

INSPECTION REPORT

THE DISRAELI SCHOOL

High Wycombe

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 131852

Headteacher: Mr N. Cook

Reporting inspector: Mrs B. Iles
12000

Dates of inspection: 5th – 8th February 2001

Inspection number: 240437

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Primary |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 - 11 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | The Pastures High Wycombe Buckinghamshire |
| Postcode: | HP13 5JS |
| Telephone number: | 01494 445177 |
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| Appropriate authority: | The Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs A. Beaton |
| Date of previous inspection: | Not Applicable |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-----------------|----------------------|---|--|
| 12000 | Mrs B. Iles | Registered inspector | English | <p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements.</p> <p>How well are the pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> |
| 9545 | Mr K. Greatorex | Lay inspector | | <p>How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p> |
| 2905 | Mr D. Shepherd | Team inspector | Equal Opportunities Art and Design Science Religious Education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 21396 | Mr A. Cox | Team inspector | Mathematics Geography Physical Education | |

| | | | | |
|-------|-----------------|----------------|--|--|
| 27365 | Mrs D. Bonnette | Team inspector | Foundation Stage History Music | |
| 10916 | Mr K. Goel | Team inspector | Special Educational Needs The provision for and standards achieved by pupils with English as an additional language The work of the SEN unit | |
| 8523 | Mr P. Hemingway | Team inspector | Information and Communication Technology Design and Technology | |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Disraeli Primary School is a new school located close to the centre of High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire. The school was formed following the closure and amalgamation of three other schools, two of which experienced significant problems. The school has been open for two years and moved into the current premises a year ago. It has 284 pupils aged from four to eleven, which is larger than most primary schools. Thirty-four children attend the nursery on a part time basis. Sixty-two children were in the nursery and reception classes (the foundation stage) at the time of the inspection. Forty-three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is much higher than the proportion who take advantage of the provision. Fifty-six per cent come from backgrounds beyond Europe and 161 pupils speak English as an additional language, which is much higher than usual. Over 36 six per cent of pupils on roll joined or left the school at times other than the usual admissions and transfer times, which is very high. Some are sheltered locally and remain at the school for only a short time. Thirty seven per cent of pupils are on the register of special educational needs and nine per cent of pupils have statements. Both proportions are well above average. There are three specialist departments that support the needs of pupils who attend the school with social, communication and language difficulties. Pupils are admitted to the reception class on a part time basis at the start of the term in which they become five. Most have attended the nursery on site. Attainment on entry is well below the local average. The majority of pupils live in the surrounding area. Most families live in rented housing and fewer parents than usual have higher qualifications.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Good teaching enables pupils to make good progress and achieve standards in English that are much higher than similar schools. Though standards are still below average in writing and mathematics, they are average in reading and most other subjects. Pupils make rapid gains in their learning in the important areas of literacy and numeracy. The outstanding leadership and management provide a clear focus for raising standards in this new school and addressing the issues of underachievement that it inherited. Behaviour is very good and attitudes to learning and relationships are very positive. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is very good. The school provides an education of good quality and good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher, senior staff and governors provide outstanding leadership.
- Very good progress has been made in establishing this new school and beginning to raise standards.
- Pupils make very good progress in English and good progress in mathematics and science in relation to their very low level of achievement when they start school.
- Teaching of reception aged children, infants and juniors is good, especially in the important areas of literacy and numeracy.
- Provision for pupils with speech and communication difficulties, special educational needs and English as an additional language is very good and these pupils make very good gains in their learning.
- The ethos and care provided are very good.
- Behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning are very good.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are improving rapidly but remain below average.
- The quality of planning for the foundation stage of learning.
- The quality and use of assessment to identify the needs of children in the nursery and appropriate provision at the earliest stage possible.
- The curriculum in areas other than English, mathematics and science has not yet been developed to the good quality observed in those core subjects.

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 first inspection for this new school which opened in January 1999.

STANDARDS

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

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1998 | 1999 | 2000 | 2000 |
| English | N/A | E* | D | A |
| Mathematics | N/A | E* | E | C |
| Science | N/A | E* | E | D |

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

Since the school opened there has been a rapid improvement in standards in English, the first priority area for improvement. Many children have a very low level of language when they start school and their achievements at the end of the reception stage remain well below average in literacy and numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Their physical and personal, social and emotional development is appropriate for their ages. By the age of seven test results in 2000 showed attainment was well below similar schools in reading, writing and mathematics and compared to schools nationally the results were very low. In science attainment was very low and well below similar schools.

There is a high proportion of bi-lingual pupils who receive support, very high proportions of pupils with special needs and statements of special need and very high levels of transience and social deprivation in the community. These all affect attainment. When compared to similar schools achievements at the age of eleven reflect the school's success in enabling all pupils to achieve their best in the important areas of English and mathematics. Bearing in mind all the factors that influence pupils' learning, progress in relation to prior attainment is very good in English and good in mathematics by the age of eleven. Pupils' achievements in these tests matched the targets set by the school based on prior attainment.

Inspection evidence shows that standards are improving. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of science is about average by the age of seven and although standards in English and mathematics remain below average pupils make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. By the age of eleven achievements are broadly average in speaking, listening, reading and science but remain below average in writing, mathematics and ICT. In religious education, art, design and technology, and physical education standards match age related expectations at seven and eleven. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in music and history. Standards in geography are average by the age of seven but there was not enough evidence to judge the achievements of eleven-year-olds. The differences between the infant and junior outcomes is due to inherited difficulties prior to the amalgamation of the schools and there has been insufficient time for the school to raise standards in all subjects in the two year period since it opened.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils love school and are excited by their learning opportunities. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour is very good. |
| Personal development and relationships | Relationships are very strong and personal development is very good. |
| Attendance | Attendance is average. |

The care shown to pupils is very good. The strong relationships, commitment to improving standards and desire for pupils to achieve their best, results in positive attitudes to learning and the desire to succeed. The regular absence of a small proportion of pupils is rigorously pursued to encourage regular attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Excellent and very good teaching characterises almost a quarter of lessons. A further 38 per cent of lessons are good. The remainder are mainly satisfactory. Three unsatisfactory lessons were observed, one in the teaching of children in the nursery and two in the lower juniors. Lack of subject expertise meant that pupils did not make the good progress observed in these lessons. Literacy and numeracy are taught effectively and teachers meet the needs of pupils well. Teachers plan lessons that have a rigorous pace and help pupils to improve their speaking skills and understanding of words. High expectations and good subject expertise and knowledge of pupils, support learning well. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive very good support.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum is broad and the literacy and numeracy strategies are implemented effectively. Other subjects are not yet developed to the same high standard. The curriculum for the foundation stage does not state learning intentions clearly enough. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Provision is very good. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Provision for personal, social and moral development is very good. Spiritual provision is good and cultural is satisfactory. |

| | |
|--|---|
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Care is very good and a significant strength of the school. |
|--|---|

The strong relationships the school has with parents and the community are supporting the development of a learning partnership that has a very positive impact on attitudes to learning and pride in the school's achievements. There is a good range of extra curricular activities that enhances provision.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership of high quality. The very good partnership with senior staff provides clear direction for improvement. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Governors offer a high level of commitment and very good support. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Self-evaluation through rigorous monitoring is of a high standard. |
| The strategic use of resources | Very good use is made of available resources to improve standards. |

The headteacher's clear vision is steering rapid improvement and inspiring enthusiasm to succeed. Staffing and accommodation are of very good quality and learning resources are good overall. The new and refurbished accommodation enhances provision and is very well maintained. The new computer suite has been open for a very short period of time but is well resourced and used effectively to support learning, for example, in mathematics. The principles of best value are applied well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour is very good. Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. The headteacher provides strong leadership. Problems and suggestions are taken seriously and acted upon. Children love school and are very well motivated. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A very small proportion of parents tend to disagree with the amount of homework pupils receive. A very small proportion would like a broader range of extra-curricular activities. |

Inspectors support parents' very positive responses to the school's work. The homework pupils receive is practical and well linked to pupils' targets and the focus of lessons. It is appropriate for the age range and enhances learning. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including sports, music, opportunities to raise funds or charities and educational visits to make learning fun. Adult literacy lessons also support the needs of community members well.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Many children attend the nursery from the age of three prior to starting school and this enables them to have an early introduction to school life. A significant proportion of children require support to develop their early language skills. Baseline assessments confirm that attainment is well below that of most children and by the age of six attainment in language, mathematics, creative development and knowledge and understanding remains well below the expectations set out in the 'Early Learning Goals'. Physical development is appropriate for the age range and children achieve the early learning goals in their personal and social development. Children are admitted to the reception classes on a part time basis at the start of the term in which they have their fifth birthday. This means that the children who have birthdays during the summer months attend for one term on a part time basis before transferring to Year 1. There is insufficient use of assessment information at the nursery stage to target the specific needs of children with special needs and English as an additional language (EAL) to give them the best possible start. Because of the very low level of language when children start school their achievements at the end of the reception stage are likely to remain below that of most six-year-olds in literacy and numeracy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Achievements in their physical and personal, social and emotional development is likely to meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals for children of this age.

2. Test results for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that achievements in reading, writing and mathematics were very low and well below similar schools. Teacher assessments in science showed similar performance. Very few pupils attained the higher levels. By the age of eleven the 2000 tests show that pupils achievements are below the national average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. However, when compared to similar schools, the results in English are well above average, in mathematics they are average and in science below average. When compared to the 1999 results standards are rising rapidly and pupils are making good progress. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. This reflects the emphasis placed on English and mathematics and also shows an improvement in all subjects from the previous year. When comparing these results it should be remembered that a very high proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, some have specific language and communication difficulties and a high proportion have special needs. A significant number have also joined the school within the last year and have experienced a range of schools in their infant years. These features contribute to underachievement in tests. The significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls apparent from test results was not evident in any age group during the inspection. There are larger proportions of boys with special educational needs and statements and in 2000 fewer boys than girls took the tests.

3. Attainment in religious education meets the age related requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and is higher than expected in pupils' knowledge of world religions. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average for seven-year-olds and well below average for pupils aged eleven. The subject is identified as a priority and very good recent progress has been made through the opening and use of the new computer suite. Achievements in art and design, design and technology, geography and physical education are the same as age related expectations for pupils aged seven. They are also average for eleven year olds in physical education and art but below the expected levels in design and technology. There was insufficient evidence to judge standards in history and music at seven or eleven and in geography at eleven. The differences between the infant

and junior outcomes is due to inherited difficulties prior to the amalgamation and there has been insufficient time for the school to raise standards in all subjects in the two year period since it opened.

4. Since the school opened the priority has been to improve standards in literacy and numeracy. The underachievement of many pupils in the locality was highlighted in the reports of the schools which closed and amalgamated to form 'The Disraeli School'. The school has successfully raised the achievements of pupils in these important areas by the age of eleven and continues to strive to improve them further. There has been insufficient time for the impact of the teaching and learning observed during the inspection to reflect fully in the school's test results.

5. The quality of teaching across the school is now frequently very good in English and good in mathematics. This is supporting learning well and a reason why standards are improving. Pupils of all ages are making good progress in relation to their prior achievements. Those with statements, special educational needs and EAL are making very good progress through the well structured arrangements for their inclusion in lessons, assemblies and the broad range of school activities which support learning through practical meaningful experiences. These pupils make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment because the quality of teaching and support they receive in the departments and in classes is very good. Staff know the pupils very well and enable them to reach their targets in small steps. Progress is monitored carefully and pupils' individual educational plans and records show precisely the gains made in learning in lessons and over each term. Very good communication with all staff and parents supports learning very effectively.

