

INSPECTION REPORT

ST. SILAS'S C.E. (VA) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Blackburn

LEA area: Blackburn with Darwen

Unique reference number: 132045

Headteacher: Mr. J. Duckworth

Reporting inspector: Mr. R. Gill
4074

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th March 2001

Inspection number: 230398

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

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 -11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Clematis Street
Blackburn
Lancashire

Postcode: BB2 6JP

Telephone number: 01254 698447

Fax number: 01254 694809

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. Brian Perry

Date of previous inspection: N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---|--|
| Mr. R. Gill 4074 | Registered inspector | Art and design, and music | What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further? |
| Mrs. B. McIntosh 8922 | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with its parents? |
| Mr. J. Evans 22173 | Team inspector | Foundation Stage | How well are the pupils taught? |
| Mrs. C. Wojtak 23204 | Team inspector | English, and geography | How good are the curricular opportunities? |
| Mr. J. Porteous 28011 | Team Inspector | Special educational needs, science, design and technology, and physical education | |
| Mr. J. Brooke 11831 | Team Inspector | Mathematics, and information and communication technology | |
| Mrs. S. Macintosh 20368 | Team Inspector | Equal opportunities, English as an additional language, and history | |

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)
 15 The Birches
 Bramhope
 Leeds
 LS16 9DP

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|----------------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 7 - 12 |
| Information about the school | |
| How good the school is | |
| What the school does well | |
| What could be improved | |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection | |
| Standards | |
| Pupils' attitudes and values | |
| Teaching and learning | |
| Other aspects of the school | |
| How well the school is led and managed | |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school | |
| PART B: COMMENTARY | |
| HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS? | 13 - 16 |
| The school's results and achievements | |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development | |
| HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT? | 16 - 18 |
| HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS? | 18 - 21 |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS? | 21 - 23 |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS? | 23 - 24 |
| HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED? | 24 - 27 |
| WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER? | 28 |
| PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS | 29 - 34 |
| PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES | 35 - 54 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a larger than average sized primary school for boys and girls aged between four and eleven years old. It has 387 pupils on roll. At the time of the inspection there were 58 children on roll of reception age. The majority of pupils are from the immediate locality. Taken together, pupils' attainment on entry is generally well below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. There are currently four per cent of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, which is well above typical levels. There is a very high proportion of pupils (79 per cent) for whom English is an additional language. About a third of these pupils are at an early stage in their learning of English. Currently, four different heritages are represented in the school. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. The school became an amalgamated infant and junior school in October 1999. It is part of the 'Raising Achievement in Inner City Schools initiative' and focuses particularly on involving parents in the process of raising standards in pupils' reading.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St. Silas's C.E. Primary School is already a very effective school that results from a very well managed process of amalgamation. The proportion of pupils reaching expected levels at the age of eleven in English, mathematics and science is typical of most schools nationally. This represents a significant achievement for pupils who could not speak English when they started school at the age of five. The good quality of teaching generally has a positive effect on pupils' learning throughout the school, particularly now that the quality of education in the infants has improved so dramatically. The headteacher, staff and governors have been very effective in establishing the new school and a context in which good practice could be maintained in the juniors while weaknesses were tackled in the infants. Expenditure for all pupils is about average, but in view of the achievements made by pupils by the time they are eleven, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides strong and thoughtful leadership that has managed the process of amalgamation very well and a staff that is united in its commitment to raising achievement.
- The very good and, at times excellent teaching, allows pupils to make significant strides in English.
- The school sets ambitious targets for pupils, particularly at the end of the juniors, and works vigorously to help pupils achieve them.
- Creates a climate in which children's behaviour and moral development are very good.
- Establishes very productive relationships with parents and the local community.
- Caters very well for reception aged children.
- Provides a staff team that is united in its commitment to raising achievement.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics by the time pupils are seven.
- Teaching in some lessons when the class is being taught as a whole.
- Outdoor play facilities for the physical development of reception aged children
- Basic facilities in some classrooms such as running water, furniture, and the cramped condition in the school hall.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the school's first inspection. It has made very good progress since it was amalgamated in 1999. It has the highest aspirations for all pupils, particular those that start their schooling with little or no English. These pupils are included very well and succeed as a result. The minority of pupils for whom English is their first and only language is catered for appropriately and included well in all activities. The thoughtful inclusion of all pupils in learning and the general life of the school are very well managed. The teaching of the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy has continued to play a major feature in the curriculum. The good provision for pupils with special educational needs has been maintained in the juniors and extended into the infants, where previously it was not as well developed. The governing body is well organised and in a position to develop this new school even further. There is still more to do to complete the work of amalgamation and to ensure that all teaching fully meets the needs of pupils.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | | Key |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|--|
| | all schools | | | similar schools | |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 | |
| English | N/A | N/A | C | A | well above A average above B average C below average D well below E average |
| Mathematics | N/A | N/A | D | C | |
| Science | N/A | N/A | E | E | |
| | | | | | |

This table shows that pupils' attainment, in 2000, was similar to the national average in English, below it in mathematics, and well below it in science. Pupils' achievements are well above average in English compared to similar schools and average in mathematics. In science, pupils are well below average in both respects due to the low number of pupils that attained a higher level in the tests.

Standards achieved by eleven year olds in English, mathematics and science, as judged during the inspection, are currently average. This represents an overall advance on last year's standards with improvements having been made in mathematics and science, in particular. By the age of seven, pupils are currently below what is expected of them in reading, writing, mathematics and science, but that is in itself an advancement on last year's national test results when they fell well below expected levels. There has been a noticeable improvement in pupils' achievements at the end of the infants since 2000. However, not enough pupils reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the age of seven. The school has identified this as an issue for improvement in its post-amalgamation action plans. There are some effective methods in place to tackle low standards in the infants and these are beginning to succeed.

By the age of five, children's progress is very good in the reception classes. Many children begin school with extremely weak skills in English and make significant advances in their first year in school. They are currently on course to meet national expectations in knowledge and understanding of the world and personal, social and emotional development. They are likely to go beyond expectations in creative development. In English and mathematics they may not reach expected levels, but have made significant advances nonetheless. It is in physical development that they have not achieved so well because limited facilities for outside play have hindered their progress.

Overall, pupils achieve well. This obviously includes the pupils for whom English is an additional language because they represent about four fifths of the school population. They are well taught and make rapid progress in learning English. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well due to the good support they receive from teachers and special needs assistants. The governors set ambitious targets for eleven year olds and the pupils frequently exceed them.

Pupils reach at least expected levels in all other subjects of the National Curriculum for infant and junior pupils. In information and communication technology (ICT) most pupils go beyond what is expected due to the high quality teaching they receive in Years 5 and 6. They also exceed expectations in music and design and technology for the same reason.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Pupils have positive attitudes to school and their work. They are eager, enthusiastic and enjoy learning. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Very good. Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school. |
| Personal development and relationships | Personal development is good. Pupils co-operate very well with each other. Relationships are very good and a strong feature of the school. |
| Attendance | Well below the national average, but there are some very good and successful measures in place to tackle low attendance. The school has worked hard to raise awareness of the importance of good attendance, but many pupils are still taken on extended holidays and this affects the overall figures. The incidence of unauthorised absence has been reduced successfully. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged up to 5 years | aged 5-7 years | aged 7-11 years |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Very good | 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 quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory or better in virtually all of the lessons observed: in 66 per cent of lessons teaching was good or better and in 26 per cent of all lessons it was very good. Three per cent of teaching was excellent. In the one unsatisfactory mathematics lesson, teaching was ill balanced in favour of too much talk from the teacher. Too little was expected of the pupils and they made slow progress as a result. Teaching is generally good throughout the school and, as a result, learning is good overall. Whilst teaching is good in the infants and the juniors, teaching is more often very good in the juniors. Very good and excellent teaching is characterised by enthusiasm and exciting ways to promote learning to which the pupils respond in a very positive way, making rapid progress.

The weakest aspect of teaching is in the way some teachers find it hard to conduct useful whole-class sessions to introduce a lesson or bring it to a close. Pupils generally make progress when they are engaged in the lesson's main activity, but can be uninvolved when listening to the teacher as a whole class. This is because some teaching lacks the techniques to ensure full attention, does not use questions well enough to promote discussion and does not give enough opportunities for pupils who find it hard to articulate an idea to speak out with confidence.

The teaching of English is good throughout the school. It is often very good in lessons devoted to the National Literacy Strategy, where reading and writing are most proficiently taught. The teaching of mathematics, using the National Numeracy Strategy, is generally good in the juniors and satisfactory in the infants. The difference lies in the quality of whole-class sessions and the involvement of all pupils in that phase of the lesson. Good teaching overall is now helping pupils in the infants to achieve well which is an improvement generated since amalgamation. This is partly because the school is now meeting successfully the needs of younger pupils with special educational needs. They were not catered for well in the previous infant school setting. Beyond English and mathematics, teaching is good in ICT, history and geography in the juniors. In science, design and technology and music, teaching is generally good throughout the school except in junior music where it is very good. It is very good overall in the reception classes.

Teaching successfully meets the needs of all pupils, particularly for pupils with a special educational need and those for whom English is an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Good. Pupils experience an interesting range of activities including extra-curricular activities. The school makes very good use of its links with parents to help pupils achieve well. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils well to make sure they make good progress in lessons. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | Good. There is very good support for children with English as an additional language provided by bilingual teaching assistants in reception so the children make very good progress. The two full-time 'Ethnic Minority Achievement' teachers also work effectively with younger pupils, in Years 2 and 3. They create additional opportunities to develop pupils' English in which pupils continue to make good progress. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | This is good overall, the strongest element being the successful cultivation of pupils' moral development. The spiritual and social dimensions are well provided for and cultural developments are promoted well through art and music, in particular. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school monitors pupils well in the day-to-day life of the school. There are very good procedures for setting targets in English, mathematics and science and helping pupils to achieve them. |

The school has established most effective links with parents and they are generally supportive. The involvement of parents has a significant impact on the work of the school, particularly through the reading project deigned to raise achievements and reinforce family involvement in the learning process.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher and the deputy headteacher have been particularly effective in managing the amalgamation. Co-ordinators are working hard in pairs and teams to ensure that pupils reach even higher standards. There are good strategies in place to ensure that standards continue to rise in the infants. Previous low attainment has been tackled well. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | The governors have successfully steered the amalgamation through many difficulties. They have been instrumental in creating a new school, which is maintaining the successes of the junior school, while tackling the significant weaknesses of the previous infant school. Their active involvement helps them to meet all statutory requirements. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | The school is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses related to the creation of a new school. The headteacher is skilful at identifying the improvements in teaching and learning that are required, but since this is a recently amalgamated school, the co-ordinators have not yet had as many opportunities to evaluate the work of their colleagues. |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| The strategic use of resources | Good use is made of resources, including grants for staff training and special educational needs. There is currently a large financial surplus, but this is all allocated for use in furthering the development of this new school. |
|--------------------------------|---|

There are sufficient teachers and support assistants. They are all generally well deployed although some classroom support assistants are not well used in lessons where the teacher needs to speak to the whole class. On these occasions support staff play too passive a role. The accommodation is very good for reception children, but poor in many other respects. Classrooms are too cramped and the lack of water and sinks restricts learning. The outside play area for the youngest children is not well equipped for physical development, but this is a key priority for the school. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory and used well. The governors take a forward looking and active interest in all aspects of school life. They seek information from all sources, including parents, and they work very well to find ways in which to run the school more efficiently and effectively.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • Children make good progress. • Children are expected to work hard. • Children like school. • Behaviour is good. • The school helps children to become more mature. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methods to canvass parents' views about the school. |

Inspectors agree with all that parents like about the school. The school establishes very productive relationships with parents and the local community and has some excellent links with parents, but does not often canvass their views formally.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The overall attainment of eleven year olds in 2000 was similar to the national average in English, below it in mathematics and well below it in science. When the school's results are compared to those achieved by schools with the same number of free school meals a different picture emerges for English and mathematics. In English pupils go well beyond the levels achieved by pupils in similar schools. In mathematics they are in line with those levels. It is only in science where they remain well below the average.
2. When these results are studied more closely, and with the pupils themselves in mind, they represent a high level of achievement. Four fifths of the pupils at the school could not speak English when they began in the reception class. Their progress was limited because the, now closed, infant school had serious weaknesses in its leadership and standards achieved by the age of seven were often well below the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Yet, by the age of eleven, in 2000, they achieved as well as most schools nationally in English, were just below the national average in mathematics (by about three pupils). Their science results were low due to the relatively low number of pupils performing at the higher level.
3. Standards achieved currently by eleven year olds in English, mathematics and science, in 2001, are about average. Teachers have learnt a great deal by analysing previous test papers and have managed to help pupils to conquer gaps in previous learning. Challenging targets have been set in English and mathematics for eleven year olds. These targets have even been increased during the year in view of the good progress that has been made by the Year 6 pupils. The school is on course to meet or even exceed these targets. There are suitable plans to provide extra tuition for all pupils that need an extra boost to be able to achieve a level typical for their age. This extra tuition, and the general emphasis on high achievement, has meant that in the last two years the school has exceeded the targets suggested for them by the local education authority.
4. Standards reached by seven year olds in reading writing and mathematics in 2000 were well below the national average. Since they entered the school at well below expected levels, progress by the age of seven was limited. However, a closer examination of the statistics reveals that more pupils, than in 1999 or 1998, are now achieving at the higher end of the expected level, but, overall, it is the lack of pupils reaching the higher level that makes the average grade remain so low. In terms of achievement, the school recognises that there is still more work to be done in helping pupils in the infants to perform at their best, but there are some effective measures in place and a successful start has been made in the short time since amalgamation.
5. Initial assessments on entry to the reception class show that this year, as usual, the intake was well below typical levels in literacy and mathematics. This is borne out by the findings of the inspection. Considerable progress is being made by children in the reception classes, and by the age of five most are expected to reach nationally expected levels in knowledge and understanding of the world and in personal, social and emotional development. They will go beyond these levels in creative development. In mathematics they will still be below expectations but achievement is good. Skills in English remain the weakest area of learning compared to national expectations, but

most pupils have made significant strides. It is only in physical development that the required progress has not been made. Children have been able to practise finer movement in the classroom, but the lack of proper outside facilities for climbing and general play means that achievement is low and they are not on course to reach expected levels.

