seen planning and building an 'Anderson Shelter'. They were encouraged to plan and evaluate their work using clear criteria, guided by a design sheet. Pupils worked with commitment and enthusiasm, but they struggled to match the products to the designs, and showed little awareness of the properties of the materials they were using. Teachers place a good emphasis on the whole process of designing, making, evaluating and refining. However, pupils' designing and making skills are under-developed and they make unsatisfactory progress through both key stages. This is despite the satisfactory teaching seen in the small number of lessons. This teaching was well focused, and gave pupils some good opportunities to generate ideas, make products, and evaluate their effectiveness. Nevertheless, pupils do not achieve well over time due largely to the lack of time given to the subject and the absence of a systematic approach to the teaching of skills. By Year 6, pupils have a limited understanding and awareness of different types of tools and the constraints of different materials.

115. The subject is managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator, who is well organised and has built up the resources to support the teaching. However, she recognises the need for the school to focus on the teaching of design and technology and help teachers build up their confidence in the subject. The draft policy includes helpful guidance, though formal assessment procedures have yet to be introduced. Portfolios of pupils' work are being introduced to help with assessment procedures.

GEOGRAPHY

116. Pupils attain standards in line with national expectations by the time they are aged 7 and 11. By the age of seven, they have a well-developed understanding of their locality, pointing out the different features of the area such as the local park. They also know the features of their school. Pupils in Year 2 describe their route accurately from their classroom to the hall in the junior building. They draw simple maps outlining their route, often labelling

appropriately the features on the way. Past work indicates they have sufficient knowledge of a contrasting locality, and have studied how a coastal location differs from their own, based upon a story. Pupils have sufficient knowledge of localities further away, gained, for instance, through a visit to a local farm. Past work on display indicates that they know the features found there, and can sketch buildings and vehicles accurately.

117. Pupils develop a suitable range of investigative skills and knowledge of other locations by the time they are aged 11. Pupils know some of the features of a Mediterranean country, such as Greece, and can use an atlas to locate places adjacent to it. They have a sound understanding of how to interpret information from a map, and find features such as rivers and mountains. Pupils' work in Year 5 illustrates clearly their understanding of the effects of climate on a location and how it can influence tourism and land use. Pupils in Year 6 study the differences between local, regional, national and international news. They use their knowledge of their local area, as well as areas further away, to relate to the different stories. Pupils' past work also illustrates their ability to record their observations during fieldwork on the Isle of Wight. They make accurate diagrams to show different features of the area, such as cliffs, bays and coves.

118. Pupils make good gains in their learning as they move through the school. This level of achievement is enhanced by the use of simple fieldwork around the school, to make observations, and collect information. Visits in the locality, to shops for instance, contrast well to locations further away. Pupils work and behave well in both key stages. They are particularly good at listening to the class teachers' instructions and directions. Pupils take care with their work generally, although this is a stronger feature in the work of older pupils. They enjoy their work throughout the school, and pupils in junior classes often supplement their activities with work brought in from home or researched on the Internet. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make sound gains in their learning in Key Stage 1, but their rate of learning increases and it is good by the time they are 11.

119. Teaching is never less than satisfactory, and it was judged to be good in 50 per cent of the lessons seen. Teaching was very good in one lesson in Key Stage 1, and good in over half the lessons seen in Key Stage 2. The very good lesson in Year 1 showed the teacher's ability in asking open-ended questions. The use of a teddy bear to help illustrate the features found around the school motivated pupils and helped them to recall the features well. Teachers in Key Stage 2 explain tasks well, provide interesting activities, and have high expectations of pupils' work rate. In the best example, pupils in Year 5 became fully absorbed in their work on a poster to entice people to travel to Greece. Pupils were so motivated by the topic that they carried out their own research at home and brought in additional materials. The effective use of time is another good feature of teaching. Activities are well balanced between listening, discussion, and investigating the chosen area and its features.

120. The subject is managed as 'humanities' together with history. The scheme of work, based on guidance provided nationally, is being tailored appropriately to the specific needs of the school. There has been good monitoring of activities and work produced, and informative reports have been produced for senior staff and governors. There are good resources for the subject, and priorities chosen for development are appropriate.