6. The very good teaching of literacy is enabling all pupils to make rapid progress. They are very well supported by teachers and classroom assistants and inspection evidence indicates that speaking, listening and reading skills are improving quickly. The structured approach to teaching phonics to targeted groups is raising standards in reading and writing effectively, although progress in writing is slower. The successful implementation of the numeracy strategy is also having a positive impact on standards and results are improving.

7. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing speaking and listening skills to enable pupils to develop confidence in the use of spoken English. Pupils make good progress. They listen attentively to their teachers and by the age of seven enjoy taking part in discussions, offering their ideas and opinions. Pupils are well supported and their ideas are valued. Consequently they become increasingly confident to articulate their ideas. At times they experience difficulty when using tenses and ordering words accurately in English. Pupils develop a good understanding of technical vocabulary in English and mathematics but in other subjects they experience greater difficulty and need considerable reinforcement and support to express their understanding. They continue to make good progress and by the age of eleven many are articulate and put together reasoned arguments well. However, there are occasions in all age groups when pupils do not find it easy to express themselves succinctly, or understand precisely what has been said. For example, in a science lesson with pupils in Years 1 and 2 the teacher skilfully reinforced the words 'absorb' and 'waterproof' in a range of ways to ensure pupils had good practical understanding of the meaning of the words. There is insufficient reinforcement of language in subjects other than English and mathematics in lessons and this is an issue for the school to address as it develops its cross curricular planning. A minor weakness is the lack of monitoring of the precise acquisition of language for those pupils who require very specific support. They are, however, monitored carefully to judge their progress against the school's predictions for achievement in the National Curriculum each term.

8. Progress in reading is good and well supported by a phonics programme taught to pupils in small groups. Pupils, including those with EAL, develop a good knowledge of sounds and letters and by the age of seven they are also becoming aware of the purpose of

punctuation. Reading is accurate and fluent with increasing use of expression. Many pupils need time to read text independently before reading aloud. This enables them to establish meaning and improves the fluency and pace of their reading. Pupils with EAL continue to need support to establish the meaning of unfamiliar words when the text is challenging. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils talk about their favourite authors and books and describe characters and events they particularly like, for example the 'Katie Morag' stories. They understand the difference between non-fiction and fiction and how to locate information using contents and index. By the age of eleven pupils describe the development of characters and plot within stories. They make good use of class and group reading to identify passages of text that back up their ideas and opinions.

9. Progress in writing is good and work in all classes is presented with pride. The range of writing is broad and all pupils have opportunities to write stories, reports, lists, labelled diagrams, letters, diaries and factual reports. They are taught to plan their writing and have a good awareness of the stages within the writing process. By the age of seven spelling of simple words is mainly accurate but pupils lack the breadth of vocabulary to write at length and they need support to understand fully the range of similar sounds and their use within word families. Bi-lingual pupils make good progress in learning and appreciating the phonetic differences of sounds between English and their mother tongue. Standards show significant improvement between the ages of five and seven. For example, most pupils know how to use capital letters, full stops and question marks, more able pupils recognise exclamation marks and speech bubbles in text. Eleven-year-old pupils write independently and show a greater awareness of how to make their writing more interesting. However, many pupils need help to use description and few achieve the higher levels. More able pupils are well challenged, for example they are expected to use a thesaurus to locate words that provide alternatives from the ones they use most often. Standards are improving, expectations are very high and all groups of pupils receive the support they need to achieve their best.

10. In mathematics, good progress has been made in implementing the numeracy strategy. Seven-year-olds have a sound grasp of mathematical language and satisfactory understanding of number operations; many are beginning to understand place value. The teaching of mathematics in groups organised according to pupils' needs is supporting the pace of learning well in the juniors. Bearing in mind the very low attainment on entry to the school progress is good. Pupils' oral mental skills are developing well. For example, eight and nine-year-olds add and subtract in tens and fives to calculate numbers to 100. They understand the term digit and in practical tasks accurately make nets of three-dimensional shapes. The majority recognise shapes and their names but some find the terms more difficult to use. In one lesson the very good reinforcement of language by the teacher supported pupils well, linking the term 'pyramid' to their understanding of 'The Egyptians'. Consequently they identified the difference between triangular and square pyramids within a meaningful, practical and subject related context. In their investigations pupils use a range of approaches to solve problems and are beginning to independently choose and describe their methods of problem solving.

11. Although standards in science are lower, the higher grade was narrowly missed in the last tests and inspection evidence indicates that pupils are making good progress. A difference in achievements relates to pupils' use of technical language. Many pupils need support and reinforcement to understand difficult words and use them to describe their knowledge and understanding. This inhibits their overall level of performance and is an area for continuing development. Most seven-year-olds know water can be changed to ice and that raising the temperature can reverse this change. Pupils know that plants need water, warmth and light to sustain life. Year 3 and 4 pupils identify materials that are good conductors of electricity and practically construct circuits to light bulbs and switches to turn

them on and off. By the age of eleven the pupils understand the concept of a fair test and make reasonable predictions when carrying out investigations. For example, in Year 6 pupils understand the variables chosen to compare the rate of evaporation of substances such as water, vinegar and washing-up liquid and explain why they think some substances evaporate more quickly than others.

12. In religious education, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of religions based on the rich cultural diversity within the school. Pupils have a good understanding of world faiths, festivals and places of worship. This enables them to make comparisons and connections between religions and makes a positive contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Older pupils understand how beliefs affect people's lives. They identify the names of sacred books and describe their visits to places of worship. They compare differences between prayer and worship and understand the different dress requirements, for example between visiting the church, gurdwara and mosque. Pupils have a sound understanding of Christianity and an appreciation of the similarities and differences between the Christian religion and other world religions, for example when discussing 'The Five Pillars of Islam'. A strength of these discussions is the sharing of individual experiences openly, valuing differing points of view and learning why rituals are important.

13. Progress in information and communication technology (ICT) has been inhibited by the delay in setting up the computer suite, which was beyond the school's control. Pupils' access to computers at home and at school has been limited and there have been few opportunities for them to practise their skills. However, younger pupils use a mouse to click and drag icons. During the inspection good use was made of the new suite, teaching was good and pupils were quickly learning the structure of a database and how this can help to display information as graphs. However, keyboard skills are slow due to the lack of previous experience and this restricts the pace of learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. Pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are very good. They love school and are excited by their learning opportunities. Throughout the age groups pupils are enthusiastic about their work and eager to succeed. They sustain very high levels of interest and concentration because teachers plan tasks that interest and motivate them. They take great pride and enjoyment in producing their best work. Pupils are encouraged to express their ideas and opinions and respond with confidence, enthusiasm and enjoyment to the high expectations teachers have of them.

15. Behaviour has improved dramatically from the descriptions in reports of the schools that amalgamated to form Disraeli and is now consistently very good. This confirms the views of parents. When they come to school, in assemblies, at lunchtimes and at playtimes, virtually all pupils behave very well. In lessons behaviour is almost always very good and pupils listen attentively and value the firm, calm, insistence of teachers, which secures order and the maintenance of school rules and values. Pupils move around the school in a quiet and orderly manner and have a very clear understanding of the standards expected of them. Exclusions are infrequent and used only as a last resort. During the inspection there was no evidence of bullying, racism or lack of respect for school property.

16. Relationships in the school are very good. The pupils form extremely constructive relationships with each other and with adults. They work co-operatively, demonstrating that they will listen with interest to each other and will try to understand the other person's point of view. On several occasions pupils spontaneously applauded the work of their classmates, for example, when two pupils read out their poems in assembly. Pupils play together well

and make good use of the well-appointed play areas. Pupils consistently demonstrate patience, tolerance and understanding for others.

17. The pupils' personal development is very good. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils to show initiative and take responsibility. Pupils regularly perform jobs within the classroom and around the school. As pupils progress through the school greater degrees of independence are encouraged. Older pupils act as monitors around the school at break and lunchtimes persuading other pupils to stick to the code of conduct. In addition, they regularly help with the integration of pupils with special needs. The school council meets regularly and minutes show that recommendations are implemented. Year 6 pupils have recently represented the school very successfully in the local mini-enterprise scheme. All pupils are eager to be involved in fund raising activities.

18. Attendance at the school is just satisfactory and improving. Unauthorised absence is above average reflecting the school's unwillingness to condone unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good. Virtually all pupils arrive at school on time, many arriving early. They come happily to school, eager and ready to learn, enabling the school to make a prompt and efficient start to the school day.

19. The very positive attitudes to learning, very good relationships, very high standards of behaviour and the high quality opportunities for personal development are important strengths of the school and have a positive effect on the quality of teaching and learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. Almost all the teaching staff joined the school in the last two years, with the most recent changes being in the infant classes in the last year. The quality of teaching is very good in almost a quarter of lessons with excellent features observed in science in Year 6 and in the teaching of pupils with speech and communication difficulties. A further 38 per cent of lessons are good and the remainder are mainly satisfactory. Only three unsatisfactory lessons were seen. One was in the teaching of children in the nursery where tasks were too hard for the children and two were in the lower juniors. Planning is of good quality and has clear learning objectives that are communicated well to pupils.

21. The teaching of literacy is a strength of the school and the reason why standards have risen rapidly for older pupils. Rapid progress is now evident for younger pupils as staff strive to provide rigorous support to improve language and communication skills. The teaching of phonics is systematic and thorough. Teachers follow a specific phonics programme on a daily basis. For pupils in Years 3 and 4 these short sharply focussed sessions provide frequent and regular practice and pupils benefit from the rigorous pace and opportunities to improve their diction and understanding of words. This is helping to improve reading and writing. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) and those with special educational needs are very well supported. Learning support assistants work in close partnership with teachers and pupils, interpreting language when required and ensuring there is a consistent approach to teaching and assessing the progress made by each pupil. The dedication of staff to raise standards is evident in the regular commitment to lunchtime sessions that enhance curriculum time. Very good teaching in Year 2 enabled pupils to discuss a story character and plan a letter requesting further information. Pupils of different abilities managed this successfully because the expectations of individuals were clear and manageable and the resources to support writing were planned carefully to provide the essential vocabulary and letter format.

22. Numeracy is also taught effectively. Subject expertise and teachers' knowledge of pupils support learning well. In Years 1 and 2 teachers maintain a brisk pace and skills are practised and developed regularly to increase mental agility, for example, when pupils were

practising the quick recall of addition facts to 10. The teacher made good use of digit cards to maintain pupils' concentration and involvement. This strategy also enabled the teacher and her assistant to assess pupils' knowledge and to provide effective feedback on their achievements. Teacher focussed tasks are usually challenging and clearly explained but there are occasions when tasks do not challenge more able pupils far enough, for example in the teaching of pupils aged eight and nine, when questions in mathematics are answered quickly and the opportunity to extend the thinking further is missed. This is a minor area for improvement. The setting of older pupils for mathematics provides opportunities for pupils to be taught in smaller groups and this is helping to address individual needs and provide more individual support, particularly for pupils who have difficulty learning and using specific vocabulary. A strength in the teaching is the way teachers value the answers of all pupils and ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to contribute to discussions. This helps maintain trusting relationships and the acceptance of sensitive criticism which guides learning purposefully. A minor weakness in the marking is the inconsistent use of comments to show pupils how they could improve.