6. In English, pupils' current standards in Year 6 are slightly better in writing than they are in reading, because pupils have so many very good opportunities to practise their written work. Despite the marginal differences between reading and writing, standards are in line with national expectations and many pupils are expected to exceed them. Pupils' achievements in reading are well supported by adults from within the school and at home. This is having a positive effect on standards. By the time they are eleven, most pupils read with confidence and clarity of expression. Pupils' achievements in listening and talking about their ideas are good. They are encouraged to take part in lively discussions and debates during the lessons and this has a positive effect on their achievements.
7. In mathematics, pupils in Year 6 are reaching required levels. The improved standards are partly due to the detailed analysis of test papers to determine where pupils need to make improvements and the arrangements for teaching whereby pupils are divided up into groups based on their attainment. These factors are having a positive effect on pupils' achievements.
8. In science, many pupils are now at a satisfactory level by the time they are eleven. They are able to conduct experiments into physical processes, make predictions and record results well. It is this emphasis on investigation and discussion of results that has made the difference compared to the 2000 results. Pupils are far more likely to achieve at the higher level this year due to the improved teaching methods.
9. Beyond English, mathematics and science, pupils' attainment is typical for their age in virtually all subjects. In ICT and design and technology, standards are higher than expected in the juniors because of the very knowledgeable teaching that they receive, particularly in the last two years. They are also high in music in the juniors because of the systematic build up of skills that pupils enjoy in lessons taught by a teacher with specialist knowledge.
10. The 79 per cent of all pupils who speak English as an additional language make very good progress, particularly in the reception classes and in the juniors, and achieve well by the time they are eleven. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. There are good procedures in place to identify pupils who may be having difficulties, particularly those associated with learning to read. The knowledge that pupils learn in literacy and numeracy lessons is practised well in other subjects. For example, pupils get good opportunities to measure accurately in design and technology and to write interesting prose in geography.
11. Pupils who are capable of higher attainment thrive and achieve well in the juniors, particularly in the last two years. This is reflected in the standards they achieve in English and mathematics. There is more scope for them to make better progress in science. The dearth of pupils who reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics at the age of seven demonstrates that achievement could be higher in the infants. The school has identified this as an issue for improvement in its post-amalgamation action plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

12. The school has a caring ethos, which fosters the development of a high standard of behaviour and responsible, thoughtful attitudes in all pupils. This has a significant impact in creating a positive, purposeful atmosphere in which pupils learn and achieve well. Discussions with pupils and parents indicate that pupils enjoy coming to school and know that teachers want them to do well. Pupils are clearly proud of their work and school.
13. Children in the reception classes are uncertain when they first start school, but very good teaching ensures that they quickly settle into the routines of the school day. They are polite, well behaved and cheerful and enjoy trying out their new-found skills in spoken English. They are well behaved in class and throughout the school day. Children are enthusiastic and show very good levels of persistence in their chosen activities. They show a high level of participation in counting activities and are quite confident about counting in front of the class. Children are able to reflect on the quality of their work and say what they have used and how it might be further improved. They know that things have to be put away at the end of the lesson and they happily work together to achieve this.
14. Infant and junior pupils have good attitudes to their work and are motivated to learn. They are greatly interested in their work and try hard to finish set tasks. They respond very well when the work is interesting and exciting, providing a good degree of challenge. They can sustain good levels of concentration, particularly during group and individual activities. Most pupils are keen to answer questions and ask relevant questions to enhance their learning. In many lessons the good attitudes and behaviour are a positive feature and contribute most effectively to their learning. For example, in a science lesson, older pupils quickly switched from listening and answering questions to written and investigative work. They co-operated very well in the relatively cramped conditions and undertook a simple experiment without any fuss. The teacher's confidence in their behaviour allowed him to use small tacks in an experiment to test magnetic strength.
15. Pupils are keen to contribute to discussions and employ previous learning in their answers and suggestions. They become increasingly adept at evaluating their learning and suggesting ways for improvement. In a Year 1 dance lesson, the teacher encouraged them to talk about what went well and what they liked about each other's performance. Work and ideas brought from home are valued and used in the classroom. On returning from extended holidays, children share their experiences and culture through photographs and the diaries they have written about their visit. It is the class teaching component of some lessons in which there are some weaknesses in pupils' attitudes. Some pupils lose interest when they do not feel part of the class activity. Questions are asked at too rapid a rate and they cannot keep up or the teacher does not employ enough techniques to ensure that all pupils are involved.
16. The pupils' of all ages behave very well and are mindful of the school and class rules. When moving around the building pupils are orderly and sensible. During playtimes pupils mix well and play together in a friendly way, though football tends to dominate the area for older pupils. Although many pupils bring crisps and sweets to eat at playtime, litter is disposed of carefully. The high quality of racial harmony is a true strength of the school and pupils are interested in and show concern for each other. Respect for the feelings and beliefs of others is well developed and reflects the positive open attitudes of the school community. Parents appreciate and acknowledge the efforts of the school in setting the right standards of behaviour and positive attitudes and feel that it

achieves its aims. Pupils are clear about the way they should behave and as a result the school has not had to exclude any pupils.

17. Relationships throughout the school are of a high standard. There is a good sense of community among the pupils and adults with everyone showing regard and respect for each other. Pupils particularly like showing their school and its work to visitors. They are friendly and polite and without a second thought they stand aside for adults, hold doors open and exchange pleasantries. They give good support and encouragement to each other. On several occasions, in lessons, pupils very quietly advise each other in supportive manner. Pupils co-operate very well in group, class, and individual activities. In many lessons relationships are highly effective in helping achieve a very positive work ethos in which pupils collaborate well. The nice touches of humour from teachers help pupils feel valued and this benefits their learning. Lunchtimes are well-organised and pleasant social occasions. Table manners are very good, children talk companionably whilst eating and obviously enjoy the company of others. The school is a happy harmonious community and bullying is not an issue.
18. The pupils' personal development is good. They respond well to opportunities for responsibility such as jobs in the classroom, giving out milk and organising equipment in assembly. There are, however, limited opportunities for older pupils to show initiative and undertake increasing responsibilities in the school. Nevertheless, pupils are interested in the life of the school and enjoy the extra-curricular activities. Two older girls, for example, found their art club so exciting that they volunteered to assist at the club for younger children.
19. Attendance is unsatisfactory with rates well below national figures. As a result of the school's very good procedures, and valuable support from the bilingual assistant in emphasising to parents and pupils the importance of regular attendance, the levels of unauthorised absence have fallen. A significant amount of the authorised absence is due to pupils taking extended holidays. This is a factor, related to the school's attendance figures, over which they have very little control. Registration is quick and punctuality encouraged. Most pupils are punctual but there are a number of persistent latecomers who are monitored rigorously. The educational welfare officer provides appropriate support.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. The school provides its pupils with a good quality of teaching, and this is the most significant factor in ensuring that the pupils learn at a good rate in lessons and achieve well throughout the school. All but one of the lessons were of at least a satisfactory quality; 37 per cent were good, 26 per cent were very good and three per cent were excellent. Although the school has only been established since September 1999, teachers have adapted well to changed circumstances and, with the school's support staff, provide a coherent team which successfully enacts agreed approaches to teaching. This consistency imbues the pupils with a depth of confidence about their schooling and allows them to make good progress. Good and very good teaching occurs in the reception classes, in the infants and in the juniors. The majority of parents appreciate the good teaching that goes on. Most parents, at the pre-inspection meeting and on the questionnaire, rated homework as being well organised and particularly helpful in the upper juniors.
21. Many of the school's youngest pupils, some of whom start school shortly after their fourth birthdays, are faced with learning English as an additional language to the one they have learned at home. Daily attendance at school represents a major change in

their lives. The quality of teaching provided for these pupils is very good. The teachers and support staff provide a good range of interesting activities for work and structured play, which help the pupils settle quickly into the daily routines of school. The teaching of spoken English is very good and the pupils very soon begin to test out new skills and to understand the teachers' instructions. The high quality of support that is provided by other staff, including those with multi-lingual skills, proves crucial to boosting the pupils' confidence to speak and to making sure that they gain full and equal benefit from the teaching. Currently, the pupils are taking turns to play in the Pet Shop in their classroom. They quickly move into the roles of shop assistants, cashiers and customers and lively conversations ensue. When a classroom assistant joins in, the conversation moves up a gear, because the questioning introduces new words and gives the pupils the chance to use them in their replies. This kind of intervention typifies the teaching and is one of the secrets of its success. The teachers have very good knowledge of effective teaching methods and understand what kind of work should be provided for the pupils to learn well. Although pupils' standards in reading and writing are well below average, they make really good progress because the teaching makes the learning of letter sounds fun and memorable for them. After they had been taught the letter 'l', for example, the teachers and support staff helped the pupils to complete all kinds of activities that gave them good practice in writing and sounding out the letter.

22. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum and bring this knowledge to bear to plan interesting and, in the best lessons, demanding work for the pupils, which reflects their high expectations that they will learn well. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are both used to good effect and they form the centrepiece of the teaching of basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics. In the very good lessons in English and mathematics, teachers add their own knowledge and expertise to drive the pupils' learning forward and to introduce new work successfully for pupils of different attainments. In an English lesson in a Year 5 and 6 class, the pupils learned about narrative viewpoints and how to identify previously learned features of traditional fairy tales in a story that was new to them. The teacher's knowledge was extensive and allowed penetrating questions to be posed that required the pupils to justify, explain or exemplify their answers. The pupils learned very well and extended their skill in interrogating text and in giving full spoken answers to questions.
23. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff form very good teams and use their team efficiently and effectively to the benefit of pupils in all the lessons where the teaching was good or better. In particular, some pupils, who are learning English as an additional language and are finding it more difficult than other pupils of their age, receive very good support from multi-lingual staff. They help pupils who do not understand the vocabulary or grammar of English and thereby make a significant contribution to the good level of teaching seen in school. They often use children's first language to talk to the children, explaining any unfamiliar vocabulary and ideas, encouraging them to participate when on the carpet, checking they understand.
24. Further explanations and the clarification of the main teaching points ensure that pupils can play a full part in lessons and complete tasks successfully. In the least effective lessons, additional opportunities for pupils to learn are missed when the teacher with special responsibility for pupils for whom English is an additional language spends half the lesson sitting while the class teacher talks. Moreover, there is sometimes only a brief reference to this teacher's role in the lesson plan.
25. Helpful support is provided for pupils who have special educational needs, maximising their learning in many lessons. In a Year 1 mathematics lesson, for example, the teacher and support staff complemented one another's work and the pupils learned at a

very good rate, extending the range of methods for adding pairs of numbers. In a very good science lesson in a Year 5 and 6 class pupils with special educational needs worked in groups with their friends and achieved work at a level very far above that which would normally be expected.