HISTORY

121. Pupils attain standards in line with national expectations by age 7 and 11. The school is adapting national guidance to support teaching, and teachers are beginning to plan their work in line with the new requirements. By Year 2, pupils understand that life was different in the past. They learn about Florence Nightingale and, during the inspection, they received a visit from an actress in role as the famous character. Pupils were spellbound by her story and fascinated by the range of artefacts she had brought to show them. This dramatic presentation helped pupils to appreciate the story and understand the differences between the working life of nurses in Victorian Times and those of today.

122. Pupils are beginning to understand that events change people's lives, and that some of these changes affect our lives today. Pupils in Year 1 have visited the Museum of Childhood at Bethnal Green, and pupils throughout have brought in a collection of toys that belonged to their parents as children. These, together with photographs and childhood memories of parents and grandparents, form an attractive school museum, which helps pupils to understand how toys have changed over time.

123. By the age of 11, pupils show a developing understanding of chronology. Pupils in Year 5 are able to use their class time-line to identify the Roman period correctly. They understand the meaning of the terms BC and AD. Pupils suggested that the Greeks came before the Romans because the Greeks worshipped different gods whereas the Romans were beginning to convert to Christianity. They understand that historians use a range of sources to find out about the past. Several pupils talked about the work of archaeologists, and some spoke of stories being passed down orally through generations. They understand that the remains of old buildings and remnants of artefacts can provide information about the past. Pupils in Year 6 use their research skills to find out about life in the 1960s. In lessons, pupils show a good understanding of history in their oral work, and are developing the skills of historical enquiry. However, many pupils have poorly developed writing skills, and this has an impact on their progress in some aspects of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language also make satisfactory progress in history.

124. Teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons well, making good use of artefacts and a variety of sources of information. Pupils benefit from teachers' good subject knowledge, and lessons are conducted at a brisk pace. Teachers relate the work well to pupils' direct experience, which engages their interest and helps them to achieve. The use of a theatre company was particularly successful, and further visits are planned. Pupils are enthusiastic about their lessons. They share resources well and work well in groups, for instance when pupils in Year 6 prepared short presentations about aspects of life in the 1960's. In all the lessons observed, pupils worked with effort and concentration.

125. The subject is soundly managed by the co-ordinator, who monitors colleagues' planning, providing advice and support where necessary. Pupils' work in books and on display is also monitored but there has not been the opportunity to observe colleagues teaching. There is no formal system of assessment in history. Resources for the subject are good, including a range of artefacts. These include articles, photographs, and written

accounts of life at South Park from former pupils and memorabilia. These are attractively displayed in the entrance corridor and provide a valuable reference collection for history teaching. The library has sufficient books to support the teaching of history, but some books are worn and in need of replacement. The school has an impressive archive collection tracing its history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

126. Pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations by ages 7 and 11. By Year 2, pupils use the keyboard and mouse effectively to control activities on the screen. They use an art programme to create different regular shapes, such as squares and rectangles. Pupils add colours accurately to create different effects, for instance using the ‘spray’ tool to give the impression of fireworks in the night sky. Past work shows that pupils can perform simple word-processing skills, changing fonts into different sizes and rearranging simple text. Pupils use CD-ROM programmes to find out information and carry out simple mathematical problems. Pupils’ skills are effectively developed within information technology lessons, but these skills are not reinforced systematically in other subjects throughout the school.

127. By Year 6, pupils develop a suitable and appropriate range of skills. Pupils have appropriate knowledge of spreadsheets. They word process effectively, and use this to create a school magazine that shows a well-developed range of word-processing techniques and graphic features. Pupils in Year 3 use a drawing programme skilfully to create a poster using clip-art features. Older pupils in Year 5 develop their knowledge of databases, entering and amending data, and printing the finished results. Pupils in Year 6 are beginning to design their own web site pages using different designs and graphics.

128. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, although they make the most gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills in Years 3 to 6. They benefit significantly from the opportunities to use information technology in some other subjects. For example, work in mathematics makes effective use of spreadsheets, and drawing programmes are used to well to support the teaching of art. In lessons, pupils pay close attention to the teachers, and are enthusiastic about working with computers. They behave well, often working co-operatively in pairs and sharing resources. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, make sound gains in their learning in Years 1 and 2, and good gains in Years 3 to 6. This picture reflects the rate of progress, the systematic development of skills and the levels of achievement made by other pupils.