23. The main difference between the good and very good teaching and satisfactory teaching is the reinforcement of the specific vocabulary pupils need to learn and the depth of knowledge of the teachers. Pupils' progress is slower in satisfactory lessons because they lack confidence to use technical words and the pace of learning is not as rigorous. Teachers do not reinforce subject specific vocabulary with the same frequency observed in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. In addition, the teaching of subjects such as history and geography is structured in blocked units of work. This results in long gaps in time between the teaching of subjects, and pupils find it hard to recall their past learning. There are not enough planned opportunities to systematically link the teaching of English and mathematics skills to other subjects. Consequently work has to be revisited before new learning can take place. This is a key issue for the school to address. There are however examples of lessons where teachers apply these skills well, in science in Years, 1, 2, 3 and 6 and in physical education in Year 1. In these lessons teachers expect pupils to use a broad range of terms and their personal confidence and expertise ensures that language acquisition is successful.

24. In the small number of lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher's subject expertise was weak in art and in a mathematics lesson the teacher did not provide sufficient guidance to ensure pupils understood their task. Consequently, pupils made mistakes, which were not corrected at an early enough stage, they began to lose concentration and the objectives of the lesson were not met.

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

25. The curriculum is broad, and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. A good programme of personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught to all pupils and French is taught well to Year 6. A range of other valuable learning opportunities supports the curriculum. Year 6 pupils take part in mini-enterprise activities each week. They also take part in competitions from time to time with other local schools. Mini-enterprise activities have included forming a car washing company, but mainly focus on smaller scale activities such as running a café, cake stalls and selling ice-cream at sports day. A systematic programme of sex education is included in science and PSHE lessons. Drugs education, including smoking, is also taught in science and PSHE. In addition, the community police supplement this provision by providing a three-week programme on drugs abuse for Year 6 pupils. Extra mathematics lessons, Springboard, are provided as a booster for Year 6 pupils twice a week after school. Additional mathematics lessons are provided for all pupils in Years 2 and 6 before school which gives opportunities for them to use computer programs to advance their skills and knowledge. These initiatives are aimed at increasing attainment in mathematics to the standards achieved in literacy.

26. The school sets an appropriate amount of homework throughout the school. A very wide range of other extra-curricular activities is also provided. These include country dancing, gardening, reading, computer and book making for pupils in the infant classes, and computer, book making, French, sewing, aerobics and running for older pupils. Football, netball, cricket and athletics clubs are also available and the school takes part in inter-school competitions in these sports. These activities are well attended by pupils. Approximately half of the pupils attend at least one of these activities. All activities are open to both boys and girls. The breadth of curriculum provision is a strength of the school.

27. The school has, quite rightly, given priority to developing the curriculum in the core subjects, particularly in English and mathematics. Rigorous strategies enable literacy and numeracy to be taught effectively. The school is shortly to be assessed for the nationally recognised Certification of Quality Mark which focuses on the teaching of the basic skills. The time allocated to the teaching of English is well above that of most schools, and that allocated to mathematics is also high. With the exception of physical education, the time allocated to other subjects is slightly below average, which leads to a lack of balance. This will need to be reviewed as the school considers how curriculum time may be used to link literacy and numeracy skills to other subjects more efficiently. For instance, many opportunities for teaching literacy skills through subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education are not maximised at present. The balance of teaching time within each subject is sometimes not appropriate, for example to ensure the inclusion of enough investigative activities in science and the regular teaching of key skills in art, history and geography. In spite of these shortcomings, the school meets statutory requirements.

28. Curriculum planning in literacy and numeracy is a strength of the school. There are good policies for all aspects of the curriculum and schemes of work for all subjects based upon the national QCA guidance and the local authority's agreed syllabus. The curriculum co-ordinator has developed with the staff a two-year cycle of topics that provide a sound framework for implementing the schemes of work. The topics in different subjects have been chosen to inter-link with each other where appropriate. This year teachers are annotating the schemes of work appropriately in order to reflect the needs of the pupils and the environment of the school. The two-year planning cycle secures appropriate coverage of the curriculum and details progression in learning for each year group. However, the long gaps in time between the teaching of some subjects means that aspects of learning have to be revisited before new learning can take place, for example in history and geography. There has been insufficient time for the school to develop all subjects to the same high standard observed in English and mathematics. Teachers' short term plans clearly show the learning objectives for lessons and include a variety of appropriate and interesting activities for the pupils. This planning is consistently of good quality. This is an important factor in raising standards of attainment.

29. Planning for pupils with special educational needs is good. On most occasions, tasks set for these pupils are challenging. There are some exceptions to this, such as in some religious education lessons when some older pupils with special educational needs were required to draw pictures and were not sufficiently challenged. Teachers plan work for pupils with special educational needs taking into account their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). IEPs are of very good quality. The targets set in these plans are appropriate and achievable.

30. Planning for pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) is also good overall. The school assesses the level of English acquisition of these pupils and then sets targets for improvement accordingly. Work set for these pupils is appropriate and meets their needs. The school provides all pupils with equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum, including those from the departments for speech and communication difficulties. They are included in assemblies and lessons when appropriate and join pupils of their own age. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English

is an additional language and this enables them to achieve their best. High attaining pupils in the junior classes are taught in high ability groups in mathematics and science to help provide appropriately for their abilities. Occasionally, more able pupils are not well provided for in some subjects. While provision for them is satisfactory overall, more precisely targeted activities would extend pupils' learning more quickly.

31. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good, spiritual provision is good and cultural provision is satisfactory. Acts of collective worship provide many opportunities for pupils to reflect on aspects of their lives. During the inspection, opportunities for reflection focused on making people happy. Opportunities for reflection occur in other subjects, such as religious education, English and history. For instance, older pupils reflected on how communities live in religious education. This helps pupils develop a spiritual awareness. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to begin to understand the difference between right and wrong. Classes have their own rules and there is a whole school reward system that is reviewed each week in assembly time. Very good behaviour is promoted by all staff in classrooms and around school. Pupils are encouraged to treat property with due respect, walk around school calmly, open doors for each other and enter school in an orderly fashion after break-times. Pupils relate well to each other and have opportunities to work in pairs and in larger groups. They have a strong sense of pride in belonging to the school. Pupils co-operate with each other and take on responsibilities enthusiastically. For instance, each class has a representative on the School Council. The representative is selected by the pupils in each class and special needs departments and this representative discusses issues of interest and concern with the headteacher each half term. Each representative has a job description. The School Council has discussed safer routes to school, wet play games and designed playground markings. There are also four house captains who are elected by members of their houses. These captains issue a manifesto and give a speech to their houses prior to their election. They also organise sporting events for their house. In these and other ways the school is making very good provision for pupils' social development.

32. Provision for pupils' cultural development is sound. The cultures represented by the pupils are valued highly. For instance, the cultures and religious practices of Muslims provide the centre of interest in a number of religious education lessons. Pupils also have opportunities to study the cultures and religious practices of Jews and Sikhs in religious education. The school has developed good links with the Yundum Primary School in Gambia. This helps to give the pupils a sense of what schooling is like in another country. The school plans to develop this link further. The school is also planning to develop links with a school in Germany. Further opportunities for promoting cultural development are included in geography and history lessons. However, as a whole, the school misses opportunities to promote cultural development, for instance, in design and technology, music and art. Foods, designs, art and music from different cultures are not promoted sufficiently to maximise the rich cultural diversity within the school community and to enhance the curriculum.

33. The school has good links with the community and other schools. Pupils visit places of worship in Wycombe, such as the church, mosque and gurdwara, and representatives from some of the religions visit the school. Pupils regularly take part in inter-school competitions in sports and mini-enterprise.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school provides very high quality support and guidance and effectively promotes the welfare, health and safety of pupils in a warm, caring and stable environment. This atmosphere encourages pupils to learn and develop as rounded individuals with high aspirations and a love of learning.

35. The school has established very carefully planned programmes for assessing and monitoring the attainment of pupils. All teachers use information from school assessments, statutory and non-statutory tests very effectively to provide useful information about pupils' attainment and progress. This information is comprehensively analysed and used effectively to highlight individual learning needs, set targets and inform lesson planning in literacy and numeracy. However there remain occasions when higher attaining pupils are not challenged fully, for example in a mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4 and in subjects such as religious education where recording tasks are too easy. Monitoring pupils' progress throughout the school year enables the school to successfully identify where pupils have made gains in their knowledge and understanding and where additional individual support is needed.

36. The formal assessment structure complements well the very good informal monitoring which results from the warm relationships between staff and pupils. The headteacher and other senior staff provide very good role models to promote the care and high expectations of each pupil. All staff know the pupils very well and have a very clear picture of their strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of the children and consistently monitor their ability to cope on a day-to-day basis. Personal and social education is given a very high priority and is successfully promoted through lessons, assemblies, educational visits and the high quality relationships that exist in the school.

37. All staff work hard to promote high standards of good behaviour. The rules in the code of conduct are well known and applied consistently by all staff, many of whom were seen to pre-empt incidents of possible misbehaviour with firm, calm, intervention maintaining good control. All staff log incidents to ensure that any emerging patterns are detected and addressed. The school is highly effective in promoting an environment where bullying, racism and oppressive behaviour are not accepted.

38. The school has worked hard and implemented a number of strategies to improve attendance. Registers are marked speedily, correctly and efficiently at the start of the school day and after lunch. All absences are properly noted and contact made with parents to justify the absence. Secretarial staff contact parents on the first day of absence to ensure that there is a valid reason. Registers are regularly scrutinised to identify emerging patterns. Parents are being deterred from taking their children away from school on extended holidays during term time. This, together with the number of pupils who remain on the register after appearing to have left the school or who are on long absence, are the main reasons for the attendance levels being slightly below the national average.

39. Child protection is handled very effectively. The headteacher holds responsibility for these issues and ensures that all staff are aware of the need for vigilance and the steps to take if suspicions are aroused. Health and safety is well promoted in the school. The recently constructed and refurbished buildings do not require much maintenance but all staff look for potential hazards. All staff are safety conscious and ensure that the security of pupils is maintained. Hazardous materials are kept securely away from pupils. Staff work extremely hard and successfully create a caring environment where the interests of pupils are promoted very effectively.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and confirm that it has many strong features. Virtually all parents believe that the school is well led and managed and their children love school. They also believe that behaviour is good, the teaching is good, their children are expected to work hard and the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. They feel comfortable to approach the school at any time and consider the school works closely with parents. However, a very few parents responding to the

questionnaire tended to disagree with the amount of homework pupils receive and a similar proportion would like a broader range of extra-curricular activities. These reservations were not supported by inspection evidence. The homework pupils receive is practical and well linked to pupils' targets and the focus of lessons. It is appropriate for the age range and enhances learning. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities including sports, music, opportunities to raise funds for charities and educational visits to make learning fun.

41. Parents and other adults are encouraged to involve themselves in the life of the school and many respond enthusiastically by participating in a wide range of activities. Many help regularly within the classroom and around the school as well as on trips and other activities. Helpers are deployed effectively, they are given clear directions and their help is well structured. In addition, many parents do their best to support the work their children are expected to do at home. There is an active parents association that organises a range of social and fundraising activities in support of the school. A successful recent initiative by the school has been to introduce a family literacy scheme. This programme is supported enthusiastically and the participants confirm that they feel better qualified to assist their children with their learning. The school values highly the contributions made by parents that enhance pupils learning and personal development.