26. Most teachers are skilful at organising their teaching to make sure that there is a high level of involvement of all pupils in all parts of the lesson. Where teachers succeed and use a very good range of methods for capturing and holding the pupils' interest, the learning that takes place is very good. It is these lessons that have an extra sparkle and reflect a thorough understanding on the teacher's part of how children learn successfully. In a music lesson in Year 5 and 6, every pupil was involved from the moment the lesson started, each being required to make an individual contribution firstly in a warm-up activity and, subsequently, in small groups to plan and perform a rondo of space music. Because all the pupils were fully involved from start to finish, the lesson had a powerful momentum. So intense had been their involvement that they were able to reflect on the quality of their own work and make carefully considered suggestions about how, in the following lesson, they might be able to improve their compositions.
27. By contrast, in a small proportion of lessons, teachers find difficulty in including all the pupils in the work, particularly at times when they are teaching the whole class together. Although these lessons are usually of a satisfactory quality, they do not have the same cutting edge as the large majority. Typically, the methods used to ensure that all the pupils are participating are limited in range and the teachers do not recognise that too few pupils are involved. Techniques of posing questions to the class lack sophistication, and the momentum of the lesson relies too heavily on the willingness of a small number of pupils to volunteer answers. Other pupils adopt a passive response, allowing others to answer and slowing their own learning. These lessons come to life when the pupils have tasks to do, but the taught part of lessons is, on occasions, too long and tedious. In the worst examples, which were very few in number, mild and soporific inattention declined into restless behaviour and unwanted levels of noise that hindered the pupils' learning. In one unsatisfactory mathematics lesson, for example, the pupils spent far too long listening to the teacher and other staff were under-deployed. Because too little time was allowed for the pupils' own work, their behaviour deteriorated and they did not learn enough.

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

28. The school provides a rich curriculum for its pupils that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Within the limitations imposed by the accommodation, it is good overall with many strengths. A wealth of imaginative learning opportunities has been carefully designed to reach out beyond the basic curriculum and the immediate community. There is a significant shortcoming in the lack of appropriate facilities for the physical development of the children in the reception classes. However, parents generally appreciate the curriculum provided and the way the school prepares pupils for their secondary education.
29. The curriculum for the reception classes is well planned. It includes all the areas of learning for children in the reception classes, and places a well-chosen emphasis on the need to develop skills in language and literacy. The curriculum provides interest and challenge for the pupils, particularly in communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; creative development; and in personal, social and emotional development. The school is unable to provide a full curriculum for the

children's physical development, because resources in the hall are inappropriate for this age group and there is no outside area dedicated to children in the reception classes.

30. The strong emphasis placed on language and literacy is continued throughout the school. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy have both been introduced successfully and elements have been incorporated into the rest of the curriculum. Following the amalgamation the school recognised the need to establish an agreed set of procedures for the curriculum to ensure that pupils' learning was seamless. To this end co-ordinators from both key stages have, in consultation with the whole staff, agreed policy guidelines and schemes of work for all areas of the curriculum. This has resulted in a coherently planned curriculum that meets statutory requirements and ensures equality of access for all its pupils. The staff have worked hard to develop a new scheme of work for personal, health and social education that is particularly comprehensive and aims to raise self-esteem. It not only includes health education, sex education and information on drug misuse but also extends to areas such as business education and citizenship. In the autumn term Year 2 took part in a drug safety programme designed to raise awareness in parents and children.
31. To avoid duplication of knowledge, understanding and skills, certain subjects are appropriately planned over a two-year cycle. Furthermore, in order to ensure that the children are fully prepared for the national tests aspects of some subjects are timetabled to take place in the autumn and summer terms to avoid overload on the pupils in the spring term when they are concentrating on their tests. The school has produced helpful distance learning packs for use by pupils on extended holidays to India and Pakistan.
32. Further initiatives have been established to enrich learning. Support for charities is at the heart of many activities. 'Project Link Africa' is a recent example of a project, which regularly offers support to an African school. Appreciation for sport, music and the arts is heightened through visits, visitors and partnerships with other organisations such as a local football club and hospital. There are good opportunities for pupils to attend extra-curricular activities, for example, the art club. The 'Raising Achievement in Inner City Schools initiative' is a good example of how the school works with parents to raise standards. Several displays around the school reflect the background of the children, such as photos of the school Eid party, writing of names in two languages and photographs taken when on extended holiday in Pakistan. However, few opportunities have been created to incorporate topics in subjects such as history and geography that would reflect the background and culture of most of the pupils.
33. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all classroom activities and undertake a very wide range of curricular experiences. Some younger junior pupils work with the special educational needs co-ordinator for part of the week, but the co-ordinator is careful to make sure the time for these sessions varies so that pupils do not miss other important lessons. There is a heavy emphasis on support for learning English as an additional language, especially in the reception and the infant classes.
34. The school makes good overall provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is reflected in the way staff and pupils relate to each other, and the friendly, thoughtful and supportive ethos that permeates the school. Parents are particularly appreciative of the values that the school inculcates.

35. Spiritual education is good. School assemblies act as a focal point for the pupils' spiritual development. The thoughtful story often encourages pupils to think about other people and their feelings, to persevere even when things are difficult or to be "brave today by being nice". The appropriate reflective prayer, along with the well-sung hymns, makes this a worthwhile experience. Grace is said in classrooms before lunch and the day usually ends with a class prayer. Pupils have opportunities to reflect on world issues and disasters such as a recent railway accident. They consider places where they might be close to God and think about the emotions felt by Jesus and those around him at Eastertide. Religious festivals of all faiths represented in the school are celebrated successfully.
36. The school provides a very good framework for the pupils' moral development and good provision for social development. All members of staff encourage pupils to understand right from wrong, and the classroom rules, drawn up in consultation with the pupils, are used to support them. Members of staff provide good role models and reward the pupils with stickers, verbal encouragement or house points. Pupils are given the opportunity to discuss the morality of destroying the environment and the problems related to the recent foot and mouth disease outbreak. Moral issues are raised in many of the lessons and pupils were observed thinking about the fact that "you cannot tell what someone is like by just looking at them". Older pupils are given the opportunity to help the younger ones by reading to them and supporting them when they enter school for the first time. They act as house captains and their duties include the arranging of house assemblies. Pupils fulfil some valuable roles related to everyday school life including feeding the fish, acting as librarians, helping in assembly and assisting at the art club. They carry out their duties sensibly, enthusiastically and conscientiously. Guided walks for Years 5 and 6 provide an opportunity for social development as do the discussions in class when pupils are given the opportunity to express their views on school or national issues.
37. Provision for cultural development is good. The school promotes positive attitudes towards the pupils' own cultures by celebrating special events related to their own heritage. The school has links with an African School and this has done much to raise the pupils' awareness of life in that continent. The school choir that meets at lunchtime enriches the musical life of the school, and visiting musicians give pupils the opportunity to listen to live music and to express their feelings through painting. An art club, available to every age group in turn, provides a splendid addition to school life and displays around school encourage the pupils to be aware of the work of a range of artists and designers. Pupils visit exhibitions related to Ancient Egypt and the artist J.M.W. Turner, and experience a Tudor activity day at a local centre. Visits are also made to museums in Blackburn and Ribchester. Recently the whole school experienced a performance of 'Sleeping Beauty' by a visiting theatre group.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school provides a caring, supportive environment where the welfare and protection of pupils is given a high priority. Much has been done to create a harmonious community, which makes an effective contribution to pupils' sense of well-being and supports their learning. Every opportunity is taken to react positively with the pupils and boost their self-esteem. Pupils are happy to come to school and parents appreciate the care given to their children. Excellent arrangements are made to support children and their parents prior to their induction into the reception class. Home visits made by the staff are very much appreciated and help forge good relationships between families and the school. Staff show a high level of care and concern for pupils' welfare and willingly give time to talk to pupils and their families. Bilingual staff readily act as

interpreters when this is necessary. In school, they use their bilingualism very effectively to instil confidence in the very young children.

39. All members of staff, including lunchtime assistants, provide a very good level of supervision and carry out their duties in a caring way. If pupils accidentally fall or hurt themselves during play, swift action makes sure that any distress is reduced and, if necessary, first aid administered. The governing body is aware of making sure that the school is a safe environment and representatives of the premises committee work with the headteacher and staff to ensure that any potential safety risks are noted and removed. The school has a detailed Health and Safety policy, which follows local education authority guidelines. Child protection procedures are securely in place and there is a good awareness of them throughout school. The designated person has received relevant training and is well experienced to undertake the responsibilities.
40. The school has very good procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour. They are based on rules, prominently displayed throughout the school, and clear rewards and sanctions. The teachers are very good role models and expect high levels of behaviour in and out of the classroom; the pupils duly respond. During lessons, most teachers have very good strategies for instilling good behaviour. Much of this is based on the very good relationships and mutual respect that exist between the teachers and pupils. Most pupils do not want to earn the displeasure of their teachers and they respond well to their praise and encouragement. Incidents of inappropriate behaviour are rare and there are very few incidents of serious bad behaviour and bullying entered in the school's record book. There have been no exclusions since the amalgamation.
41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very good. After amalgamation of the two schools, the headteacher took swift action to reduce the number of unauthorised absences caused by infant children. Parents were rightly reminded of the importance of regular attendance and the strong link with attainment. Bilingual assistants provide an invaluable link with Asian families in helping promote good attendance. Much discussion took place about extended holidays and parents were informed that absences of more than six weeks would result in their child being taken off roll. The school has forged close links with the educational welfare officer and children causing concern are monitored. The school records and effectively monitors each child's attendance throughout the school. As a result of rigorous monitoring and targeting of individual pupils the number of unauthorised absences has fallen significantly. However, authorised absence remains unsatisfactory due to a significant number of children taking extended visits and religious observance. Those children taking extended holidays are provided with useful distance learning packs and are helped to re-integrate back into school on their return.
42. Pupils' personal development is monitored and recorded well. Good accurate assessments are made of pupils' personal qualities such as attitudes and behaviour. The monitoring of attendance benefits from the school's close knowledge of the pupils as individuals. The provision for pupils with special education needs is good and they make good progress. The Ethnic Minority Support staff work effectively alongside teachers to offer very good support to those children learning English as an additional language. All pupils are fully integrated into the life of the school and are valued as individuals. Support staff and bilingual assistants are generally well deployed and used effectively, which has a significant impact on raising the achievement of groups or individual pupils. There are some exceptions in lessons where assistants spend too long just listening to the teacher talking to the whole class without being given a specific role to play.

43. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The school obtains a great deal of information from national tests at the ages of seven and eleven, and non-statutory tests at eight, nine and ten as well as nationally recognised spelling and reading tests. This information is rigorously analysed by the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. One result of this analysis is that pupils who need additional support receive it quickly. Pupils for whom English is an additional language and other pupils who may have difficulties in literacy lessons receive carefully targeted help from teachers, bilingual assistants and other adults working in classes. Class teachers give regular tests in subjects such as mathematics and science and the results of these are shared with pupils in junior classes. This is part of the school's very good procedures for setting targets for individual pupils and knowing whether such targets are met. Teachers and pupils, especially older pupils, know how much progress is made and what needs to be done to achieve or exceed those targets. Each term there is a formal review, which may result in an adjustment in targets. This is especially important in this school where a much higher than average proportion of pupils may miss several weeks of school at a time through extended visits to their families. The marking of day-to-day work in pupils' books varies from very good to satisfactory. There are examples of marking where pupils are given extensive guidance about what they need to do to improve their work but in some books there are very few comments. There are good examples of helpful, short-term assessment and target setting when pupils work with the special educational needs co-ordinator. She encourages pupils' success and positive attitudes by giving them reasonable targets, which they can reach within a week. The school monitors the progress of pupils with special educational needs well. The co-ordinator regularly reviews the individual education plans and keeps teachers well informed about the progress and needs of those pupils who are occasionally withdrawn for additional help.
44. Teachers make good use of their assessment procedures to plan the curriculum and individual lessons. There are extensive planning documents for all subjects of the National Curriculum that teachers use to plan weekly and daily lessons. These are good quality documents that give clear guidance and help. The school has made considerable efforts to make sure that the whole of the required curriculum is taught systematically. This has become especially important since the amalgamation of the two schools. Very good planning procedures are now in place throughout the school.
45. Most planning documents have sensible suggestions for assessing pupils' progress. Teachers keep informal records of the progress of individual pupils but there is no set format or requirement that they do so. There are examples of sensible, informative records, which help teachers to know how well pupils are working day by day and these are particularly useful in helping teachers to plan work for individual pupils. Teachers make good efforts to involve pupils in the assessment of their own learning. There are good sessions at the end of lessons when pupils discuss how well they have done and what they could do better.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school's work is considerably enriched by its partnership with parents and this has a beneficial effect on pupils' attainment and progress. Evidence from meetings with parents and the questionnaire indicate very clearly that they value and support the school. Parents feel the school is well led and agree unanimously that amalgamation has gone very smoothly and to the benefit of the children and their parents. They see their children liking school, making good progress and being well behaved. The inspection findings support these positive views. There are no regular formal procedures for seeking parents' views and as a result an issue relating to school

uniform has taken some time to resolve. Following discussions with Asian leaders in the community the governing body has now agreed that boys will be allowed to wear long trousers.