129. Teaching is good. In both key stages, joint planning ensures consistency and clear instructions that set tasks in context. Well-planned lessons ensure that pupils have sufficient time to use the computers. Pupils benefit from teachers’ good subject knowledge, particularly with regard to programmes such as those used for databases and drawing programmes at Key Stage 2. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, evident in the well-paced lessons and the rate at which pupils learn new concepts and skills. Teachers throughout the school have developed their own expertise and are continuing to benefit from regular training as part of a government initiative.

130. The recently appointed co-ordinator manages the subject well. She monitors pupils' work and has introduced well-developed schemes of work to support teachers' planning. The policy has been reviewed and updated. Pupils benefit significantly from the recently refurbished computer suite, which enables pupils to be taught discrete skills. A part-time technician engaged by the school maintains these facilities.

MUSIC

131. Standards attained by pupils in Years 2 and 6 meet national expectations. Pupils in Year 2 memorise a good repertoire of songs. They sing tunefully and harmoniously, with varying tempo. They complete a number of simple maps showing routes to school each day, with symbols illustrating the sounds heard at various locations. In a practical lesson, they allocated suitable instruments to such sounds, for instance using a xylophone to represent raindrops. By Year 6, pupils develop a significantly greater repertoire of songs. In one lesson seen, pupils devised an ostinato accompaniment for a Beatles' song. Pupils of average attainment explained confidently the meaning of ostinato. However, in this otherwise satisfactory lesson, insufficient time was available for pupils to evaluate each other's work. Pupils in a Year 5 lesson were seen to listen attentively to brief extracts from the work of composers such as Stravinsky and Mahler, with the objective of matching the music to proposed television advertisements. In this good lesson, where pupils were encouraged to express opinions, the class showed good understanding of mood, tempo and volume.

132. Pupils make good progress throughout the school. They compose and perform with increasing confidence. A small but significant proportion of pupils learn to play musical instruments, including the guitar, violin, trumpet, flute, and piano. Pupils are given good opportunities to perform in the school orchestra, which plays at assemblies, parents' evenings, and an annual carol service at a local church. During the inspection, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 sang with clarity and vigour during a choir practice. The school choir recently performed at the Royal Albert Hall.

133. Pupils respond enthusiastically to musical activities, and are appreciative of each other's performances. Their attitudes and behaviour are very good, and they take pride in the quality of their playing and singing. Pupils with special educational needs, and the large number with English as an additional language, are fully involved in musical activities. For example, a visually impaired pupil benefited from the use of a sheet with large music print to help her become fully involved in the lesson.

134. The overall quality of teaching is good. Pupils benefit significantly from the school's engagement of a skilled musician, who teaches particularly well and works closely with non-specialist teachers to improve their subject knowledge and teaching skills. Her in-depth subject knowledge, humour, and decisive but relaxed approach are an inspiration to pupils and staff. This part-time teacher is also an effective subject manager. A new policy for music is being implemented, offering many ideas for the use of information technology and the inclusion of music in other subjects. There are no formal assessment procedures. Western music predominates in the school, though music of other cultures is being progressively introduced. Accommodation for music is satisfactory, although some classrooms are too small for practical music lessons. There is a good range of resources, which is used well to support teaching.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. Standards in physical education are below national expectations at ages 7 and 11, and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is due largely to the lack of curriculum time given to the teaching of physical education, particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6.

136. In Years 1 and 2, a small proportion of pupils move with confidence and link skills to make a sequence in gymnastics and dance. However, the overall quality of pupils' movement is under-developed. Pupils are unable to reproduce simple skills with consistency or explore imaginatively with confidence. A particular weakness in Years 1 and 2 is pupils' lack of ability in evaluating their own work and that of others to help with the improvement of skills and understanding. This weakness is continued in work in Years 3 to 6.

137. In Years 3 to 6, a small proportion of higher attaining pupils are well co-ordinated and move with confidence in games skills. For example, a small number of pupils in Year 6 controlled the ball well during skittle ball and passed the ball with accuracy and appropriate pace. These pupils also showed positional awareness by moving into an appropriate space to pass and support members of their team. However, all pupils in Years 3 to 6, including higher attainers, would benefit both from more challenging activities to improve their skills development, and from more opportunities to plan and evaluate their work. Although the large majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons, pupils overall make unsatisfactory progress through the key stage. The large majority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are underachieving in physical education. This is because they are not given enough opportunities to maintain or develop an awareness of health-related fitness, strengthen control and fluency in their practical work, and develop an ability to compare their own work with that of others. In consequence, pupils are unable to evaluate and refine their work.