42. Parents are well informed about the school and their children's activities and progress through a very good range of letters, newsletters, reports and meetings that are of high quality. The governors' annual report to parents is clear and easy to understand. The prospectus is very attractive and informative. Reports to parents provide very good information about progress what the children know and can do and future targets. Information is provided in other languages when appropriate to support parents. Parents are well informed about the areas of study for their children and ample opportunities are provided for consultation when concerns arise.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The quality of leadership and management is excellent. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the direction of this new school. He has developed a very strong partnership with the governors, deputy headteacher and staff and receives their full commitment and support. There is a very strong desire for the school to succeed and a very high level of enthusiasm which has led to significant progress being made in two years.

44. The challenge of amalgamating three schools, two of which were experiencing difficulties has been approached in a systematic and thorough manner. The movement of the school to split site accommodation and then a year later to refurbished, newly extended accommodation was very well managed. Parents commend the headteacher and staff for the smooth transition to the new premises. The shared analysis of strengths and weaknesses led to a clear understanding of the action needed to enable all pupils to achieve their best and receive the best possible education within the school's resources. The challenge of raising standards was a top priority and together with staff and governors a school improvement plan was devised which set high expectations and a rigorous programme of action for staff, pupils and the community.

45. This consultative style of management has enabled staff, governors and parents to feel very well informed and to contribute to and influence decisions. The views of all those involved in the learning partnership are valued. Consequently there is a shared desire to achieve the goals in the school improvement plan within the timescales that have been agreed. Very good progress has been made in establishing an ethos of calm purposeful learning. There have been significant changes in staffing following the amalgamation and the majority of teachers have been appointed in the last two years. A training programme based

on professional development needs and the needs of the pupils has been very effective, raising standards of behaviour, attitudes to learning, and the quality of teaching. This is enabling pupils to make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. In addition, the school is working to achieve accreditation for these achievements. The team spirit enables the school's aims to be realised and met in full.

46. Governors have played an important role in shaping the direction of this new school. They have sought local advice, acted upon it and taken part in the appointment of all staff. They have a governors' action plan that directs their work, ensuring the strengths of individuals are utilised in full and that training needs match priorities. The well-established range of sub-committees meets regularly and good feedback to full governing body meetings ensures effective liaison and very good communication. Governors are fully involved in monitoring standards. They review the progress of pupils with staff, discuss curriculum developments with subject co-ordinators, review end of key stage test results and spend time in school to monitor behaviour and the inclusion of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language (EAL). They review and ratify policies appropriately and have a sharp understanding of the progress made and what needs to happen next. The school brochure and annual report for parents provide useful information that is available in different languages and supports parents well, particularly those who are new to the area. There is no complacency and the level of self review and evaluation is impressive considering the short period of time the school has been open and the transition made from a temporary governing body to a permanent one which involved changes in membership.

47. The school development plan is of very good quality. It identifies priorities clearly for each area of the school's work, and identifies curriculum areas to develop, priorities for those responsible for pupils with special educational needs and EAL, personnel, premises and community links. The plan is costed and monitoring and review procedures are identified. The plan is reviewed regularly. Systems to evaluate the effectiveness of decisions on raising standards are being developed as the school's available data increases and the tracking of rates of progress begins to highlight any variations in the achievements of groups of pupils. There has been insufficient time for this to be developed in full as data is not available for all pupils who join the school at times other than the usual admission times. The deputy headteacher has worked in close partnership with the headteacher and has effectively influenced the development of very good monitoring systems that enable the progress of every pupil to be followed in detail, indicating whether the expected amount of progress has been made or not. She presents a very good role model for staff.

48. Curriculum leadership is of very good quality, for example, in the important areas of literacy and numeracy, special educational needs and the teaching of pupils with EAL. As curriculum areas become the focus for development, co-ordinators train and develop the subject expertise and knowledge of their colleagues to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning across the age ranges. Monitoring files show how observations secure the consistent implementation of agreed strategies and the inclusion wherever possible of pupils with speech and communication difficulties and EAL. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, co-ordinators regularly review planning and standards of attainment through sampling pupils' work. Release time is given to support this important element of leadership. The headteacher, deputy head, coordinators, governors and local authority monitor the quality of teaching and the very good balance of internal and external observations supports this process very effectively.

49. Although the school has no previous report of its own many criticisms raised in the reports of the former schools were the starting points for development. Behaviour is now very good, the leadership and management are a significant strength of the school and very good progress has been made in ensuring the quality of teaching is good. Pupils are now making

good progress bearing in mind their prior levels of attainment. The generally good quality of curriculum planning is supporting teaching and learning well, particularly in English and mathematics. Attainment shows steady improvement in English, mathematics and science and a higher proportion of pupils now attain average levels. Work in these important areas is mainly well matched to meet individual needs. However, this provision is not consistent in the nursery where children do not receive the appropriate support to improve their language skills at the earliest stage possible.

50. The teaching staff are well qualified and appropriately experienced. Specialist staff for pupils with special educational needs and those with EAL offer very good support. The learning support assistants also have significant strengths and experience and enhance the learning of pupils with speech and communication difficulties, other special educational needs and EAL. For example, they work patiently with children in the departments to enable them to take part in mainstream classes wherever possible, by interpreting language for bi-lingual pupils in lessons and by encouraging independence and integration. The very close partnership they have with teachers enables them to understand pupils' targets, the level of support required and the amount of challenge that is appropriate. The caretaker, cleaning and administrative staff are all highly committed and make a significant contribution to the smooth running, clean and well-ordered environment. Staffing ratios are high but effectively meet the broad range of needs of the different groups of pupils within this school community.

51. The premises are attractive, well-organised and good use is made of the space available. The school has a hall, technology room, large library area and access to hard play and grass areas. There is an environmental area in the grounds. Storage space for resources is generous. Displays are colourful and reflect pride in pupils' achievements and links with schools in other countries. These make a significant contribution to the quality of the learning environment and reflect the school's aim for every pupil to succeed.

52. The quality of resources to support the curriculum is good. New resources to support the literacy project and the development of information and communication technology are very good. There are minor weaknesses in the limited range of bi-lingual books for pupils and artefacts owned by the school to support cultural development.

53. Financial planning is of very good quality. The school development plan is costed in a systematic manner and the criteria for success are well chosen and appropriate. A range of budget proposals is considered and the plans for whole school and curriculum development are fully considered by staff and governors. Monitoring spending and the impact of decisions are systematic and lead to staff and governors reviewing provision and resources. While there is significant evidence of the monitoring of school improvement there has not yet been enough time for the school to measure the impact of expenditure on standards and the value added to pupils' learning over time.

54. School administration is of very good quality and enables the school day to run smoothly. Regular financial reports are shared with the headteacher and governors. Administrative duties are separated sufficiently to ensure financial probity. The funds devolved to the school for setting up the new premises, for departments of pupils with speech and communication difficulties, pupils with other special educational needs and EAL are deployed in an effective manner. The school provides a good quality of education, relevant to the needs of the pupils and offers good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The school should:

1.* Raise standards in writing by the age of seven by:

- ensuring that the skills and knowledge learned through literacy are consistently applied across the breadth of the curriculum.
(*Paragraphs 2, 7, 10, 23, 70, 73, 77, 139, 140.*)

2.*Raise standards in information and communication technology by the ages of seven and eleven by:

- implementing the plans already in place to support staff training to improve teaching and learning;
- ensure that the whole curriculum is taught and that more able pupils are always challenged.
(*Paragraphs 13, 119, 121, 124.*)

3.*Raise standards in mathematics by:

- ensuring that all lessons maintain a good pace and offer sufficient challenge to the more able pupils;
- ensure that time is always used effectively and that marking consistently contains comments that help pupils improve.
(*Paragraphs 2, 82, 83.*)

4. Improve provision for children in the nursery by:

- developing planning which is matched to the nationally prescribed early learning goals for children of this age;
- developing the quality of the assessment of children when they start the nursery to identify their needs and appropriate provision at the earliest possible stage of learning.
(*Paragraphs 1, 57, 58, 64, 68.*)

5. Develop a better balanced curriculum by:

- adjusting time allocations both between and within subjects;
- planning opportunities for literacy and numeracy skills to be applied in a wider range of contexts.
(*Paragraphs 10, 27, 28, 77, 139.*)

Other issues the governors should consider for inclusion in the action plan:

- monitor the precise language acquisition for pupils with little English.
(*Paragraph 7.*)
- acquire a range of books that better reflect cultural diversity.
(*Paragraph 52.*)
- ensure that all teachers have the expertise to teach important aspects of design and technology. (*Paragraph 110.*)
- plan more challenging work for low attaining pupils in religious education.
(*Paragraphs 29, 139.*)

*** Issues that the school has recognised and included in its development plan.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 83 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 26 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 4 | 20 | 38 | 34 | 4 | 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) | 17 | 267 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | | 50 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

| | Nursery | YR – Y6 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | | 28 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 2 | 121 |

English as an additional language

| | No of pupils |
|---|--------------|
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 94 |

Pupil mobility in the last school year

| | No of pupils |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 56 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 48 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 6.6 |
| National comparative data | 5.2 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.4 |
| 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 | 21 | 22 | 43 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|---------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 10 | | 15 |
| | Girls | 10 | | 14 |
| | Total | 20 | 16 | 29 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 47 (61) | 37 (56) | 67 (59) |
| | National | 84 (82) | 85 (83) | 90 (87) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | 11 | 15 | 11 |
| | Girls | 14 | 15 | 13 |
| | Total | 25 | 30 | 24 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 58 (52) | 70 (57) | 56 (59) |
| | 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 | 15 | 24 | 39 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| | Total | 26 | 21 | 27 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 67 (34) | 54 (36) | 69 (32) |
| | National | 75 (70) | 72 (69) | 85 (78) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| | Total | 20 | 20 | 21 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above | School | 54 (26) | 54 (31) | 54 (28) |
| | 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 | 17 |
| Black – African heritage | 1 |
| Black – other | 4 |
| Indian | 1 |
| Pakistani | 112 |
| Bangladeshi | |
| Chinese | 2 |
| White | 115 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 8 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 15 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 17.8 |
| Average class size | 29.7 |

Education support staff: YR – Y6

| | |
|---|-------|
| Total number of education support staff | 12 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 317.5 |

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 18 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 30 |

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Number of pupils per FTE adult | 6 |
|--------------------------------|---|

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

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

| | £ |
|--|--------|
| Total income | 651087 |
| Total expenditure | 729734 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2347 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 83125 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 4478 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 284 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 170 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 59 | 33 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 48 | 41 | 5 | 0 | 6 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 50 | 39 | 4 | 0 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 44 | 39 | 9 | 3 | 6 |
| The teaching is good. | 58 | 34 | 1 | 1 | 6 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 46 | 39 | 9 | 1 | 4 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 60 | 31 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 67 | 29 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 49 | 42 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 54 | 39 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 50 | 41 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 36 | 43 | 13 | 0 | 8 |

Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest interger, sum may not = 100

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56. At the time of the inspection there were 62 children in the foundation stage; 30 in the nursery, 24 in a reception class and 8 reception children within a Year 1 class. Children in the nursery and younger reception children attend on a part-time basis and begin full time in the term in which they are five. Attainment levels on entry to the nursery are well below those usually expected. A significant number of children have poorly developed speaking skills. In addition, many children speak English as an additional language. This affects the children's ability to communicate their depth of learning. By the end of the foundation stage children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, physical development and knowledge and understanding of the world but are not likely to achieve them in communication, language and literacy, mathematics and creative development.

57. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory overall with some unsatisfactory teaching due to weaknesses in the use of assessment and planning which lacks clarity and is not shared with support staff. This results in some activities that do not match the ability of the children or to adults who are not clear about the intended learning outcomes for groups of children. Where planning is clearer support staff are able to ensure effective learning through their well-matched interventions. Teaching for reception aged children is good and has a positive effect on the children's learning. As a result children make rapid progress, but because of the low attainment on entry, they are not yet achieving the standards expected of children of this age. Reception teachers have a secure understanding of how young children learn and of the importance of play and first hand experiences. Lesson plans are clear and detailed with appropriate learning intentions linked to activities that are interesting, challenging and focused. Activities are well organised and promote communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. All foundation staff are well aware of the weaknesses in children's communication skills and attempt to model responses for them. There is systematic identification and good support but it is not implemented early enough and affects the progress that some children make in the nursery. The Year 1 teacher who has a small number of reception children tries very hard to ensure the children have appropriate experiences but is constrained by the accommodation, the expectations of the Year 1 curriculum and lack of planning links between the two classes which have reception children. The good quality teaching leads to satisfactory progress for these children but the provision for practical, play based activities and interaction with other reception children is lacking. Praise and encouragement are very effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development throughout the foundation stage. Children are given very clear instructions about what it is they are expected to do. Reception teachers use questions, comments and observations well to assess children's progress and to plan for future learning.

58. Children are assessed when they enter nursery using a format which checks skills and confidence but which does not identify or diagnose individual language difficulties sufficiently well. Assessment observations are not made in the nursery to measure progress or to help staff to plan how to support children's learning. This affects the rate of progress children make in the nursery. Statutory Baseline Assessment takes place when the children enter reception. Results are shared with parents and are used effectively to help the teacher plan tasks to meet individual needs. Staff work well together in the nursery and reception and this has a positive effect on children's learning. Teachers, nursery nurse and support assistants are enthusiastic and have high expectations of the children. The new foundation stage leader is beginning to consider how to ensure all support staff are involved in the

planning which will place more focus on learning intentions. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning through sharing books at home whenever they can and attending workshops to find out how to help their children in the early stages of their learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. Children's personal, social and emotional development is given a very high priority and by the time the children leave the reception classes they are achieving the early learning goals in this area. This reflects the good teaching in both the nursery and reception classes in this aspect. Children enjoy coming to school and respond well to the rules and routines of the nursery and school, which emphasise independence. They are eager to learn new skills and to explore ideas. Emphasis is placed on developing understanding of appropriate behaviour and the difference between right and wrong. Staff provide good role models and explain sensitively to children the consequences of their actions, encouraging them to consider the feelings of others and apologise if they have upset someone. Children learn to share and work together in a variety of situations, for example when playing computer games and in their role play. Older children work independently for sustained periods of time taking pride in their achievements. Relationships are very positive.

Communication, language and literacy

60. In both the nursery and reception children enjoy listening to stories and share books with each other and adults. Teaching is good in the reception classes and sound in the nursery. Teachers encourage children to choose books as an activity and to take them home regularly. All adults talk to pupils, encouraging the development of language and children, therefore, are becoming good listeners. Communication, language and literacy are given a high priority but, despite this emphasis, the children do not achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the reception classes.

61. Elements of the literacy strategy are particularly well used by teachers in the reception classes and there are a wide range of experiences and activities to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. Many children in the nursery and reception have difficulty responding to questions that require them to provide answers; they prefer to use one-word answers, point, nod their heads or demonstrate practically what they know. Few children enter into conversations with each other even when involved in imaginary play. Children need a great deal of opportunity to play before they are able to express themselves with any degree of confidence. Play situations, snack times and carpet times encourage children to talk about their own experiences and extend their vocabulary. In reception an exciting 'Disraeli Express' is well used by the children to create and negotiate roles, use written labels to begin to drive the bus and to develop their language skills. Clearly labelled displays, alphabet friezes and name cards help children to develop their early reading and writing skills, although few children confidently use initial letter sounds. Children are encouraged to make marks on paper as they create their own lists in the nursery café or work in the reception class 'office' where there are supplies of paper, pens, crayons and pencils available and children write notes and letters to each other. As a result of these experiences children are happy to write and understand that their marks have meaning. Higher attaining children are able to write their name and are using recognisable letters in their developing writing. Older reception children in the Year 1 class do not have the opportunities to develop their skills in literacy through the same play based activities and at times their progress is constrained because tasks are too challenging and require adult intervention.

Mathematical development

62. The nursery and reception classes provide an appropriate range of activities to promote mathematical understanding. Teaching is good in the reception classes and satisfactory in the nursery. In the nursery, one unsatisfactory lesson was observed where tasks were too difficult for the children and they did not have a secure enough practical experience or understanding of the mathematical language to complete their tasks successfully. Consequently they made little progress.

63. By the end of reception the higher attaining children are in line to meet the early learning goals for counting and shape. However, the majority of children will not achieve these levels. Children learn to use mathematical ideas and skills in real life play situations, such as when they help measure out ingredients to make biscuits or work out how much it will cost to travel on the 'Disraeli Express' to go to the supermarket. They have opportunities to compare, match, sort, order sequence and count using a range of games, routines and experiences. Staff use number rhymes to develop children's early ideas of number and simple calculations. Number lines are used effectively to develop an understanding of order and position. Children enjoy counting activities and some of the reception children can count to 10, with higher attainers counting beyond 10, recognising the numbers and sequencing accurately. A significant number of the children find it difficult to clap a requested number of times up to ten. The very effective use of puppets motivates the children to make attempts at answering questions with confidence. Children consider size, shape and position when playing with different sized animals and cars in the sand and water. Opportunities to make construction models allow children to explore shapes and develop their mathematical vocabulary. Appropriate elements of the numeracy strategy are implemented which has a positive effect on children's achievements.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

64. Throughout the foundation stage teaching is satisfactory. Children use the computer with confidence; most are able to control the mouse and recognise the enter and arrow keys. They use different programmes to support their learning in mathematics and literacy. Reception children further develop their skills in the ICT room. The children also use the tape recorder sensibly when listening to taped stories. Opportunities are provided for the children to make their own models and practise their skills in designing and making, although the school lacks the resources for young children to use a wide range of tools. The reception children helped to think of what was needed on their play bus and made some of the objects themselves, such as the bell. They used their knowledge of the split pin to make the steering wheel. However, children are not always given the opportunity to explore materials and simple tools independently as adults tend to over-direct during these times, particularly in the nursery. All staff provide support and encouragement to help improve children's skills of cutting and sticking. Construction toys are available and are used well to encourage children to make their own models and to enhance discussions about such topics as pushing and pulling. The celebration of festivals encourages children to develop an understanding of their own community and cultures. Careful planning in reception starts from learning about the child and their families and over time beginning to know and understand more about the local area but weaknesses in their experiences mean they are unlikely to achieve the early learning goals by the age of six. Planning is not of such good quality in the nursery and does not contain sufficient detail to ensure that all staff are prepared to meet the specific needs of the children.

Physical development

65. The school has a well-designed outdoor area, which is shared by the nursery and reception classes. One group of reception pupils in the Year 1 class has less opportunity to use this outdoor space for prolonged sessions because it is situated in a different part of the school. However, staff ensure there is regular access for short periods of outdoor play. There are plans to buy large equipment for climbing which will help children to develop their climbing and balancing skills. There is a wide range of wheeled toys that children manoeuvre well, avoiding obstacles as they incorporate them into their play situations. Teaching is satisfactory in the nursery and very good in reception. Consequently they are likely to achieve the early learning goals by the age of six. The children demonstrate increasing control over objects such as balls by pushing, patting, catching or kicking. Reception aged children have structured physical education lessons to promote their development. In one lesson reception aged children were encouraged to 'take a ball for a walk' and to control the speed of its movement with their feet. This worked well and they made good progress in learning how to control and position the ball.

66. Children move around school safely and are able to line up in order to go to different parts of the school. Children make good progress in their physical skills and handle tools, construction toys and modelling materials competently. Emphasis is placed on the development of skills to help children to hold pencils correctly for effective writing.

Creative development

67. Reception children will not achieve the early learning goals for creative development when they enter Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory and children enjoy a range of experiences in art, music, story and imaginative play. Through these experiences children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to develop their use of language to express ideas. A very good example of this was the construction of the play bus. Songs and rhymes help develop their understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern and children enjoy singing. However, imaginative music making is not a regular experience.

68. There are not enough regular opportunities for children to practise their creative skills. There are too few opportunities for children to explore colour, mix paints independently and use a range of tools or materials as these experiences are not continually available, particularly in the nursery. Art and creative sessions are usually directed by adults. On the occasions in the reception class when the teacher asks careful questions, such as, 'Which materials would be best?' children make better progress. Activities for children to develop their senses through investigating are limited, although sand and water play is encouraged.

ENGLISH

69. Test results for seven-year-olds in 2000 show that achievements in reading and writing were very low and well below similar schools. Very few pupils attained the higher levels. By the age of eleven the 2000 tests show that pupils achievements were below the national average in English but when compared to similar schools, they were well above average. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels was average. The school's results since it opened indicate a rapid improvement in standards and pupils are making good progress. The emphasis placed on English has successfully raised the expectations of pupils, teachers and parents. Bearing in mind the very high proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language, those who have speech and communication difficulties and the high proportion who have special needs or who are transient, pupils have made very good progress. The significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in the tests for eleven-year-olds was not evident in any age group during the inspection. There are

larger proportions of boys with special educational needs and statements in the juniors and this makes comparisons by gender difficult. In addition, significantly fewer boys took the tests in 2000 than girls.

70. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in speaking, listening and reading are about average when pupils leave the school but writing, while much improved, is below average and few pupils reach the higher levels.

71. Since the school opened the initial priority has been to improve standards in literacy. The underachievement of many pupils in the locality was highlighted in the previous reports of local schools that amalgamated to form 'The Disraeli School'. The school has successfully achieved this aim and continues to strive to improve results further. The introduction of the adult literacy project is one example of how the school is helping parents to become involved in their children's learning.

72. Staff training and development to ensure the consistent quality of literacy teaching has enabled all staff to gain the knowledge and expertise they need to effectively support the wide range of pupils' needs. The quality of teaching is very good in half the lessons and the remaining half is good. Pupils of all ages are making good progress in relation to their prior achievements and those with statements, special educational needs and English as an additional language are making very good progress through the well structured arrangements for their inclusion in lessons and activities such as the teaching of phonics which supports learning through practical meaningful experiences. A minor weakness is the lack of systematic monitoring of the precise acquisition of language for those pupils who require very specific support. These pupils are, however, monitored frequently against their progress in achieving National Curriculum targets.