47. The school has given a high priority to the development of good relationships with parents and very effective links have been formed. Many of these are related to the very good strategies in place to encourage parents to participate in their child's learning and life of the school. Staff make sure that the welcome for new pupils is warm and see this as an important step in forging positive long-term relationships. Bilingual support staff have a major role in communicating with parents whose first language is not English. The practice of staff welcoming parents and their children in the mornings means they are accessible and able to build up a rapport with them. A home and school co-ordinator provides a valuable link between school and home. The families she visits each week are appreciative of her efforts in learning to speak their home language. Staff are encouraging mothers to be involved and many are volunteering to attend a college course to learn to speak English. Parents agree that the home/school links are very good and a real strength of the school.
48. The school provides an impressive range of information for parents and encourages them to become involved in their children's work. Information is very well presented and written in a friendly way. Particularly successful are the induction packs for new pupils and Early Years booklets, both with translations into community languages, which provide useful information for parents and guidance on how to support their child. Formal communications, including newsletters, are translated into community languages if required. Details of topics and work to be taught in the classroom are provided for each year group. Teachers suggest activities for parents so they can support their child at home with additional learning. A well-established teacher for ethnic minority children and their families has set up and maintained an effective initiative to improve pupils' reading by involving families in their children's learning. A parent or other adult works with the child at home and one afternoon a week in school where they are well supported by the co-ordinating teacher and two bilingual teaching assistants. As well as the improvement in reading, it has the additional benefit of bringing parents into the school community and leads to their greater involvement, encouraged by the staff who work with them and visit their homes.
49. Parents are always welcome to talk informally to staff at any time if they have any concerns regarding their child. There are also three formal opportunities for them to meet with teachers to discuss their child's progress. Parents are made aware of children's targets at these meetings and they provide a useful focus for discussion. Parental attendance at progress meetings is very good and they appreciate the help of a bilingual assistant for translation and interpreting when necessary. Pupils' annual written reports are generally good, but only the very best give constructive criticism and an indication of steps to improve. The school works closely with parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are informed from an early stage of the school's concerns about their child. Most attend reviews and are kept well informed of the child's progress. Parents are very appreciative of the support given by the school to pupils with special educational needs.
50. Parental involvement has a good impact on both the pupils' learning and the work of the school. The level of direct help in school is satisfactory and growing. A few parents help in the classroom and provide valuable help on outside visits. There is no specific parents' association but sponsored events are well supported. The school encourages parents to extend their children's learning at home and provides them with a wealth of information on how to do so. Parental support of their child's learning at home

emphasises the value of learning and contributes to the positive attitudes pupils have to school. For example, parents enjoy the opportunity to work alongside their children during the weekly workshops and say it gives them good knowledge of what their children can do. Children and their parents like learning together at home and at school. Most parents are happy to support their child when work is sent home and many listen to their children read regularly. The home loan reading packs for the reception children are excellent and very well used.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The governors, headteacher and staff have all worked very well to accomplish the amalgamation of two schools. The previous infant school had serious weaknesses in its management that have been successfully eliminated by the amalgamation. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher led the former junior school very well and have started to implement a development plan to ensure that pupils enjoy similar achievements throughout the school. The amalgamation was completed about 18 months ago, but major advances have only been possible in the current academic year after appropriate classrooms have been established for reception aged children and some new staff have been appointed.
52. It is impossible to judge the progress since a previous inspection because this is effectively a new school, but the former junior school had established a tradition for high achievement and the new school continues this tradition very well. The majority of pupils start school with little or no understanding of English, but by the time they are eleven they reach similar standards to those found nationally. This is significant achievement and is directly attributable to the quality of teaching they have received and the leadership and management in the previous junior school and the now amalgamated school.
53. Many of the governors have a long-term commitment to the school and bring a great deal of experience to their new responsibilities. They have quickly helped to establish effective procedures for school management after a period of frustration caused by governing two such dissimilar schools during a period of intense difficulty for the infant school. As a result legal responsibilities are being met in full. The headteacher and governors have won the support of many parents for their management of the amalgamation and the way in which the headteacher, in particular, has set about improving the teaching and learning in the infants. The headteacher has been very ably assisted by the deputy headteacher who manages to combine successful teaching with a senior management role. They have worked in partnership for over 20 years and successive groups of pupils have benefited greatly from their continual striving for higher standards. There is still more to do to complete the work of amalgamation in the respect of making sure that all staff adhere to a common approach in their teaching, but this does not detract from the high quality work already undertaken.
54. Parents are rightly pleased with the new classrooms for reception aged children. Prior to the amalgamation young children's learning was very restricted by the fact that their classroom was also a school hall and the continual movement of furniture resulted in much lost time. Now children have a brand new open-plan classroom that is well equipped with furniture and general resources. They receive very good teaching and are making very good progress. This area has gone from a major weakness to a major strength in a few months.
55. There is a shared commitment, among the staff, to succeed. This has been brought about, partly, by the strategy to create pairs or small groups of staff to manage aspects

of the curriculum, for example. This has greatly benefited staff from the previous infant school who had very little chance to assume management responsibilities. They now talk with authority about school initiatives and their part in them. Staff have all been involved successfully in re-writing policies and schemes of work to match the needs of a full primary school.

56. Parents' views about the way that the school is managed are very positive and they are involved very well in their children's learning. The school has built up first rate links with its local community by appointing staff who have a thorough understanding of parental and community issues. However, it has not canvassed opinion formally and consequently the issue about school uniform was not dealt with as quickly as some parents would have wished.
57. Leadership and management for children in the reception classes are most effective. Planning is thorough and takes account of the most recent national guidance for this age range. This impacts positively on children's learning and ensures that they can make best use of the National Curriculum in Year 1. Overall responsibility for the infants, who are taught the National Curriculum, and the reception classes rests with one member of staff. In practice most of the daily decisions in the reception classes are taken by the teachers themselves. The school has recognised that there is some duplication of roles in this department, particularly since the raising of standards in the infant classes is a significant challenge in itself.
58. There is a strong ethos that is based on very positive relationships between adults and pupils and between pupils themselves. As a result, pupils are very well behaved. The school tackles the teaching of personal and social education well.
59. The school has begun an effective programme for monitoring teaching, which includes support from the local education authority. The governors for literacy and numeracy are also involved in monitoring the effects of teaching and of standards in general. The headteacher has concentrated, wisely, on observing literacy and numeracy lessons, but has not been able, in the time available, to do a lot more. Subject co-ordinators have seen a limited number of lessons to judge the quality of teaching and suggest improvements, but a systematic programme of monitoring, which would link into the national requirements for monitoring in relation to Performance Management, is not yet in place. Co-ordinators, particularly in English, mathematics and science, have begun to see pupils' books and work to evaluate learning. They also analyse test results to determine how teaching needs to be improved so that standards can be raised. The use of assessment information to set targets for improvement is expertly undertaken by the deputy headteacher. This work, coupled with a clear idea of how teaching needs to be conducted to assure high achievement, is a cornerstone of the school's success.
60. The current development plan is a very clear document based on a thorough system of evaluation carried out at all levels within the school. It comprises, in the main, lists of vital tasks that need to be completed by co-ordinators in the current year, and an outline of major priorities for forthcoming years.
61. The school has developed an effective equal opportunities policy that makes it quite clear that all pupils will learn their responsibilities to others in a multi-ethnic society. This policy is well linked to the practical issues that arise in teaching and learning in a school in which about 80 per cent of pupils are learning English as an additional language. There are currently two full-time teachers and four part-time bilingual teaching assistants at the school who contribute well to the achievements made by

pupils. The co-ordinator and headteacher decide on priorities for deployment to have the greatest impact on pupils' achievement. Literacy lessons, jointly planned with class teachers and an experienced teacher funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement grant, often provide additional and effective learning opportunities for pupils and professional support for the class teachers. Special educational needs provision in the school is also managed very effectively. The special educational needs co-ordinator works quietly and conscientiously to support both pupils and teachers. Her efforts are very much appreciated by her colleagues.

62. There is a good number of teaching staff who are deployed and trained effectively. Classroom support assistants play an effective role when the pupils are working in groups, but there are occasions when they sit with nothing to do while the class teacher is talking. This represents an ineffective use of resources. The accommodation, for many year groups, is very poor. The school hall and many of the junior classes, for example, are cramped and unsuitable for the kind of learning that is expected in the National Curriculum. By contrast the new reception classrooms are very well set out for a range of activities to take place. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory and computers are used well in classes to allow pupils useful opportunities to extend their learning. The area for reception age children to play outside is generally lacking in equipment for play, but the school is treating this as a priority.
63. The school makes good use of available grants. These grants are largely designated for specific purpose and have been put to productive use, for example for staff training. Funds available for ICT have been well used to provide additional computers in classrooms. Funds for special educational needs are used effectively to secure the most appropriate support for pupils who find work and behaviour difficult.
64. The headteacher and governors have managed the financial aspects of the amalgamation very well. The governors, headteacher, teachers and office staff make sure that money is spent wisely by researching how to spend it and choosing the goods and services that represent the best value for the school. The school has a sizeable balance, but this is all accounted for and comprises extra funds related to the amalgamation.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. The headteacher, staff and governors, with support from the local education authority, should:

1. **Improve standards in English and mathematics in the infants. To do this they should:**
 - ensure that those pupils who are capable achieve higher than average scores. (Paragraphs 4,11,81,84,89,95).*
2. **Improve the teaching of the whole class where it is weak. To do this they should:**
 - increase the range of strategies used at the beginning and end of the lesson;
 - use support staff more effectively during periods of whole-class teaching;
 - deal more effectively with any inattentive pupils;
 - devise a programme of staff training and support to tackle these weaknesses; and
 - observe lessons to provide feedback to teachers about these aspects. (Paragraphs 15,27,59,85,86,91,92,107,115,120)
3. **Raise standards in the physical development of reception aged children by providing outdoor play facilities.** (Paragraph 28)
4. **Improve features of the accommodation that have a detrimental effect on children's learning. To do this they should:**
 - provide sinks and water in or near to classes that are lacking this facility;
 - continue the upgrading of furniture; and
 - clear the school hall of stored items that hinder learning in physical education lessons. (Paragraphs 29,62,78,103,109,123,132,135)

*The school already has a clear and appropriate plan of action to tackle this issue.

