

INSPECTION REPORT

VALENTINE INFANT SCHOOL

Sholing
Southampton

LEA area: Southampton

Unique reference number: 132025

Headteacher: Mrs Dianne Hobbs

Reporting inspector: Mr Keith Edwards
RgI's OIN: 21190

Dates of inspection: 26 February -1 March 2001

Inspection number: 230750

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Valentine Avenue Sholing Southampton
Postcode:	SO19 0EQ
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Carol Cunio
Date of previous inspection:	No previous inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Keith Edwards, Registered Inspector (Ofsted No 21190)	Mathematics	What sort of school is it?
	Art	The school's results and pupils' achievements
	English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
		How well is the school led and managed?
Helen Griffiths, Lay Inspector (Ofsted No 9446)		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
		How well does the school care for its pupils?
		How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Pauline Goodsell, Team Inspector (Ofsted No 29989)	English	Equal opportunities
	Geography	Special educational needs
	History	
	Music	
	Religious education	
Keith Williams, Team Inspector (Ofsted No 21074)	Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
	Science	
	Design and technology	
	Information technology	
	Physical education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Valentine Infant School in Sholing on the outskirts of Southampton is a new school that has been formed from the recent amalgamation of two local infant schools. It is located in the buildings of one of the former schools on the same campus as the junior school. Valentine draws most of its children from the immediate locality.

There are currently 237 boys and girls on roll, all of whom attend the school on a full-time basis. The pupils are taught in nine classes in discrete year groups. At the present time, 33 per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average. Most, but not all, of the pupils are white and the overwhelming majority come from homes where English is the first language.

The pupils are admitted into full-time education in the reception class in the September of the school year in which they are five. Before this, most of the pupils have attended a local playgroup or nursery. Nevertheless, the attainment of most of the pupils on entry to their reception year is below average. Thirty-one per cent of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. This is a higher percentage than the national average. Two pupils have a statement of educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Valentine has rapidly established itself as a successful school. The headteacher has provided a clear sense of direction and has built an effective team. The staff and pupils are well motivated and the climate for learning is good. The quality of teaching is good and the pupils are making good progress. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and she has enabled the school to achieve a great deal in a short time.
- The quality of teaching is good and it enables the pupils to make good progress.
- The provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school.
- The staff work very effectively as a team and provide good role models for the pupils.
- The pupils are enthusiastic about the school and the quality of relationships is very good.
- The school makes good provision for those pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language.
- The quality of financial management is very good and the school provides good value for money.

What could be improved

- Standards in information technology are below average
- The organisation of the school timetable requires further modification
- Assessment procedures are at an early stage of development
- The school has no plans to introduce a drugs awareness policy
- The external accommodation is unsuitable for infant pupils

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 Valentine Infant School. It has made rapid progress since it opened on one site just six months before the inspection. The leadership has been very successful in overcoming resistance to the new school within the community. The staff have quickly established a learning environment where hard work and achievement are prized and the pupils feel secure and valued. The pupils behave well and links with parents and with the local community are developing well. The staff from the two former schools are functioning as one team and the school has established clear curriculum guidelines. The school has successfully introduced the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school has good information technology capability and the pupils are involved in a regular programme to develop their skills, but standards could be higher.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	N/A	N/A	C	B
writing	N/A	N/A	C	B
mathematics	N/A	N/A	C	B

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

The children start school with standards of attainment that are below average. The children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, and by the age of five most of the children are likely to reach the early learning goals for this age group. The children make very good progress in their personal and social development. They respond well in literacy and numeracy lessons and make good progress in their language and mathematical skills. They make good progress in finding out about the world around them and in their creative development. Their progress in their physical development is satisfactory; it is limited by the poor state of the outdoor facilities.

Standards in the work seen in the core subjects are close to the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. In the national tests in 2000, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were broadly average but above those found in similar schools. Standards in the work seen confirm this picture. However, standards are rising and the school is well set to sustain improvement. The pupils are beginning to exceed the targets set for them. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and they make good progress in literacy and numeracy. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress across the curriculum. Standards in information technology are improving as the pupils make good use of the new computers installed in the suite. Standards in science, religious education, history and geography are satisfactory and the pupils make good progress. Standards in art, design and technology, music and physical education are satisfactory and the pupils make sound progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very positive attitudes towards school. They try hard and persevere with their work. They are enthusiastic and purposeful learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are good. Pupils know how they should behave and are courteous and thoughtful. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils willingly undertake responsibility and there are many good opportunities for them to do so. Relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils are very good.
Attendance	Attendance levels are satisfactory. Most children arrive promptly at the start of the school day and lessons start and finish on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
52 lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good and it enables the pupils to make good progress. In all of the lessons the teaching was satisfactory or better. In 48 per cent of lessons, the teaching was good and in a further 17 per cent of lessons it was very good. The quality of teaching is consistently good in the Foundation Stage and it enables the children to make good progress, especially in their personal and social development and their language development. The pupils with special educational needs receive good support and so make good progress in learning basic skills. The teachers have a secure grasp of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and use these lessons to good effect. Particular strengths of the teaching throughout the school include the quality of the teamwork with the other adults who support in class and the wide range of practical activities that are prepared for the pupils. These motivate the pupils and enrich their learning. Throughout the school, the teachers have established very good relationships with the pupils and maintain good discipline. The teachers are developing their expertise in information and communication technology and are using the new computer suite to good effect.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided for all of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, are good. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school provides well for those pupils with special educational needs and enables them to make good progress in relation to their learning targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for the small number of pupils with English as an additional language is good. The pupils are well integrated and are making good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good. The provision for the pupils' spiritual development is good and there is satisfactory provision for the pupils' cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection and ensuring the pupils' welfare are good. There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour. Further work is required on refining the school's assessment procedures.