73. Classroom assistants provide very good support and inspection evidence indicates that speaking, listening and reading skills are improving quickly. The structured approach to teaching phonics to targeted groups is raising standards in reading and writing effectively, although progress in writing is slower and attainment remains below average by the age of seven. More opportunities to apply the skills learned in literacy lessons across other subjects are needed to reinforce these important skills. Features of the high level of consistency in support include the way in which all staff encourage pupils to talk about their ideas and feelings, valuing their efforts and sensitively correcting omissions and mispronunciation. This enables pupils to feel confident to contribute to discussions.

74. Seven-year-old pupils read with technical accuracy and significant emphasis has been placed on developing pupils' understanding of descriptive vocabulary to improve levels of comprehension. Considerable emphasis is placed on helping pupils to develop confidence to contribute to discussions and speak in well-formed sentences. Teachers model language effectively and this is a particular strength in the teaching. Pupils respect their teachers, listen attentively and sustain good concentration during introductions, task instructions and plenaries. By the age of seven they enjoy listening to others and value ideas and suggestions. They structure sentences that are usually articulate but occasionally reflect the difficulties of translating from one language to another. Pupils develop a good understanding of the technical vocabulary introduced through the literacy hour. While pupils make good progress in developing their use of language, there are occasions when they do not understand precisely what has been said or have difficulty communicating their depth of understanding, for example when learning words which sound the same but are spelt differently. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise the skills they have learned in literacy lessons in other subjects. This is an issue for the school to address.

75. Pupils use phonics, pictures and context to gain meaning from text. They develop good knowledge of sounds and letters and by the age of seven are aware of the purpose of punctuation. Many pupils need time to read quietly before reading aloud. This helps them to understand the main ideas and improves the fluency and pace of reading to an audience.

Pupils with English as an additional language continue to need support to establish meaning of unfamiliar words when the text is challenging. They make good use of dictionaries but where a range of words is used to convey similar meanings they need adult support. Pupils show a keen interest in books and by the time they are seven more able pupils talk about their favourite books and stories, discussing characters they like, for example 'Katie Morag'. Pupils understand the difference between non-fiction and fiction, and the purpose of the book title, contents and index. By the age of eleven the range of reading is broader and pupils describe the development of characters and events within stories they have read, for example in books by Roald Dahl and Dick King Smith. Reading homework is encouraged daily and reading diaries show that families support the school's home policy wherever possible. For example, many older brothers and sisters write comments as well as supporting adults.

76. Pupils of all ages write for a range of purposes including stories, reports, lists, labelled diagrams, letters, diaries and factual reports. They are taught to plan their writing and have a good awareness of the writing process. Punctuation and spelling are taught systematically and by the age of seven simple words are spelt correctly. Phonics teaching is improving spelling and inspection evidence shows that younger pupils are at times ahead of pupils in older classes as the current teaching practice effectively supports their progress. Standards show significant improvement by the age of eleven. For example, the range and amount of writing is impressive with examples of extended writing which are paragraphed and show good use of punctuation such as exclamation marks and inverted commas. Pupils write short biographies that reflect their appreciation of pictures by famous artists, for example, Renoir and Van Gogh. The quality of writing is improving because pupils are taught to plan their writing and have a good understanding of the drafting process. Handwriting is usually well formed and legible and most pupils write in pen in a fluent joined hand. The quality of presentation in exercise books, final drafts, displays in classrooms and corridors is good and reflects a sense of pride.

77. Teachers use a broad range of strategies to motivate pupils, for example, direction, discussion, group work and the assessment of progress. Consequently pupils enjoy their lessons, know what they need to do next to improve and look forward to sharing reading and writing together. They show a high level of interest and enthusiasm for their work and perseverance to improve fluency in spoken and written language. Teachers model language well for pupils, reinforcing specific sounds within words and accuracy of pronunciation. Through the skilful use of questioning they engage pupils with differing levels of confidence in spoken English to take part in discussions. They correct inaccuracies sensitively and encourage pupils to help one another. As a result, very good relationships exist between pupils and teachers. Pupils respect the views of adults and strive to achieve the high expectations made of them. A weakness in provision is the linking of these very good features across all subjects. For example, in a religious education lesson the opportunity was missed to consolidate literacy skills as pupils recorded their responses in pictures. This did not challenge the more able pupils sufficiently. This is the next step for the school to address as it develops the wider curriculum and makes cross-curricular links. This is a key issue for action.

78. Daily lesson plans have precise objectives and detail the different tasks for groups of pupils. The literacy hour has been successfully implemented and is supporting raising levels of attainment and progress. The quality of marking is good, indicating success and identifying areas for improvement. This helps pupils to celebrate their achievements.

79. Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are thorough and systematic. Teachers maintain detailed records of pupils' progress, predicting rates of progress and alerting staff and parents if difficulties arise. Good use is made of this information to set individual and

school targets and to evaluate the effectiveness of current practice on standards. There is some variation between classes in the preciseness of targets. Where they are specific, pupils know exactly what they need to practise to improve, in other classes where targets are broader pupils are not sure of the small steps that can be taken to reach higher standards.

80. The co-ordinator provides a very good role model and together with the ongoing monitoring support provided by the headteacher and deputy head there is very good evidence of the progress that has made in two years. The subject action plan shows clearly the school's aims to develop English across the curriculum.

81. Resources are mainly of good quality and the library offers an attractive environment to select books, read quietly and listen to stories. Pupils in the speech and communication departments benefit from this resource. Their excitement in choosing books and listening to well read stories was evident in a very good lesson led by the co-ordinator. While there are many new and attractive books there are inherited books which are old and of limited use. A weakness in provision is the small number of books available to reflect the cultural diversity of the school community.

MATHEMATICS

82. Standards in the tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 were well below those for all schools but were average compared to similar schools. In the same year, tests for seven-year-olds showed standards were very low compared to all schools and well below similar schools. At the age of eleven the proportion reaching higher levels was below average; at seven the proportion reaching higher levels was well below average. At seven boys and girls attained similar standards. At eleven the girls appeared to perform much better than the boys in the tests but few boys took the test in comparison to girls. No significant gender differences were found during the inspection. The targets set by the school for 2000 were achieved. In the reports of the schools amalgamated to form Disraeli mathematics was highlighted as a weak area.

83. The inspection findings show that while achievements remain below average at the ages of seven and eleven pupils make satisfactory progress, and many make good progress in relation to their very low attainment when they start school. This is because the quality of teaching is now good overall, and was only unsatisfactory in one lesson. The pupils' attitudes to the subject are good, and they generally behave well in lessons. These are the reasons why pupils' performance is improving.

84. By the time they are seven pupils can order two digit numbers, name simple shapes and are aware that numbers can be added in any order. They know their addition facts to ten. All pupils can count on in ones from a number less than 20 and some can count on in tens. Most of the pupils can double single digit numbers and can explain their methods and strategies.

85. By the age of eleven pupils can double and halve numbers quickly in their heads and can mentally add 5, 50 and 100 to a given number. They use formal and informal methods to multiply and divide, and work confidently with money and measures. They can draw a range of graphs, name different types of triangle and use co-ordinates.

86. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils are taught by their own class teacher, and all classes have additional support for mathematics lessons. The pupils generally make good progress. At the start of lessons teachers work with pupils on mental and oral mathematics. A brisk pace is maintained and skills are regularly practised and developed, helping to keep these skills sharp. This was shown in a good Year 2 lesson where pupils were practising instant recall of

addition facts to 10. In this lesson digit cards were well used to keep the pupils involved in the lesson and to provide effective on-going feedback to the teacher and teaching assistant. As a result, the teacher was able to match her questions to the needs of the pupils well. In the main parts of lessons staff provide significant amounts of direct teaching. Ideas are developed well, and useful strategies are demonstrated, as in a Year 1 and 2 lesson about adding the numbers shown on dominoes. In this lesson the teachers' management of the pupils allowed her to work uninterrupted with a group of pupils, as a result of which they made significant progress. Lessons end with a useful plenary that draws together what has been learned.

87. The older pupils are taught in sets according to their ability. An additional teacher is available, allowing four smaller sets to be made from three classes. Lessons follow the same structure as those for the younger pupils. Mental and oral work gives a clear start to lessons, and in the best lessons questions are included which encourage pupils to explain how they worked out their answers. This allows teachers to assess the depth of pupils' understanding effectively. This was clearly seen in a Year 3 and 4 lesson in which pupils were calculating additions to 100. In the main parts of lessons pupils are told what they will learn and how to set about this, as shown in a Year 3 and 4 lesson where they split up numbers to add them more easily. In one lesson the teaching was unsatisfactory because pupils' misconceptions were not clarified in time.

88. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are taken through a brisk mental session which is challenging in speed and difficulty. One lesson asked the more able to count on and back in steps of 25, 2.5 and then 0.25. In the best lessons opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss their strategies and resources are well used. In a lesson on multiplying and dividing by 10, 100 and 1000 digit cards were well used to engage and involve the pupils and provide effective on-going assessment to the teacher. Planning is clear and effective, and teachers share with pupils what they are to learn. The main part of the lesson always starts with a direct teaching session. In most cases this is followed by group work where the teacher sits with one group and develops their skills, but in others the teachers react to questions from the pupils, and their time is used less effectively. As a result, opportunities for pupils to make greater progress are missed. This was seen in a lesson where pupils calculated the answers to simple word problems. The work is generally well matched to the needs of individual pupils, although the most able in sets are not always sufficiently challenged, for example in a fractions lesson where some of the questions were too easy and lacked depth. As with the younger pupils, lessons end with a useful plenary, though opportunities to clarify misconceptions are not always exploited. As a result pupils are not always clear about what they must do to improve.

89. The pupils' attitudes to the subject are positive and classroom control and management are generally good, ensuring that behaviour is good. The importance that teachers place on the correct use of mathematical vocabulary and the opportunities for speaking and listening observed in all lessons ensure that the subject makes a good contribution to literacy. Useful homework activities which develop classroom work and practise skills were seen throughout the school.

90. While information from tests is used well to show progress and set targets, day-to-day assessment is less well developed. Marking is thorough but includes few comments showing how pupils could improve, and teachers do not keep on-going records of pupils' performance in the key areas of mathematics they have been taught. As a result some work lacks challenge and is not well matched to the needs of the pupils.

91. Targeted pupils in Years 2 and 6 have recently started working with an individualised learning package on the school computers. This provides opportunities to practise basic

skills. The pupils attend willingly out of normal school hours. It is too early to see any improvements in attainment, but the programme has the potential to make a useful contribution to pupils' standards and attitudes. In addition 'catch up' sessions are held for Year 5 and 6 pupils after school on two days a week. The pupils are given refreshments before they start, and then receive high quality teaching for 45 minutes. They are keen to attend these sessions, always complete their homework, and enjoy their work. This work outside the normal school day makes a significant contribution to the standards these pupils achieve.

92. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language receive very good support. They are fully included in all aspects of the mathematics curriculum and their achievements show they make very good progress in meeting the targets set for them. A high priority is given to work in numeracy. Pupils develop their mental skills successfully, are taught strategies effectively and are given opportunities to develop and share their own methods. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The work of the co-ordinator and senior management team has helped to improve the quality of teaching and standards are rising as a result. They have given a strong lead in the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, led in-service training, audited strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and identified key tasks needed to further improve the quality of teaching and raise standards.

SCIENCE

93. The statutory teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 1999 and 2000 indicate that attainment was very low in comparison to the national average. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was well below the national average. Inspection evidence suggests that standards in science are improving significantly and that they are now broadly in line with the national average because there is appropriate coverage of the curriculum and the quality of teaching is now good. Pupils are appropriately challenged but experience difficulty expressing themselves using scientific vocabulary which restricts the achievement of higher levels.