Other areas for improvement identified during the inspection are the:

- (i) use of classroom support assistants and support teachers (paragraph 24,62,92,121); and
- (ii) formal canvassing of parents' views (paragraphs 46, 56).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 74 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 23 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 3 | 26 | 37 | 34 | 1 | 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) | N/A | 381 |
| Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals | N/A | 108 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | N/A | 9 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | N/A | 110 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 309 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 34 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 20 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.3 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.8 |
| National comparative data | 0.5 |

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| | 2000 | 22 | 29 | 51 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 13 | 11 | 15 |
| | Girls | 23 | 23 | 23 |
| | Total | 36 | 34 | 38 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 71 (n/a) | 67 (n/a) | 75 (n/a) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 85 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 11 | 17 | 15 |
| | Girls | 23 | 23 | 22 |
| | Total | 34 | 40 | 37 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 67 (n/a) | 78 (n/a) | 73 (n/a) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 88 (86) | 88 (87) |

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 | 29 | 26 | 55 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 20 | 19 | 21 |
| | Girls | 21 | 15 | 19 |
| | Total | 41 | 34 | 40 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 75 (n/a) | 62 (n/a) | 73 (n/a) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above | Boys | 20 | 19 | 2 |
| | Girls | 21 | 15 | 20 |
| | Total | 41 | 34 | 41 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 75 (n/a) | 62 (n/a) | 75 (n/a) |
| | National | 70 (68) | 72 (69) | 80 (75) |

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

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 93 |
| Pakistani | 192 |
| Bangladeshi | 26 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 70 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 18.3 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 20.8 |
| Average class size | 29.3 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 9 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 191 |

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 1999/2000 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|--------|
| Total income | 737000 |
| Total expenditure | 628000 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1674 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | N/A |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 109000 |

**Qualified teachers and support staff:
nursery**

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | N/A |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | N/A |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | N/A |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | N/A |

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | N/A |
|--------------------------------|-----|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

386

Number of questionnaires returned

158

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 70 | 27 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 47 | 47 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 49 | 44 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 43 | 39 | 11 | 4 | 2 |
| The teaching is good. | 64 | 34 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 43 | 45 | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 47 | 38 | 6 | 3 | 6 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 62 | 32 | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 42 | 41 | 9 | 3 | 6 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 50 | 38 | 1 | 0 | 11 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 49 | 39 | 4 | 0 | 7 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 42 | 29 | 11 | 2 | 16 |

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

66. When St Silas' CE Infant School was inspected in October 1997, the report was critical of the quality of education that was provided at the time for the children under the age of five. The accommodation did not lend itself to effective teaching and there was little direction for the work of the children or the teachers. Standards of attainment among the children were low and their progress was not quick enough. Since then, the changes that have taken place have resulted in a considerable change in the quality of education provided for the children in the reception year. The accommodation has been remodelled to allow the teachers to plan and organise a suitably challenging and interesting range of activities. The teachers have formed a determined and knowledgeable team with the support staff and, together, they provide a very good quality of education for all the children. Resources for learning are, in the main, new and capture the children's interest and stimulate them to learn very well. Although there is still scope for further improvement, for example to develop the use of the children's home languages for teaching, to quicken their progress in writing, and to improve standards of physical development, the quality of education is now very good and the children are achieving very well.
67. All the children start school and attend full-time in the September that follows their fourth birthdays. They are taught in two classes, which share many resources and facilities and, in practice, work as one unit. When they start school, the children's levels of attainment are well below average for their ages. Although many are reported by multi-lingual staff to be confident speakers in their home language, standards in spoken English are very low and make the task of settling the children into school quite demanding. Few children have experienced a sustained period of education and more than half are believed to have none at all. Consequently, the children's social skills are poor. They are unused to spending time in the company of adults outside their families and are unsure of how to work and play with other children around them. Very few have begun to develop skills in the early stages of reading, writing and mathematics.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. Most children lack confidence when they start school, but they quickly settle into the daily routines. When they arrive each morning, the staff greet them with reassuring smiles and welcoming words. This helps them feel confident and they enter the classrooms with a purposeful stride and are glad to see their friends. This sensitivity to the children's needs characterises the teaching, which is consistently very good. Many opportunities are provided for the children to work in groups, to enjoy a quiet moment with a book or to choose the work that they would like to do. These add further to their confidence. All the children have established friendships within the class and they play and work together very well. In the classroom's Pet Shop, they happily assume the roles of staff and customers and take turns at much sought-after activities such as taking charge of the dog's carrying cage or being responsible for selling the dog food. Because this and other work is so carefully planned, the children have learned to sustain their effort and concentration and see tasks through to their completion. Although a small number of children have yet to settle fully into their schooling, the achievement of the large majority is very good and they are on track to attain the standards set for children when they start in Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

69. Work in this aspect of the children's learning pervades each lesson every day, but despite the very good progress in communication, language and reading and satisfactory progress in writing, only a small proportion of children are likely to achieve the goals set nationally in this area of learning.
70. The teachers and support staff, including those with multi-lingual skills, have attached great importance to teaching the children how to communicate using spoken English. The teaching methods that are used are very effective and, although so few could speak English when they started school six months ago, all the children can now communicate in English with their friends and the adults around them. Some have learned so well that they seek to have conversations with adults about their work, asking questions and making use of the new words that they have learned; others use their new-found skill in speaking English subtly to persuade an adult to look at a book with them for example, or to amuse. One pupil added a little patch of spots to the elephant that she was painting and announced with a giggle that it was a tattoo. Another bemoaned the fact that a planned visit by a farmer had not taken place because of 'the disease'. The multi-lingual support staff contribute effectively to the children's learning of English, but the school has not yet done enough to make the very best use of their valuable skills to help the children to speak in and listen to their home languages. The school has begun to consider this shortcoming.
71. The teaching of reading is very good. It is good for writing, but it lacks some of the pace and emphasis found in the teaching of reading. The teachers are using well-trying and successful methods, based on the National Literacy Strategy, to teach reading. They are well versed in such methods and, although the children's attainment is still below average, they are learning well and making good progress. Good readers are few in number but they read accurately and use illustrations to help them re-tell the story. These and a reasonable proportion of the other children know the sounds of many letters and they are beginning to understand how to use them to have a go at unfamiliar words. Many children have yet to reach this stage but they have learned that books are enjoyable and contain information or stories. Even those children who have not begun to read at all choose to go the book corner and look through books, starting at the beginning and going through to the end.
72. Standards in writing are lower than those in reading and the children do not achieve well enough. The teachers are aware of this and of the need to add further dimensions to the teaching to encourage better progress. The pupils of average and above average ability understand that writing is a form of communication. In the writing area of the classroom, they have recently been writing letters, but not enough has been provided to help them to complete the task successfully and not enough time is given by the adults to help the children develop and practise writing. The writing of even the highest attaining children is short in content and, while many other children can write their names independently, this is the full extent of their skill. The lowest attaining groups have yet to progress beyond making basic marks.

Mathematical development

73. The children are learning very well in this aspect of their development despite the fact that their attainment is expected to be below expectations by the end of the reception class. The teaching is very good and is making a strong impact on children's learning, particularly since children's achievements depend so much on their ability to speak English. Imaginative methods are used to involve all the children in lessons taught to the whole class, and the range and quality of the tasks provided allow children to practise numbers and to extend their understanding of shape. Counting is a daily feature and almost all the children can count to 20 quickly and accurately. The more able children delight in showing how far they can count – even up to 109! Many children understand the principle of addition and, by singing counting songs with the teachers, they are learning well how to take one away from numbers up to five. One child explained that when two little ducks out of five had gone away there were three left.
74. Currently, the children are learning about symmetry and the teachers have planned and prepared a good range of interesting tasks for the children to do to practise making symmetrical patterns. Some of this work is being done on the suite of four computers. The children were fascinated by the way the patterns emerged and were able to explain their understanding of what was happening. One girl, looking at the pattern that she had created, was astonished: "It comes on two sides!". In a later lesson, some higher attaining pupils made patterns with two lines of symmetry. This really stretched the children's thinking and made great demands on their skills in explaining what they could see happening. "I putted a cross and then I putted another line into the corner. Then I did a line and crossed it. I wanted to make a star." Although they are at an early stage of learning to speak English, the children use the language associated with their work in mathematics very well. The encouragement and explanations provided by the multi-lingual staff add significantly to the children's capacity to explain their work so lucidly and children's achievements are very good.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. The children enjoy learning about the world around them. They are making very good progress in this area of their development as a result of the good teaching. Most children attain the goals set for their learning. Very good progress is also possible because many children have made long journeys, often by plane, to visit family members across the world and they talk about the experience of the journey and of meeting senior members of their families, often in rural communities. The school adds successfully to their knowledge. Recently, for example, they have been learning about animals and they can distinguish between pets, farm animals and wild animals. They understand that a pet needs food and care and they can talk about the size and colour of, and pattern on, wild animals. In science, they have learned about ice and observed it melting and seen that melted chocolate re-forms as it cools. Following a visit to a local park, the children recorded the route that they had taken from school.
76. Teaching makes very good provision for the children to use computers as a routine part of their work. Children are confident about using a mouse to open programs on which they are going to work and to restart when they wish to create a new pattern. They work quickly and independently to select the colours that they wish to add to their work. Support staff, teachers and a parent ensure that the children receive plenty of encouragement and support to increase their self-sufficiency. The questioning and prompting are subtle and help the children to solve problems themselves as they arise. All staff contribute to the keeping of a careful record of the children's successes and

record the difficulties that they experienced. This is a successful strategy and allows the teachers to plan the next stage of work for different groups of children.

Physical development

77. This is the most difficult area of learning for the school to tackle. The children are unlikely to reach the goals set for the end of their year in reception, because the school does not have the facilities and resources to help the children develop fully. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but teachers struggle hard to provide experiences for children to develop physical skills beyond those possible in the classrooms. In the summer of 2000, the classrooms for reception were refurbished to allow the children to work through the day undisturbed by other daily events. Consequently, the teachers are able to provide plenty of opportunities for the children to develop good control over pencils, crayons, paintbrushes and other tools. For example, the children were able to shape and roll out play-doh, and use pastry cutters to make some sweets. The teachers firmly but gently insist on the children learning to hold their pencils and crayons properly. This results in the children being able to add colour neatly to drawings and to include beautifully drawn illustrations in the letters that they have written.
78. The school's hall provides a poor environment for the children to exercise their muscles. The equipment is too large for children of this age to use or to learn to handle safely, and restricts the scope of the work that can be done. To add to the problem, the school does not have an outside area that is dedicated to the reception children. There are no wheeled toys or bikes and no apparatus for the children to use. This represents a significant gap in an otherwise very good curriculum, as children are unable to exercise fully, to practise climbing and to develop bodily control and confidence.

Creative development

79. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is very good and the children are likely to exceed the targets set for their attainment by the end of the reception year. Their achievement since starting school is excellent, especially in art because children's work has been influenced strongly by the art consultant's activities with six and seven year olds. The children can use a range of drawing tools to make marks and draw patterns. They make good choices, using pencil, charcoal, fibre-tipped pens and pastels all on the same designs. These are crafted with great care and skill and the children are currently adding colour to their work. Some children are returning each day to add paint, crayon or pastel, usually working co-operatively in pairs with studied concentration. Support staff provide gentle encouragement and helpful suggestions without dictating what the children should do. The children are able to comment on their work and say what else could be added to improve its appearance. The outcome of the work is spectacular and of a standard in excess of work usually seen from children of this age. In addition, the teachers provide opportunities for children to choose to paint. The pictures of wild animals, which they are painting currently, are painted with freedom and fun. Music is taught as an activity for the whole class, allowing teachers to make specific points. This works well. In one class, for example, all the children were involved playing different instruments to accompany a story told by the teacher. The children learned how to play their instruments at the right moment and how to play crescendos and diminuendos.
80. There are two teachers and four support staff, two of whom speak the languages that are spoken in the homes of most of the children. The quality of teaching is very good overall for all children, including those with a special educational need. It ensures that the children get off to a really good start in the school and achieve very well in this

earliest stage of their education. The teacher who co-ordinates the work of staff and children in the reception classes is new to the school and combines this responsibility with the management of the infant classes. This is a demanding role, which the co-ordinator is discharging effectively. Attendance at staff meetings and informal visits to lessons allow the co-ordinator to have an overview of standards in the reception classes and of the quality of education. In practice, the drive for change and improvement comes from the teachers of the reception classes. They have formed a lively team with the support staff to plan, provide and review the daily work of the classes and the progress of the children. This capacity to analyse how well things have gone and to identify what needs to be done next are important factors in making sure that the children achieve very well. The headteacher and the co-ordinator recognise that there is much about this stage of education that is unique to the age group, and that it is increasingly difficult for the co-ordinator to lead and manage two stages.

ENGLISH

81. The attainment of eleven year olds in 2000 was similar to that found in most schools nationally. This was the first set of results achieved by pupils at this new primary school, but it replicates the standards achieved by pupils in the previous junior school. They have done very well to achieve these results since the majority possessed very little English when they were five. Their continued success places them well above the levels reached by similar schools. The achievement of eleven year olds is directly attributable to the high priority placed on literacy throughout the school, the high expectations and effective teaching they receive, particularly in the last two years of the juniors. Current standards reflect this successful picture. Most pupils are reaching nationally expected levels and the school is on course to meet its ambitious targets. Standards in writing are particularly high with many more pupils reaching expected levels than would normally be found in most schools. Standards reached by seven year olds in reading and writing were well below the average in 2000. Despite some successful teaching since the amalgamation there has not been enough time for the pupils to make much of an improvement on their very low skills in English. However, results are an improvement on those achieved by the now closed infant school. Current standards are below average for seven year olds.
82. Most pupils listen carefully to all adults and to other children. In Year 1 the pupils are beginning to express themselves clearly and even the quietest members of each class are willing to participate in discussion. Although not all pupils can speak fluently or have a wide vocabulary they are keen to make themselves understood. By the age of seven most pupils are expressing themselves clearly. This comes from the number of good opportunities they are given to discuss and answer questions. The inclusive ethos of the school encourages all pupils to listen to each other and on the occasions when a pupil struggles to voice an opinion, or makes a mistake, the rest of the pupils are sensitive and encouraging. In one Year 4 lesson one pupil thought the teacher had said, "I scream" instead of "ice cream" and gave an adverb instead of an adjective. The bilingual support teacher realised the reason for the strange answer and everyone laughed with the pupil. The fact that teachers listen so well to their pupils encourages them to express themselves more freely and by the age of eleven most pupils are good at listening and responding to others. They readily share thoughts and ideas. In one reading session, for example, pupils were finding evidence from a text about the past. Every contribution from every pupil was valued and given credit. In a Year 5 and 6 class, pupils were giving their reasons against the wearing of short trousers. Although the subject aroused strong feelings the pupils were articulating their suggestions clearly

and were able to understand both sides of the argument. They were familiar with technical vocabulary such as 'statement of issue'.