138. The unsatisfactory progress and underachievement of pupils reflect the lack of curriculum time allocated to the subject, rather than the quality of teaching and learning, which was satisfactory overall. All lessons apart from one were judged to be satisfactory or better, and a third of lessons seen were good. Pupils are keen to participate. They make the most gains in their skill development and understanding when teaching includes well-paced practical activities, clear demonstrations and opportunities to practise skills. Aspects of good teaching were seen in several lessons, and pupils are generally well managed. Good relationships are used effectively in helping pupils organise themselves and work successfully in groups. Unsatisfactory teaching was slow paced and included little guidance for pupils to help them develop skills and improve their understanding. Overall weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory teaching included a lack of in-depth subject knowledge, particularly with regard to gymnastics, and the absence of challenging tasks to stretch all pupils. Pupils made satisfactory progress in lessons although they are capable of achieving more. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are well integrated, and make similar gains to other pupils in the lessons.

139. The experienced subject co-ordinator is a member of the senior management team. He has good knowledge of the subject and provides colleagues with helpful guidance. However, physical education is not allocated sufficient curriculum time, and the school does not have sufficient equipment or adequate facilities to successfully support the teaching of gymnastics in Years 3 to 6.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

140. Standards in religious education meet the level expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. A high number of pupils enter school with well below average attainment in English and, as a result, standards of attainment in religious education are below what they should be at the end of Year 2. Although pupils display a basic understanding of Christianity and some other faiths, many pupils in Year 2 cannot provide simple descriptions or explanations of related elements in their own experience.

141. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Teaching was satisfactory in two of the lessons seen, but unsatisfactory in another. The unsatisfactory teaching was directly related to a narrow range of teaching strategies, which failed to motivate pupils' interest. In this lesson, no account was taken of pupils' prior understanding or learning. By the end of Year 2, pupils have been introduced to Christianity and other faiths, such as Sikhism, through stories and the celebration of festivals, such as Diwali and Christmas.

142. Teaching and learning is good overall in Years 3 to 6. Teaching was good in 50 per cent of lessons seen and satisfactory in 50 per cent. Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicate that teaching in these year groups is good overall, and that pupils make good progress in their learning. Where the teaching is good, teachers use a range of interesting teaching strategies to motivate pupils' interest, and lessons are well planned to take account of pupils' prior knowledge and experiences. Good quality teaching was seen in two Year 6 lessons, where pupils compared the festivals of Diwali and Christmas and teachers built effectively on what was taught in previous lessons. In these lessons, pupils shared their experiences with the rest of the class, and this is a common feature of the good teaching. In consequence, pupils in such lessons are provided with opportunities to understand the religious beliefs, attitudes and activities of other people, and to develop their own beliefs and values. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed a sound understanding that religions share some common features. They consider basic religious concepts and ways in which these have been expressed in sacred books, rituals and daily living. The attention and respect with which most pupils listen to their teachers and to each other make a very positive contribution to their learning. A good example of this was observed in a Year 5 lesson where the good relationships encouraged pupils to express opinions such as, 'if you talk to God with your mind and heart, He will help to solve your problems' as they considered God's attributes. This was not the case in two lessons in Year 2 and Year 6, where the immature behaviour of some pupils meant that effective teaching strategies did not result in good learning.

143. The school provides good support for pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language. This support is well targeted to give pupils full and equal access in lessons, so that they achieve appropriately. Pupils' learning and understanding is well supported by the sensitivity with which teachers approach Christianity, other faiths and issues raised in lessons. Teaching is generally used well to reinforce moral values and to provide recognition of pupils' own value as individuals. The school invites people from other faiths and cultures to speak to pupils in lessons and in assemblies. This provision helps pupils to consider and to understand the diversity and richness of other faiths

and cultures. The importance of equality of opportunity and the need to encourage respect for, and understanding of, other faiths and cultures, is emphasised appropriately in lessons. There is a good range of stimulating artefacts, though these are not always used to motivate pupils and focus their attention in lessons.

144. The co-ordinator has very good knowledge of the subject and provides enthusiastic leadership. She ensures that the school's planning is closely linked to the Agreed Syllabus, and that the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Displays and well-organised artefacts reflect the school's commitment to the celebration of the different beliefs held by pupils. Visits to places of worship are well planned to enrich pupils' experiences.