94. Trends over time show improvement with variations from year to year resulting from the different proportions of pupils with significant special needs and language needs. The national tests for 2000 indicate that for eleven-year-olds standards were well below average and slightly below those of schools in similar contexts. A very small proportion of pupils attained the higher levels. Gender differences should be treated very cautiously as there were very few boys who took the test compared to girls.

95. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language (EAL), make good progress in the infant classes. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, enjoy carrying out investigations and they make very good progress as they do so. The reason why pupils are making such good progress is because the teaching of science is good. Lessons are planned with clear objectives and a sharp focus. Teachers and learning support assistants support pupils effectively. In Year 1, the majority of pupils can identify which materials soak up water most effectively, and a few can arrange materials, with adult help, according to how well they absorb liquids. Most Year 2 pupils are able to carry out a test for themselves to discover the absorbent properties of materials and understand why materials such as bricks and wood are used for specific purposes. Higher attaining pupils grade materials according to their absorbency. In a science lesson in the department for pupils with speech and communication difficulties, one pupil was able to distinguish materials according to their bending properties. Throughout this stage of learning many pupils who have EAL find scientific terminology difficult. They are keen to learn the

meaning of words and to use them and many make good progress. However, this lack of proficiency with technical language slows down progress in science.

96. The good progress made by pupils, including those with special educational needs and EAL, continues in the juniors. Some higher attaining pupils are very keen to learn and carry out further investigations in their thirst for knowledge. These pupils are making very good progress. The teaching of science is good overall and outstanding in Year 6. Teachers' planning identifies what pupils are going to learn and the activities chosen are appropriately designed to build upon their knowledge and understanding. There is a strong emphasis on encouraging pupils to think for themselves and to predict outcomes of experiments. In Year 3, pupils are learning how to carry out a fair test properly, investigating which materials allow magnetism through and which parts of a magnet are the most effective. In Year 6, all high and average attaining pupils understand that water evaporates and forms water vapour before falling again as rain. They can also predict the outcomes of simple experiments and gives reasons for their choices. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in understanding scientific concepts but their ability to record their findings slows them down. Many pupils are familiar with and use technical language properly but some pupils, particularly those with EAL, find the use of scientific language difficult. This inhibits their ability to reflect their level of understanding in their recording and discussions.

97. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. Pupils are very interested in finding out why things happen and are keen to conduct their investigations. They work hard and respond eagerly and promptly to their teachers. High attaining pupils in Year 6 behave in an exemplary manner. They put considerable effort into their work and sustain their concentration for substantial periods of time. All pupils listen attentively and are careful when handling apparatus and carrying out investigations. Their behaviour is good and this enables lessons to be taught at a brisk pace without interruptions.

98. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. During the inspection, all teachers displayed sufficient expertise to teach science well. They challenged pupils at all levels of ability effectively. In some lessons, for instance in Years 1, 2 and 6, pupils were inspired by the content and conduct of the lesson. Pupils are managed well and pupils' behaviour is good and often exemplary. The quality of learning support is very good and the assistants play an effective role in helping groups of pupils with their learning. They also record for the teachers the amount of progress made by pupils they support. Very good use is made of resources and they are used safely. All teachers provide pupils with appropriate structure for their learning. The one significant weakness in the teaching is that a number of teachers do not plan precisely how they could help pupils with their reading and writing skills in science lessons. In the high quality lessons observed teachers displayed key scientific words prominently and encouraged pupils to use these terms when recording their findings. Occasionally, the level of working noise during science investigations is too high in the lower junior classes. This slows down the progress pupils make.

99. The leadership and management of science are excellent. The school has produced a good policy for the subject and supported it by using the QCA scheme of work. This is being annotated sensibly so that it becomes more applicable to the school. Monitoring and evaluation procedures in science are strengths. The co-ordinator has monitored teachers' planning and pupils' work. She has then fed back to each teacher her evaluation from this monitoring. She has then co-ordinated her observations and produced a useful document outlining the strengths and weaknesses in science through the school. A plan of action for the subject has been drawn up from this and targets for improvement set. The targets set are appropriate and include classroom support for teachers, levelling attainment, mapping

curriculum plans against the scheme of work and staff training on physical processes. The focus of monitoring and evaluation is school improvement. This is excellent practice. Resources in science are appropriate and adequate for the delivery of the curriculum. They are very effectively stored in plastic boxes by topic and are easily accessible for all staff.

ART AND DESIGN

100. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations for seven and eleven-year-olds. Higher attaining pupils produce work that is above average for pupils of their age. By the age of seven pupils draw, paint and use pastels with appropriate control. They have a good sense of colour and shape. For instance, Year 2 pupils draw and paint self-portraits that are recognisable in terms of shape and proportions. By the time they are eleven pupils develop good skills in observational drawing, shading and designing patterns using paper and fabric. For instance, Year 6 pupils drew a still life picture in pencil using shading to good effect. In a Year 4 lesson, most pupils developed a good eye for the visual presentation of their work as they designed colourful repeating patterns for borders.

101. Pupils enjoy art and design lessons. They take part in them eagerly, work well co-operatively and share materials sensibly. They are proud of their work. Pupils accept help from adults as they discuss their work with them and value suggestions made to them to improve their work. They reflect on the appearance of their work and try hard to achieve their best. Nearly all pupils are well behaved during art and design lessons but, occasionally, a few pupils in the lower junior classes become too excited and boisterous about their work.

102. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory. Lessons are planned well with a clear focus. Resources are used effectively. Teachers assess pupils' work well and help them to improve by offering them some useful guidance. Teachers' expertise is variable. Some teachers have considerable expertise in the subject but others lack sufficient expertise to teach aspects of the subject well. This was the case in a lesson on sculpture in the lower juniors where lack of subject expertise prevented the teacher from encouraging pupils to make the progress they should have made.

103. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The school has sensibly adopted the national guidance for its scheme of work, and is currently modifying the materials to suit its needs. An appropriate two-year programme of whole school planning has been developed and these are important foundations for the development of the subject in school. Art has not been a recent priority and the subject is not yet developed fully. Samples of pupils' work in art are collected in all classes so that teachers can see the progress pupils make. These samples include printing, sketching, textile work, painting and drawing. There is an adequate range and quantity of resources for art. However, the school has not yet assessed work in art against the levels in the National Curriculum. There have been few opportunities for staff training in aspects of art where there are weaknesses, such as in sculpture to raise standards in art and design higher. This is because art has not been a priority area for development. There are no immediate plans to raise the status of art by including it in the school improvement plan.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

104. It was only possible to observe one lesson of design and technology during the inspection week so judgements about teaching cannot be made. The study of work samples and displays of work, discussions with pupil and teachers indicate that the standard of work in both designing and making of seven-year-olds is above expectations. This is not the case for eleven-year-olds who have not benefited from the present curriculum for long enough to

achieve the standards expected. Standards by the age of eleven are below average. Pupils' designing skills are underdeveloped and some of the products are not as well constructed as they should be.

105. Good use is made of the national scheme of work to ensure work across the breadth of materials including food, textiles and resistant materials. However design and technology has not been a recent priority and the subject is not yet developed fully. Teachers structure projects to include short practical tasks to assist pupils' confidence when both designing and making. Reception and Year 1 pupils sampled and experimented with new exotic fruits prior to designing their own individual fruit salads. They also practised their skills with cutting, slicing and grating utensils to ensure well-presented outcomes to their designs.

106. Year 2 pupils had a chance to refine simple stitching techniques to ensure their hand-sewn puppets were strongly made and attractive. The teacher and support staff gave well-judged advice and questions that helped these pupils select wisely when choosing and applying materials for hair, ears and tails. Throughout their practical work pupils used tools and equipment with care and confidence and collaborated and shared well.

107. Year 6 pupils are clearly able to evaluate and describe the benefits of teamwork and the division of labour when they batch produced precise quantities of flags, hats and bookmarks in a young enterprise initiative. Other work for this age group was disappointing as only simplistic ideas emerged for a picture stand project and the quality of finish on some of the products was not good enough

108. The only teaching observed was excellent. The teacher had carefully planned and resourced a puppet making lesson. Despite bubbly enthusiasm from the pupils they accepted the insistence by the teacher that they must work to a demanding specification. This extended their design skills producing quality ideas, frequent evaluation and real excitement at their outcomes. Adults insisted on correct technical vocabulary and kept up the pace of the lesson for maximum work rate.

109. All teachers plan work using appropriate learning objectives. Pupils use self-assessment sheets and staff have begun collecting photographic records of practical work for standardisation purposes. Older pupils are not yet being given sufficient opportunity to work on projects with control systems and the school is not fully exploring or celebrating the traditional technologies of the varied cultures represented in the school.

110. The subject is well managed. The policy and development plan is helpful to class teachers in raising standards and the school is well resourced with tools and materials. Monitoring of teaching is helping to coach good practice but there is still improvement to be made and the subject has not yet been a priority for development.

GEOGRAPHY

111. The standards of seven-year-olds are broadly average. The judgement has been made on the basis of one lesson observation in the infants, analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils. There was insufficient evidence to judge the standards of eleven-year-olds.

112. In the Year 2 lesson observed the pupils compared their own local area with the Isle of Struay in Scotland. This was developed in the context of the 'Katie Morag' stories and good links were made with literacy. The pupils have an appropriate understanding of the different ways in which the land is used, and of how the buildings and jobs will differ. They have located the places on maps and drawn their own maps and plans.

113. A lesson in Year 4 used secondary sources to identify the main human and physical features of Pakistan. The lesson was well structured and the teacher showed good subject knowledge. The pupils worked as a class to identify questions that could be asked. These were then investigated using books and photographs. Several pupils were able to use their own experiences of Pakistan to help them and one group made good use of a computer and information from the Internet to consider up-to-date facts and figures. The pupils were interested in their studies and worked productively, though some were a little noisy.

114. The teaching seen was satisfactory. Both lessons were well paced, planning was effective and teachers' explanations were clear. The work in Year 2 is developing useful links with the pupils' literacy studies, and the use of a book they have enjoyed is helping to develop the pupils' interest and attitudes. Pakistan has been chosen for study in Years 3 and 4 because it builds on the links and personal experiences of many of the pupils.

115. The subject has not been a priority for the new school and there are insufficient links made to work in literacy and numeracy. While work in geography is planned in all year groups the gaps between teaching times are currently too large in Years 5 and 6, and the work is not sufficiently broad and well balanced. As a result it is not easy to develop the pupils' skills and understanding consistently.

HISTORY

116. No history lessons were observed during the inspection. Discussions with pupils and the analysis of planning and pupils' work show that pupils find it hard to describe their learning and experience difficulty articulating their prior learning. Overall, there was insufficient evidence to judge standards at the ages of seven and eleven.

117. In discussion, pupils have developed a sense of chronology and are able to place important events and people on timelines that are in classrooms. Seven-year-olds talk about Guy Fawkes and clearly enjoyed finding out about the differences between their grandparents toys and their own. As aspects of local study, older pupils study the Tudors. They learn about the life of Henry VIII and compare the houses of the rich and poor people of the time. Their letters from soldiers in Henry VIII's army show some understanding of the conditions soldiers fought in at that time, although the language skills of many restrict their ability to record their depth of understanding. Visits to historical sites, such as Sulgrave Manor make a significant impact on the pupil's understanding of what life was like in the past and result in work of a good standard. Pupils know how they can find out more information about historical events and use information books effectively. Portraits of Tudor characters such as Henry VIII indicate the emphasis placed on developing close observation skills and providing practical opportunities to record historical details through a range of media.