83. Standards in reading are below average for pupils in Year 2 and in line with expectations in Year 6. However, pupils' achievement is good between the ages of six and eleven. They develop an active interest in reading and build up their skills well. Reading becomes a way of life and develops in the amount and content read as well as in the way in which pupils come to a better understanding of the texts they use. Pupils' good attitudes enable them to immerse themselves in books and many read regularly at home. Their teachers continue to give time to individuals, fostering a love of reading and focusing on the use of sound and letter relationships. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils can read simple texts using a range of strategies. Their teachers devote a lot of time to the development of comprehension skills and to teaching groups of readers as part of the literacy hour. They do not, as yet, have a confident enough understanding of the underlying meaning related to the passages, which they read. However, the highest attaining pupils, in the infants, are confident readers and can sum up the main points in a text. The younger juniors can confidently outline the characteristics of myths and legends and are beginning to develop the higher order skills of inference and deduction. The middle juniors are strengthening the link between reading and writing through the development of an appreciation of figurative language. By ten and eleven pupils are confidently reading their writing to the rest of the class, using clear expression. Their tastes in fiction are more pronounced so that they talk with conviction about favourite authors, giving reasons for their choice. Inference, deduction and finding evidence in the text to support their opinions are being successfully developed through the setting arrangements.
84. The standard of writing of seven year olds is low, but by eleven very many pupils reach expected levels. Older pupils have made very good progress as a result of some very good teaching. Seven year olds write for a range of purposes. They are beginning to build descriptions and to use diagrams and other layouts for their writing, but they lack the confidence to express themselves clearly and at speed and progress is hindered. This is understandable given the very low skills in English that pupils had at the age of five. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are building up their descriptive writing by choosing the most appropriate adjectives and writing their own figurative language. They also write clear factual accounts and interesting stories. Year 5 and 6 pupils have many opportunities to draft their work and present it well. This enables them to focus on composing the content and re-ordering it. They use different layouts for different purposes and their writing in other subjects is generally well presented. They can write sustained stories with good attention to the plot and details. They can describe characters incisively. Persuasive writing is convincing. The autobiographies and biographies were well structured and illustrated with apposite detail. Newspaper articles are written in a consistent genre and enhanced by the use of desktop publishing software. The highest attaining pupils produce original myths that have a literary merit and magical quality. The balance of grammar and creative work produces confident, skilled writers.
85. The quality of teaching is good in the infants and the juniors. Pupils learn well in the infants, but their writing could be better, particularly by those capable of reaching the higher level. Over a third of teaching is very good and this was seen in the juniors. A strength of the school is the detailed planning, secure subject knowledge and clear learning objectives that are either displayed or explained to the pupils. In most lessons skilful questioning checks understanding and extends individual pupils by building on their comments and questions. In a good Year 1 lesson, two of the support staff wore party hats with singular and plural labels to reinforce the spelling rule in a fun way. On

another occasion an excellent lesson focusing on the building of suspense merged an atmospheric use of drama and a creative use of the voice to captivate pupils' imagination and inspired and challenged them to take risks in their own writing of an opening paragraph, "A Door Banged". The quality of the discussion and subsequent writing was raised because the importance placed on learning was highlighted by the teacher's efforts. Where teaching had shortcomings these were linked to an introduction that was either too long or where the pupils were allowed to be passive. Teaching is generally characterised by a mutual respect, for each other and for learning, that is a strength of the school. This extends to the support staff in the school who interact with teachers and pupils in all parts of the lesson and check that all pupils are following the learning. There were countless examples of good practice. During a Year 3 lesson on adjectives the bilingual teacher introduced some words in Urdu asking pupils to find out some more adjectives in their home language. The response from the pupils was one of enthusiasm and delight. Marking, however, is a weakness. There are some very good examples of marking within the school but the practice is not yet consistent and lowers the very high standards set in some areas of the school.

86. The management of the subject is good overall. The team of four teachers has helped to build a cohesive commitment to literacy throughout the curriculum and the National Strategy for Literacy has been introduced well and is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. The attention paid to analysis of performance linked to the setting of targets is helping to raise standards. There is a regular pattern of monitoring of teaching in place, which now needs to be extended to the monitoring of learning, particularly in relation to the engagement of all pupils in each lesson. There are occasionally lessons that, while being satisfactory overall, suffer from weaker teaching in the whole-class section of the lesson. Some teachers find it hard to maintain pupils' interest in the class discussion, particularly when some of them are too hesitant to speak out straight away without additional prompting.

MATHEMATICS

87. Attainment by the time pupils are seven and eleven, as judged by the 2000 national tests, is below the national average, although the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level at the end of the juniors is in line with other schools nationally. When the pupils' performance in the tests is compared with pupils from similar schools, junior pupils achieve results that are in line with the national average. The overall trend is one of gradually improving standards and inspection findings indicate that eleven year olds are now in line with the national average. There is no noticeable difference between the progress of boys and girls. The difference between the 2000 National Curriculum test results and the inspection findings can be explained partly by a difference in the year groups and also by the improved teaching of mathematics that has placed more emphasis on mental arithmetic, for example.
88. Inspection findings demonstrate that standards are still below what would be expected nationally for seven year olds. This, in itself, is an advance on previous standards, which were well below expectations. It also indicates the strong achievement by the pupils by the time they are eleven. Good teaching, overall, in the juniors has helped the pupils to make significant strides in their learning. Lessons which are lively and well organised to meet the needs of all pupils result in pupils who are keen, interested and willing to work hard to make the necessary progress. Provision for pupils with a special educational need is good and they make good progress.
89. By the age of seven, pupils know that a quarter means one of four equal parts and are able to divide two digit numbers by four to find a quarter. They know that the first

number in a division calculation means how many to share by and are beginning to see the relationship between sharing and grouping and realise that 12 shared amongst three results in three groups of four. They are able to give change for a pound and match coins to a given figure under a pound. Pupils have a sound understanding of the mathematical names for a range of two-dimensional shapes. They are able to link passage of time to tasks and record that you can turn a page in one second and that 30 minutes is an appropriate length of time to walk a dog. It is their low skills in English that ultimately prevent standards from being higher at the end of Year 2. Nevertheless, pupils could do better. The school is aware of this and has some strategies in place to tackle this issue.

90. By the age of eleven the majority of pupils work confidently with numbers. They know the value of each digit in seven figure numbers and have a good recall of number tables. They are able to explain their pencil and paper calculations by using extended methods. Pupils are able to use a variety of short cuts to help their mental calculations and understand the relationship between decimal fractions, vulgar fractions and percentages. More able pupils measure angles accurately and know the sum of the angles of a triangle and a straight line, and are able to prove that these are the same.
91. Pupils' learning is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. This picture relates closely to the quality of the teaching seen in the school, which is satisfactory in the infants with some good examples, and good overall in the juniors. Some of the tasks set for pupils in the infants lack challenge for the more able pupils who would benefit from tasks better devised according to pupils' different levels of attainment. Teachers enjoy good relationships with the pupils and in the good and very good lessons, when time is managed well, the pupils respond to the teachers' lively style and appropriate sense of humour and become excited by new ideas. When the teacher talks for too long during the opening period of the lesson pupils occasionally become inattentive.
92. In the best lessons, challenging questions, the teachers' enthusiasm, the ability to capitalise on the pupils' developing interest, a good range of examples and new ideas reinforce the pupils' understanding. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 6 lesson when pupils were introduced to the 'Sieve of Eratosthenes' and numbers with factors, after division, 'fell through', and only the prime numbers remained. In another Year 6 lesson the teacher enabled the pupils to obtain a good understanding of the relationship between the area of certain shapes, such as a rhombus and a square with the same dimensions, as the rhombus is 'a tipped over square'. In a Year 3 lesson centred around diagrams, the time allowed for the pupils' own work, and the range of tasks set enabled pupils of all attainments to benefit from the session. During a Year 1 lesson, the appropriately targeted questions and the verbal rewards offered helped pupils to gain a good understanding of the fact that the order in which numbers are added does not affect the answer. Throughout the school, in the best lessons, the teachers enhanced the pupils' learning by using every opportunity to ask supplementary questions and to relate what was being taught to the pupils' own lives. Good use is made in these lessons of the support staff, who work with groups of pupils at both ends of the range of attainment. This then encourages an air of fast learning in the group activities. In some of the lessons observed, including one unsatisfactory lesson, pupils had little time to practise the skills taught as the teacher talked for too long, and insufficient use was made of the support staff or second teacher.
93. The quality of the teachers' planning is generally good and computers are well used in many of the lessons. Pupils' learning benefits from this computer usage. They were, for example, observed in a number of lessons using the computer to record data collected into graphical form.

94. Good use is made of the test results at Years 5 and 6 to group pupils by their level of attainment. This has led to pupils' work being closely matched to their needs, and teachers have become clear about what pupils need to do to reach the levels expected. Throughout the school progress is carefully monitored by twice-termly tests. Pupils' books are regularly marked but they would benefit from more guidance about what they have achieved where they are going wrong and what they need to do next. The management of the subject is good and much is and has been done to raise standards throughout the school, especially at the upper end of the juniors.

SCIENCE

95. The attainment of eleven year olds pupils in the 2000 national tests was well below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. The findings of the inspection are that pupils' achievements are now in line with the level that most pupils are expected to reach by the time they are eleven. In 2000 the number of pupils exceeding the average at eleven years of age was well below the national picture. The inspection agrees with the school's prediction that the percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels by the end of junior school has now improved by about half. Differences between the latest national test scores and the inspection can be partly explained by the differences between year groups. The main reason, however, lies in the policy of teaching science through pupils investigating ideas and theories for themselves. The present Years 5 and 6 thrive on this method of working and consequently their work in science has improved. The attainment of seven year old pupils in teacher assessments at the end of 2000 is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels, however, is very close to the national average. The findings of the inspection are that levels of achievement in the current academic year, for Year 2 pupils, are likely to remain low this year. There is no difference between the performance of boys and girls. The low achievements of pupils in Year 2 is directly linked to their low standards in English, since most of the science curriculum depends on the understanding of words and ideas in English.
96. Despite the below average attainment in the infants, pupils make good advances in their scientific knowledge, understanding and skills. By the age of eleven they are performing at the same level as most pupils in the country. This is a significant achievement for pupils who started school with little or no English.
97. The quality of teaching is good or better in 85 per cent of the lessons seen. Teachers and other adults working in infant classes work hard to help pupils for whom English is an additional language. These pupils learn technical terms very quickly and they become increasingly adept at understanding the oddities of the English language. Teachers expect pupils to think, ask questions, make predictions, and review everything they do. This method of working has been used consistently in infant classes only since the school amalgamated 18 months ago. The benefits of this are already seen in infant classes but it is taking a little time to become established as routine. As pupils progress through junior classes this method of investigation is well established and all pupils are good at setting themselves problems and working out how to solve them. Good quality teaching, allied to a consistent, scientific method of working, has a positive impact in raising standards throughout the school, especially when pupils' knowledge increases as they complete interesting investigations. Pupils with special educational needs tackle scientific problems in the same way as their friends, often with the support of an adult. This helps them to make good progress in lessons.

98. Teachers use national guidance to ensure that all the essential elements of the curriculum are taught. They plan individual lessons very carefully to make sure there is a sensible balance between learning new knowledge and testing ideas scientifically. There is an underlying sense of excitement in most lessons as pupils listen attentively to their teachers, plan their own research, decide what equipment they will need and how to use it, and come together at the end of lessons to share their results. In a Year 5 and 6 class, for example, pupils were testing things, which would make a difference to the brightness of a bulb in a circuit. They realised they already knew a lot about electricity and they became increasingly animated as they began to use that knowledge to set up the new investigations the teacher had planned. This led to work at a very high level and pupils learned a lot from their own and their friends' investigations. Pupils with special educational needs made excellent progress during this particular lesson. Teachers give very careful thought to the resources needed for lessons. Year 1 pupils were looking at plants and how they grow. The teacher had set up two dishes of watercress some days before the lesson but one had not been watered. Pupils were astonished at the differences between the two sets of cress and one said, "They're all dead. None grew." In this same lesson pupils were taken aback when they saw how roots had grown so quickly on bulbs they had planted in water. Teachers are skilful in asking questions to check what pupils already know and what they have learned as a result of the lesson. In a Year 5 and 6 lesson on magnetism pupils were surprised to discover how much knowledge they already had about magnetism. They were then able to discuss how they could use that knowledge to discover whether magnetism could be measured or not and whether magnetism could pass through objects. Pupils set up fair tests to answer these and other questions and by the end of the lesson they decided that magnetism was a force which was not constant. In most lessons pupils are expected to predict what will happen. At the end of lessons they and their teachers discuss whether or not tests are really fair, review the success or otherwise of their investigation and suggest ways in which tests and investigations could be improved. Lessons are well resourced and this helps pupils to learn more effectively because they can carry out investigations for themselves rather than watching teachers or friends. In all lessons seen teachers were careful to use correct technical vocabulary. Pupils in Year 1 can name and label the parts of a flower while Year 2 pupils use words such as 'electrical', 'crocodile clips' and 'power' correctly.
99. Pupils enjoy science and this is reflected in the mainly good or better behaviour seen in lessons. Pupils listen carefully to their teachers, discuss their ideas animatedly with their friends and carry out tests and investigations very sensibly. The pupils' good behaviour and mature attitudes are major contributors to the good or better progress seen in most lessons. This is helped by the good relationships between adults and pupils seen throughout the school. Pupils are not afraid to say that they do not understand and teachers are always willing to express some difficult ideas in new ways to help pupils grasp difficult concepts.
100. There is a close link with pupils' attainments in written and spoken English and their success in understanding scientific ideas. Many infant pupils have been learning English for a relatively short time and while they acquire and use technical language very quickly, sometimes they do not always understand some of the meanings of English grammar and vocabulary. Teachers and other adults working in classrooms work hard to try to make sure that all pupils understand word meanings and this is largely successful. Occasionally some of the youngest pupils for whom English is an additional language know the words but do not understand the scientific ideas behind the words. This hinders their progress in lessons and over a period of time. Year 2 teachers overcome some of these problems by rarely using the word 'predict' or the idea of prediction. They do, however, give pupils very clear guidance on "What I will

do.... What I will need.... It worked because....". By the time pupils reach Year 6 they have a thorough knowledge of both the formal and informal uses and meanings of English and their progress is greater.

101. Science lessons are well served by other areas of the curriculum. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge well when calculating the strength of a magnet. In junior classes, especially in Years 5 and 6, they have very good skills of speaking and listening. They discuss sensibly and groups work out between them the best way in which to tackle problems. They listen well to their teachers and answer questions clearly and with considerable confidence.
102. There is a recent very clear scheme of work based on national guidelines, which all teachers closely follow. This makes sure that pupils learn new scientific knowledge and ideas and have many opportunities to revise things they have learned previously. The subject is well resourced and teachers use the schools and their own resources well. The recently appointed co-ordinator has already looked at pupils' work and teachers' plans in most classes and has a good grasp of what needs to be done to improve pupils' scientific knowledge and skill further.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Standards reached by seven and eleven year olds are broadly typical for their age. However, this does not represent the full picture of standards as some pupils have completed work of a very high quality under the guidance of an art consultant who is funded, for two years, by a lottery grant. A pupil from Year 5 and 6 wrote at the consultant's art club, after painting in the style of Jackson Pollock, "I felt happy and fresh minded. It was so fun. We were just throwing paint onto the canvas and letting it drip." This approach, of getting pupils to write about their experiences, and high quality results represent all that is best in the school's artwork. The impetus provided by this initiative is beginning to influence the work undertaken in class, but progress is taking some time owing to the amalgamation, the way art and design is timetabled and the limitations caused by the cramped and under-resourced classrooms in some parts of the school.
104. By the age of eleven, pupils have undertaken some challenging tasks and achieved high standards. For example, they have produced some exciting colour studies on canvas, in the style of Anthony Frost, using dyed and painted textiles that have been stretched, rolled, cut and decorated with machine stitching. However, standards are not consistently high because pupils are not able to develop their skills in a uniform manner. In the Year 5 and 6 classes, art and design is blocked into certain weeks at the beginning and end of the academic year, leaving pupils maximum time to concentrate on English, mathematics and science. This is an ideal arrangement for achieving well in National Curriculum tests, but it reduces the sense of momentum in art and design. The overall amount of time spent is about the same as having an art lesson every week, but the amount of ground covered is slightly less and pupils' motivation suffers. It results in some good work being produced in pencil sketching and painting in the style of Charles Mackintosh, for example, but pupils lack the satisfaction of building up their skills systematically over a two-year period and standards in printing and three-dimensional work, for example, are less advanced.
105. The attainment of seven year olds follows a similar pattern. Results from the art club show that pupils have the potential to produce high quality work. For example, some seven year olds have used black lines and a limited palette of colours (black, orange and purple) to produce striking and vibrant abstract pictures that demonstrate very

careful control and a sensitive handling of colour. Work in the classroom is more typical of the average work produced in many schools. Pupils have satisfactorily made collages with different materials and have a good understanding of the associated vocabulary such as 'shiny', 'dark' and 'knobbly'. In this way art and design has made a good contribution to the learning of those for whom English is an additional language. However, the collages were rather limited in the scope afforded to individual pupils to make choices about how to apply the pieces of material and in what design.

106. One of the strengths of the teaching is the effective use of the school's scheme of work to devise interesting lessons. These lessons allow pupils to develop observational skills in the context of work related to a famous artist, for example, and to practise their reading and writing at the same time. This style of teaching is more developed in the juniors where the scheme has been in operation for longer than in the infant department. Pupils in a Year 4 class, for example, have been looking closely at the prints of Hunterwasser and enjoying the detailed and colourful patterns and shapes. They were inspired to write poems that, in a surreal way, described the patterns that they saw, for example, "oddly shaped squares dropping striped circles". In the same year group, another class was making a three-dimensional model of The Dragon from Ice Mountain, thereby adding meaning to a story that they had been reading together.
107. Teaching is satisfactory overall throughout the school because the high points are balanced by lessons in which the teachers lack confidence and have not absorbed the implications of the school's scheme of work so well. This means that pupils enjoy the tasks like string printing, but that their learning is not developed in a sequential fashion throughout the school, from year to year, in the way that the scheme suggests. In some lessons teaching lacks the basic skills of grabbing the pupils attention at the beginning of the lesson in the whole-class introduction. Some teachers find it hard to involve all pupils in a discussion and many pupils are only actively involved when they begin the practical work.
108. Since this is a new school, progress from the last inspection cannot be noted, but the school has made a very good start in making sure that the art consultant's influence is felt throughout both the infant and junior departments. There has not been enough time for the scheme of work, devised with the help of the consultant, to have been fully implemented throughout the school. Nevertheless, good work is beginning to be produced and teachers' careful implementation of its recommendations is having, in some cases, a powerful influence on pupils' learning and the standards they achieve. A record of what pupils have undertaken is kept, but assessment is under-developed because there is no school collection of pupils' work for staff to discuss, and lessons often contain too few opportunities for pupils to discuss their own work and that of others.
109. The very cramped conditions in some classes have a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. There is often no source of water nearby and this restricts opportunities to paint. Desks in some rooms are so close together that it makes it hard for the teacher to squeeze past to work with individual pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. Standards achieved by pupils are above those which are typical for their age at both seven and eleven. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are included in all activities and make good progress in lessons and over time. These pupils are often supported well by additional teachers or classroom assistants.

111. Teachers' planning is based on national guidelines and is careful to ensure that pupils have opportunities to use the wide range of materials and tools required by the National Curriculum. Planning for individual lessons is thorough and teachers take great care to make sure that pupils have opportunities to learn and improve skills year by year. Teachers pay proper regard to health and safety issues in all design and technology lessons and pupils work very carefully in all the lessons seen. Younger pupils design and make moving vehicles including cars, buses and fire engines. They join materials together in various ways and use an ingenious method to fix axles to their vehicles. The co-ordinator often teaches lessons in infant and younger junior classes and her enthusiasm has a very positive effect on the pupils. There is some evaluation of work by pupils, but it is not consistent throughout the school. Year 1 pupils made houses and found some difficulty in fixing the door into the side of the house. They were asked to suggest how they could improve their work. One pupil wrote, "If I made it again I would make the wall to be short." Older pupils have good experiences of a full range of activities including stitching, drilling, sawing, model making and making 'pop-up' cards and books. In Years 5 and 6 pupils make bridges with card and wood, and they also make fairground rides using commercial construction kits. These well-constructed models show a high level of skill by eleven year olds. They have acquired a very good understanding of how materials can be joined together and what makes a strong three-dimensional structure. Pupils draw well upon their work in mathematics, science and ICT to support their work in design and technology.
112. The good, often very good, behaviour of the pupils contributes significantly to the good progress they make. This is especially true in classrooms that are cramped and without water. Nevertheless, many pupils manage to complete work of a high standard. This represents good achievement on their part. The oldest pupils have few recollections of evaluating their work. The planning documents give clear guidance for the non-specialist and the co-ordinator has opportunities to support some teachers during lessons. The good supply of materials and tools is an important factor in pupils' achievements.

GEOGRAPHY

113. Achievement in geography is typical for pupils aged seven and eleven. The teaching of geography is satisfactory overall and is good in the juniors. Teaching is better in the juniors, overall, but standards remain in line with national expectations because pupils' fluency in English is not consistently strong throughout the juniors. It is strong, by comparison, when they are eleven when some of the most elaborate work is completed. The structuring of literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum is raising standards and the development of relevant, personalised, resources such as Silas Bear is increasing the depth of understanding through captivating the children's interest. The integration of skill development through fieldwork, topics and visits also helps to engender good attitudes towards this subject.
114. By the time they are seven, pupils have a sound understanding of at least two localities and have developed their mapping skills and vocabulary. In Year 1, the teacher skilfully set the scene for a lesson on aerial views by encouraging the pupils to visualise themselves as birds soaring up into the sky. This was then built upon with a range of practically-based learning experiences that developed spatial awareness and a sense of direction. The quality of questions targeted at individual pupils ensured that good use was made of the whole group in extending the learning of the rest. In this lesson all of the children including the highest attaining children were able to work at an appropriate level. The Year 2 children have produced a lot of work contrasting Chembokali, an

Indian village, with their own locality. The activities were a good mixture of worksheets and children's own writing, diagrams and drawings. Work is not always matched to children's ability, some work is unfinished and marking is not carried out consistently across the same year group. These factors have an adverse effect on pupils' learning and achievements.

115. Pupils in Year 6, at the age of eleven, have extended their knowledge to include further contrasting localities and have improved their skills through topics on rainforests, settlements, water and environmental change. Learning is good. Pupils take a pride in their work in response to high expectations. Where teaching was very good a range of methods was used to inspire and challenge the pupils that included: group discussion; individual research; role-play, clear explanation and questioning. Imaginative and informative displays and resources played a central role in lessons. In addition, pupils' natural responses were valued in class and group discussion and used to enhance learning and self-esteem. Shortcomings in teaching included tasks being rushed, insufficient explanation of tasks and ICT resources being set at an inappropriate level.
116. Sound management is provided by two co-ordinators, one of whom held this role in the junior department for a number of years. A two-year cycle is in place to avoid duplication of work for classes containing two year groups and is timetabled to avoid overload on teachers and pupils, particularly in Years 2 and 6. Care has been taken to include some of the pupils' own culture in the curriculum which is suitably broad and balanced. Resources for literacy within the subject have recently been increased successfully.