118. The history co-ordinator is knowledgeable and is developing her expertise. The scheme of work is under review in order to meet the need of the pupils who have had a variety of previous experiences in history. The subject has not been a priority for the new school and the links to literacy and numeracy are not yet well established. The co-ordinator effectively monitors and evaluates the history curriculum and is aware of the areas that need to be developed. The amount and quality of resources are improving.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Prior to the move into the new building and the installation of a new information and communication technology (ICT) room pupils had limited opportunities and experiences in the subject. This has resulted in standards being below average at the age of seven and well

below average by the age of eleven. The school now offers a well thought out programme that is quickly supporting all pupils to make good progress in acquiring the skills and knowledge needed to achieve the standards expected. This provision has not been in place long enough to have had significant impact on levels of knowledge and understanding and practical experience. However, ICT is well used to support pupils with special needs, including those working in the specialist units. There is no discernible difference between the standards achieved by boys and those by girls.

120. Teaching is at least satisfactory and in half the lessons it is good. This is enabling pupils to make the rapid progress they need to make. Children are introduced to computers in the foundation years and they use the elderly class-based computers with considerable confidence. Most can select, run, use and close down programmes. Recent access to the new computer network room has supported reception age pupils who use the mouse, keyboard and many simple screen tools with skill and control. Standards for infant pupils, while still slightly below expected standards, are catching up fast because there are regular opportunities to use the new equipment and lessons are precisely focussed. By the time they are seven pupils use communication applications and become competent with word processing and graphics programmes. They present poems, posters and other work using computer generated designs and compositions that explore wrap around lettering, different colour schemes and imagery associated with the subject or writing style. They make good use of graphics to create pictures and compositions, and import them into texts to illustrate and enhance their work. There are few opportunities for pupils to use computers for sensing or controlling things and this is a current weakness.

121. Older pupils are also making rapid progress but have a considerable distance to make in order to reach the standards expected for their age. The concentration on desk top publishing (DTP), spreadsheets and database work is raising standards. E-mail and web page authoring has not yet been introduced. Some pupils still use the mouse and keyboards hesitantly and lack confidence because of their limited experience. Current displays feature some polished examples of DTP work following the Year 3 and 4 history trip to Sulgrave Manor. Years 5 and 6 have mounted an information board warning of the health dangers of smoking which features displays of graphics and information from various sources including CD-ROMs. The display is effective and supports learning in science and personal, social and health education. Year 4 pupils use up to date information, downloaded in advance from the Internet, to compare geographical features in Pakistan and the UK. They explain the advantages and disadvantages of using ICT sources rather than books. Year 5 pupils use databases for storing and processing large amounts of information. They select different techniques for presenting the information as graphs but are not yet able to predict the reliability of the data or the limits to finding answers from the information. Year 6 pupils regularly use ICT in French lessons and are currently using a spreadsheet to model the costs for providing food at a school event. They know how to use it to explore changes in the ingredients, quantities or costs and the effect on prices or profits. Able pupils are not yet given regular opportunities to model more complex problems with computers or to conduct research to investigate conflicting ICT sources of information.

122. The new facilities have enabled the school to adopt the national scheme of work to accelerate pupils' progress. There is sound work with communication, modelling and data handling programmes but work using computers for sensing, controlling or on-line activities are still being developed. The teaching staff have taken the opportunity to use the new network room for whole class ICT teaching This is already improving teacher confidence and accelerating pupils' learning. Effective support is available from the new technician and learning assistants are well deployed to help teachers support the large groups. Most teachers plan well using selected units recommended for younger pupils while teaching the essential requirements to enable pupils to catch up on their basic knowledge. The best teaching, in reception and Years 5 and 6, featured clear and precise demonstrations of new

skills to the pupils followed by close support for groups and individuals. This worked well and the lessons concluded with helpful reviews of progress and clear direction for the next stages of learning.

123. An assessment scheme is now being developed to collect a sample from each unit of work. Teachers have begun to organise class portfolios of these samples to inform future planning and standardisation as the quality improves. These assessments enable staff to report the new ICT skills learned by each pupil to their parents.

124. The subject co-ordinator is well supported by a newly appointed assistant and an ICT management team. They have managed the recent radical changes well and have plans to build on this with a programme of funded training for all teachers. There is a well thought out ICT development plan providing long-term vision for the development of the subject as well as immediate improvements that include e-mail and web page authoring projects. This plan is designed to secure the rapid progress for pupils and to improve standards to an appropriate level in the shortest time possible. The plan will support the school well in addressing the key issue to raise standards in the subject.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES: FRENCH

125. A visiting secondary French specialist teacher plans and teaches French to Year 6 pupils. One French lesson was observed during the inspection. Aims and objectives are clear and pupils are taught to develop their basic skills, particularly speaking and listening well. French is very effectively taught. By the time the pupils leave the school, higher attaining pupils will be able to speak words, phrases or short sentences competently.

126. Teaching is very good because the teacher speaks French fluently and her liveliness and pace encourages all the pupils to join in with enthusiasm. The teacher places an appropriate emphasis on conversational French, as well as building pupils' skills in reading and writing the language. Pupils are expected to use French all the time during the lessons and the teacher slips skilfully from French to English and back again to support the less confident pupils. Pupils are developing their pronunciation and are very willing to try. There is a good link to information and communication technology through the use of tasks such as matching clip-art to verbs. The teacher continually emphasises the links to English grammar when teaching and this is a strength of the teaching. This is a very good beginning and prepares pupils well for their secondary education.

MUSIC

127. There is insufficient evidence on which to base a judgement about the standards and the quality of teaching in music. Only one lesson was observed, which was satisfactory, and there is little recorded evidence. Discussions were held with the co-ordinator and groups of pupils and observations made in assembly.

128. The playing of an appropriate piece of music sets the atmosphere for quiet reflection as pupils arrive for assembly. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their singing through whole school singing lessons and hymn practice. Younger children learn songs and rhymes linked to other curriculum areas. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and enjoy it. In the one lesson observed in Year 5, pupils sang a complex song about Oliver Cromwell well and were beginning to use simple notation to play percussion instruments. A number of pupils throughout the school are beginning to play the recorder and 15 pupils are learning to play the violin or a brass instrument with visiting music teachers. Visits to the local theatre to take part in musical events encourage pupils to perform their musical talents in public.

129. The co-ordinator has matched the school scheme of work with national guidelines that provide staff with a structured approach to the teaching of music. There is an awareness that music is not a priority at present and there is room for improvement. The co-ordinator is clear about how music should be developed in the future and has written an appropriate action plan.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. Attainment at the ages of seven and eleven is average. The teaching of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is good, and they make good progress. The teaching of the older pupils is satisfactory. The wide range of extra-curricular activities is a strength of the subject.

131. In Years 1 and 2 pupils worked enthusiastically with small bats and balls, and are learning to analyse their work in order to improve it further. Year 2 pupils show imaginative movements in gymnastics lessons, and in one they observed each other to judge the best examples of rolling and balancing. The quality of their own movements subsequently improved considerably as a result of this thoughtful analysis. The lessons for these pupils were well structured, briskly paced and varied, with good emphasis on the quality of their actions and movements. As a result of this good teaching the pupils are making good progress.

132. In Years 3 and 4 pupils understand how to work safely, and move with growing co-ordination and control. Nevertheless, in one gymnastics lesson exploring symmetrical movements the quality of their movements was not sufficiently emphasised. The pupils showed in a hockey lesson that they can learn from teacher demonstrations and work well with a partner or in a small group. They are keen to improve, as shown when they tried to beat their own previous performance using a hockey stick to dribble through as many gates as possible in a given time.

133. In Years 5 and 6 pupils were observed in rugby and hockey lessons. They enjoyed their work, despite the cold weather, and their skill levels are broadly average. Pupils listen well to advice from their teachers. For example, in the rugby lesson the teacher correctly identified shortcomings in the pupils' stance and basic movements which they were then able to improve. However, the pupils are not given enough opportunities to identify the strengths and weaknesses of their work for themselves. This limits the progress they make.

134. In all the lessons observed the teachers and pupils were appropriately dressed. They all take part in lively warm ups at the start of lessons; in the Reception/Year 1 class their interest in the warm up was maintained by moving to the Teletubbies song. Teachers' planning is clear, with an emphasis on both what the pupils will learn and what they will do. Teachers place a high emphasis on safety. The pupils apply physical effort to their work, co-operate well and generally behave well.

135. The curriculum is broad and balanced. Although it was only possible to observe gymnastics and games lessons during the inspection, an appropriate emphasis is given to all the areas of the subject. There is a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, many of which enter teams in local leagues and competitions. These activities help pupils to improve their skills and to develop their teamwork and commitment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. Standards of attainment in religious education are average. Muslim pupils attain higher standards than this when topics are about Islam. Pupils in the infants learn about aspects of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. They currently record much of their learning

through pictures. Juniors continue to learn about these same religions but record their work in written form. Younger pupils learn about religious practices. This knowledge is extended for older pupils who visit places of worship and recognise the similarities and differences between world faiths and the important values that religions teach us.

137. By the time they leave the school, pupils understand that communities live by rules and they know some of the rules that are specific to religious communities, for example Muslims, Jews and Christians. They are aware of the different signs and symbols used in these religions and learn to apply the principles told in moral stories, including parables from the Bible.

138. Pupils' attitudes to religious education are positive. They co-operate well with their teachers and show keen interest in their learning. This was illustrated when Year 6 pupils were asked to locate the mosque and gurdwara in Wycombe on a local map. Muslim pupils enrich lessons on Islam by recounting their knowledge and understanding of Islamic practices. This helps to raise standards of all pupils and provides rich social, moral, cultural and spiritual experiences.

139. The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory, and some of it was very good in the Reception/Year 1 class and also in Year 6. All teaching is planned well and lessons have a clear focus. Teachers draw upon pupils' prior experiences in religious education effectively. This is especially the case with Muslim pupils. This is a real strength of the teaching. Lessons are prepared well and materials and equipment are to hand when they are required. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and behaviour is good. Tasks are set according to pupils' abilities. This is good practice. However, the tasks set for less able pupils are sometimes too easy. They rely too much on drawing pictures, rather than on trying to consolidate pupils' literacy skills. In addition, teachers do not develop pupils' speaking and writing skills enough in religious education lessons. Too many opportunities for increasing pupils' vocabulary and writing skills are missed.

140. The leadership and management of religious education are satisfactory. The school has developed an appropriate policy for religious education and supports this with a scheme of work which adequately reflects the local authority's agreed syllabus. The school's long term planning for the subject is sound and topics are allocated to each year group in a sensible way. However the subject has not been a priority for the new school and the links to literacy and numeracy are not yet well established. The co-ordinator has organised the resources for religious education in a systematic way. These are easily accessible by teachers. The school is aware that it needs to raise the profile of religious education within school. This includes providing a greater range of resources for use by teachers, including artefacts and more video materials. It also includes emphasising literacy skills more during lessons and planning more challenging activities for lower attaining pupils in particular.