HISTORY

117. By the ages of seven and eleven pupils reach levels that are appropriate for their age. The enthusiasm of the teachers for the subject is reflected in the enthusiasm of the pupils, particularly the older juniors.
118. In the infants, pupils learn to distinguish the present from the past, and to put events in the order in which they happen. Teaching builds successfully on what is already familiar to the pupils, which helps them understand, particularly as the majority of pupils are in the relatively early stages of acquiring English as an additional language. Pupils look at siblings in their own families, to see who is older or younger than they are. Later they draw their family tree, going back two generations. The past becomes more real to them when they visit the local museum to look at home life in the past with original objects for them to handle and talk about, and compare with the technology of the present, such as cookers. When learning about events such as the Great Fire of London, they draw maps and sequenced dates to relate them to their lives and where they live. They look at clothes then and now. They give reasons to explain why the fire spread, such as the dry weather and the houses made of wood. They learn about the significance of sources of information from the time such as Samuel Pepys' diary, and keep a diary for a week themselves to underline the difference in their lives of present and past. They begin to understand relative distances in the past through looking at transport over time, such as how the bicycle has evolved.
119. In the lower juniors pupils learn about Invaders and Settlers. A visit to the village of Ribchester helps pupils understand aspects of life in Britain at the time of the Romans. They begin to recognise different periods in history, placing the invaders in the correct sequence chronologically. Teachers' lively style and enthusiasm and good use of their voices keep pupils interested in hearing and learning about the Viking raiders. They

enjoy sharing with the class their sentence to describe a Viking warrior, such as “A Viking has no fear” and “The Vikings were fierce warriors”. The teacher encourages pupils to view the invasion from the Vikings’ point of view, explaining why they came to Britain, as well as the unsuspecting Anglo-Saxon villagers about to be invaded, so pupils develop their understanding of events and their causes. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are used to gathering information from a variety of sources which includes CD-ROMs and the Internet. In a study of the local area, pupils have a good understanding of the reasons for the growth of Blackburn and the changes that have taken place over time, for example the Industrial Revolution and the growth of the cotton mills due to the proximity to water. They draw on a good variety of sources for their research, using the appropriate vocabulary, such as ‘written eye-witness reports’ and ‘observation in the field’. When learning about the 1930s, most pupils acquire a good factual knowledge of the period, of the events, people and changes. They research the main events of each decade and migration to Britain and from which countries and the reasons, such as the labour shortage in Britain after World War 2. They look at the war from the perspective of those that were left at home, mainly women, and respond to primary source material of interviews from the time. Pupils have a good level of understanding and inference, using their increasing knowledge of the times from their research. They make sensitive responses to the quotes showing an ability to empathise with what life was like for them and how they felt.

120. Teaching is satisfactory in the infants and good in the juniors. The pattern of teaching, learning and achievement is similar to that which exists in geography. Teaching is better in the juniors, overall, but standards remain in line with national expectations because pupils’ fluency in English is not consistently strong throughout the juniors. Teachers use every opportunity to extend pupils’ knowledge and understanding. This includes the learning of new vocabulary specific to the topic or to historical research, such as ‘raiders’ and ‘eye witness’. The teachers’ knowledge and enthusiasm expertly guide the most effective lessons. Teachers have good organisational skills and knowledge of research methods. The varied tasks teachers set for pupils match the different levels of attainment so all pupils understand and achieve well. There are more published worksheets used in the lower junior classes than other classes, and while they are appropriate to support their learning, pupils also need the opportunity to develop their own skills of presenting information in different ways. For example, pupils in one class had completed some drawings showing a good amount of detail, particularly of a ‘Roman Town’, accompanied by an accurate written description, whereas a parallel class had used a worksheet that was more limited in its scope so opportunities for development were lost. Although pupils are enthusiastic and listen attentively to the teacher, in a few lessons they take time to settle to their tasks and concentrate, and so achieve less.
121. A teacher funded by the Ethnic Minority Achievement grant teaches effectively in a lesson where she works with half the class to increase their understanding of preparations for World War 2 by close examination of newspaper headlines from 1939. This develops pupils’ ability to interpret the written word from their growing knowledge and understanding of the period. In another lesson, however, the teacher is effectively deployed for the group work, but not for the whole-class work where she plays no active part, so opportunities to extend pupils’ learning were missed.
122. Teachers provide very good opportunities for pupils to improve their literacy skills in history through a wide range of reading and writing activities, which develop their historical understanding and knowledge well. As most pupils are from an Asian heritage background and English is not their first language, these additional opportunities make an important contribution to the good standards that pupils reach by

the end of Year 6 in English as well as history. Written work throughout is well presented, as are labelled diagrams and illustrations, consistently marked and often with encouraging comments. Visits and visitors also make a good contribution to pupils' understanding and knowledge of the period they are studying by bringing the period to life. Pupils' understanding of the Tudors and Vikings and their enjoyment of history are particularly enhanced by the visit of a drama company who immerse pupils in the life and times of the period. For example, pupils live like a Viking for the whole day, with appropriate clothing and artefacts and activities. Co-ordinators are aware that the history curriculum makes little reference to the areas where most of the children's families originate. There is scope within several of the history topics to develop this aspect, as has been successfully done with the 1930s' topic, which incorporates migration to Britain.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

123. By the end of Year 2, attainment is in line with national expectations. At the end of the juniors it is good, and above that achieved by the majority of schools. There are no differences in the performance of boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils have achieved well to go beyond national expectations by the age of eleven, particularly since the school cannot put computers together in one room and teach pupils as a class. The school's limited and often cramped conditions prevent this kind of arrangement for teaching. Computers are spread around the school with some in each class. This is not an ideal arrangement because only four pupils can use them at any one time. The good organisational skills shown by teachers and the strong influence of the co-ordinator have ensured that standards are high.
124. By the time pupils reach the age of seven they are able to use a sound range of skills and clearly enjoy using the computers. They benefit from the opportunity to use the computer across the curriculum. In Year 1 they label parts of plants and by Year 2 they supply the missing words to sentences and produce graphs from data that they have collected in the classroom. They correct and change their work on screen by skilfully moving the cursor around their writing. Pupils print, and in some cases save, their work independently. They work well in groups, often with support staff, and have an increasing awareness of which keys to use for changing the font size and highlighting certain words. They use graphics packages and know that by using a variety of options they can change the results.
125. By the time they are eleven, pupils have a good knowledge of the opportunities available from ICT. Year 4 pupils were observed planning and writing procedures for a floor robot to make a 'honey journey' to collect pollen and they are able to set a program to work a lift control centre. Control technology is especially impressive by Year 6. Pupils are able to use it in conjunction with their own models such as a fairground wheel. They design their own programs that control, for example, reverse actions, speed reduction by 30 per cent from 2000rpm to 1400rpm, and delay by a given number of seconds. They have a good understanding of the use of control technology, linked to the need for electronic databases, in the home and around the town, and list washing machines and traffic lights as examples. They know that sensors have many uses and these include the control of automatic doors. Pupils can import a picture that they have drawn and incorporate pictures from the digital camera into the text. They appreciate the value of a writing program when presenting their findings from a discussion and survey centred on the issue of long and short trousers in school. They plan to present their findings to the headteacher! Pupils have a splendid attitude

towards their ICT studies, and they value the many opportunities presented to them by the school. They report that they use the computer in practically every subject.

126. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in the infants and good overall in the juniors with some very good examples seen at the upper end of the key stage. Teachers throughout the school take every opportunity to use ICT to support learning across the curriculum and this not only enhances the pupils' ICT skills, but also supports their learning in a range of subjects. At best, teachers have planned for its use with or without a support assistant. During a brief spell of direct teaching in a Year 3 lesson the teacher did, however, use a spontaneous opportunity to teach pupils how to cut a drawing from a graphics screen into a word-processing page. In a Year 6 history lesson good use was made of a CD-ROM for research skills, and teachers give pupils the opportunity, if appropriate, to download information from the Internet to support their learning. Very good individual records of pupils' progress throughout the school are kept. These are used well to plan new work. Teachers attend both internal and external courses and this is doing much to develop the subject in the infants and to build on the already established good practice in the juniors.
127. The key to much of the success that the school enjoys in this subject is the expertise and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator, and the teaching staff who have benefited from his advice and example. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop a coherent and developmental policy that highlights the skills and the knowledge to be taught. His eagerness for the staff and pupils to succeed is infectious.

MUSIC

128. Standards achieved by pupils are generally typical for their age at seven, but are higher than those found in most schools at eleven. Pupils have a very positive approach to the subject, particularly in Years 5 and 6 when working in groups. The high standards achieved by eleven year olds were typically evident in one excellently taught lesson where pupils were composing space-like sounds after talking about the earth, planets and nebulae. Their most productive discussions led to one group describing clouds imaginatively as, "megallanic clusters". They used their knowledge of the rondo pattern to compose their own repeating tunes and then listened to each other's pieces in rapt attention. They were inspired by what they had achieved in a relatively short time. Pupils' attainment is greatly enhanced by their developing command of English, for example, in the way they can use a rich vocabulary to describe their compositions.
129. Pupils' achievements have been developed well during the junior years by enthusiastic and knowledgeable teaching. For example, pupils in Year 3 already know about ostinato and texture in music and can apply their knowledge when playing instruments to create the repetitive and multi-layered sounds of a rainforest. The most successful aspect of pupils' achievements at the beginning of the juniors is that they already know how to put sounds together expressively.
130. Attainment by the time pupils are seven is at the level expected across the range of activities. For example, most pupils know that dynamics refers to loud and quiet sounds and they can talk animatedly about how sounds can be arranged to produce an effect. They can sing reasonably well and maintain a beat, but their achievements, whilst satisfactory, are restricted by their more limited command of English compared with the eleven year olds and their more advanced achievements.
131. The keynote to pupils' high levels of achievement is the consistent and knowledgeable teaching that they receive. A specialist teacher that oozes enthusiasm, energy and

confidence provides this. As a result pupils acquire good levels of musical knowledge, the confidence to compose pieces that display that knowledge and the skill to evaluate their compositions. Teaching is good in the infants and very good in the juniors, the difference being that the younger pupils, in the infants, take a little longer to settle into the ambitious group activities and small amounts of time are sometimes lost that could otherwise have been devoted to a fuller discussion of what had been achieved. Nevertheless some teaching in the infants is very good. For example, a Year 2 lesson began with a burst of energy in getting the pupils to say their names in a robotic or scary way, for example. It then progressed seamlessly to a haunted castle musical story in which pupils used unusual instruments like sweet jars filled with wooden cubes (sounding like rattling bones) to tell the gruesome tale. The teacher made the lesson so exciting that pupils sang well without being conscious of it and good discipline was just taken for granted. Where teaching is excellent more time is devoted to discussing how successful the learning had been than in other lessons. In the Year 5 and 6 lesson devoted to space music the teacher gave expert verbal feedback to each group that added to the pupils' understanding and appreciation of their work, for example, "I particularly liked the ending, which gave the composition an air of finality."

132. Music lessons make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development. The school choir provides a very good opportunity for pupils to further their enjoyment in this respect. The co-ordinator has played a leading role in ensuring that the curriculum, for this amalgamated school, is organised, resources are ready and pupils enjoy a wide range of musical opportunities outside lessons. The school possesses a good library of recorded music that includes various cultural influences, but there is scope for even more music to reflect the pupils' cultural backgrounds. Occasionally, achievement in lessons is restricted when cramped classrooms have to be used for teaching. This limits pupils' chances to work experimentally with the musical instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. The standards achieved by seven and eleven year olds are average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Nearly three quarters of the pupils in Year 6 can swim a minimum of 25m by the time they leave school. This represents good progress particularly since many pupils do not swim regularly in their leisure time.
134. Teaching and learning of physical education are satisfactory. Pupils know why muscles need to be warmed up prior to strenuous exercise and they have some understanding of the effect which exercise has on the body. The school's planning ensures that all the essential aspects of physical education are taught each year. There are good quality plans for individual lessons which offer sensible advice for non-specialists and help them to sequence activities so that pupils develop skills and techniques appropriately. This gives pupils sufficient confidence to attempt new skills. For example, Year 4 pupils built up a good sequence of movement, as they portray the effects of flames and fire, in a well-planned dance lesson. In most lessons pupils evaluate their own performance and that of their friends. Comments are usually positive and a good demonstration is likely to be rewarded by applause from the rest of the class. In some lessons teachers demonstrate movements and skills well. Teachers use resources such as tambours, music and a metronome well, both as a stimulus and as signals for activities to begin and stop. Teachers encourage pupils to improve performances in gymnastic, dance and movement lessons, stopping the lessons frequently and encouraging a higher level of performance. These techniques and positive encouragement have a strong effect on pupils' responses to the lessons.

135. Despite the satisfactory nature of most lessons, the small hall, the many pieces of furniture placed around the edge of the hall and the relatively short time given to physical education lessons restrict the progress which pupils make in lessons and over time. Large areas of the hall's floor space are used to store dining furniture, physical education apparatus and various other pieces of equipment. This reduces the space for lessons. The school is aware that this needs to be addressed.
136. The restrictions placed upon physical education by the school's hall have a major impact on pupils' achievements. The subject is rescued by the breadth of the rest of the curriculum. Outside games include football, netball and cricket. Pupils receive coaching for these games and older pupils play against other schools. The school also has a house system and pupils compete against each other in football, netball, cricket and athletics. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 also enjoy orienteering. They race over a six mile course using maps and compasses. This makes an effective link between physical education and geography.