The school has formed satisfactory links with the community and partner institutions.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and, with the effective support of the deputy headteacher, key staff and the governing body, has enabled the newly-formed school to operate effectively within a short time.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements and provides good support for the school. The governors work hard to ensure that the school maintains its standing in the community.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This aspect of the school is very good. The school has rapidly established its priorities and is taking effective action to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	The school has good staffing levels, resources and internal accommodation. The external accommodation is unsuitable for young children. The school makes very good use of its support staff; it could make more effective use of time. It provides good value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school • Their children are making good progress • The school expects their children to work hard and to do their best • Standards of behaviour are good • The teaching is good • The school is well led and managed • They would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about how their children are getting on • The range of activities outside lessons

Almost all parents strongly support the work of the school. Their children enjoy coming to Valentine Infant School and are making good progress. The parents find the school to be well led and managed and approachable if matters need to be discussed. Parents feel that their children respond well to the school's expectations and good teaching and are becoming mature and responsible. Inspectors support their positive views and judge that the quality and range of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory, as is the quality of information for parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Baseline assessments indicate that on entry to the reception classes, the attainment of most children is below what is expected for their age. The speaking skills of the children are below average with many children having a limited vocabulary. However, the consistently good teaching in the Foundation Stage results in the children making rapid progress. Most children are likely to reach the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage in each of the areas of learning. They make very good progress in their personal and social development because the adults provide such good role models and provide a rich variety of experiences for the children. The pupils' progress in the acquisition of language and numerical skills is good as the teachers plan a programme of work based on the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The pupils make good progress in their creative development and in learning about the world. Their physical development is satisfactory, but there are only limited resources for outdoor play. The overall progress of the children in the Foundation Stage represents a significant achievement for the school.

2. The National Curriculum Key Stage 1 assessments for 2000 were the first set of results for the newly formed school. They indicate that the pupils' attainments were close to the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Only a small percentage of pupils achieved the higher levels in reading and writing and their performance was below the national average in this respect. However, in mathematics the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level was close to the national average. The analysis also shows that the pupils' achievements were well above average in reading, writing and mathematics when compared with similar schools. An analysis of the pupils' work confirms the results of the national tests. The pupils respond well to the quality of teaching and make good progress in relation to their prior levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs are sensitively supported and helped to make good progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The children who have English as an additional language make good progress and achieve well.

3. The pupils make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening and standards are appropriate for their age by the time they leave school. Most pupils listen carefully and speak clearly. From an early age they learn by heart many songs. The teachers set a good example in helping the children to appreciate the richness of language through the range of stories which they tell and the quality of their expression when reading from books.

4. The pupils are making good progress in learning to read. In the current Year 2, standards are close to average but standards in Year 1 are above expectations. Most pupils recognise familiar words in what they read and they use their skills and knowledge of letter sounds to help them read unfamiliar or difficult words. Almost all of the pupils enjoy the reading activities that are guided by the teacher.

5. By the time the pupils leave the school, their attainment in writing is average. Standards of handwriting and punctuation match those expected of seven-year-old pupils. There are many good examples of writing in which pupils use correct punctuation and a well-formed script. Standards of spelling are satisfactory and the presentation of the pupils' work is good as the teachers expect high standards. By the age of seven, most of the pupils have learned how to join their letters.

6. Standards in mathematics are close to average and this represents good achievement by the pupils. The school has introduced the Numeracy Strategy and the pupils are responding well to the mental activities. The school is making effective use of assessment information to organise the pupils into different ability groups within each class for target setting. The pupils are making good progress in calculations involving simple addition and subtraction, data handling and measurement. Their learning is supported by the opportunities to practise their skills in different subjects such as science and history. For example, the pupils in Year 2 investigated whether the tallest children had the largest hands and recorded their findings on a chart. Their knowledge of shape is progressing well.

7. The school's performance in the teacher assessments for science in 2000 was below average. However, standards in the work seen during the inspection were satisfactory. The pupils benefit from the opportunity to engage in a range of practical investigations. For example, the pupils explore the best materials for making an umbrella, classify materials and experiment with electrical circuits. The pupils can sort materials according to a range of properties, such as those that are shiny, transparent or have holes, and can identify whether an object is living or not. The pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

8. The school has made a considerable investment in developing the pupils' skills in information and communication technology by establishing a computer suite. Standards in the subject are improving. However, the pupils have not yet had sufficient time to benefit from this provision and, overall, standards are below average. There is a satisfactory range of pupils' word-processing around the school and their skills in this aspect are broadly average. There are, as yet, too few opportunities for the pupils to work in other strands of the subject.

9. The pupils achieve well in religious education. Standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the time the pupils leave the school. The pupils have a sound knowledge of Bible stories and can name festivals of other world religions. The pupils' progress is further promoted by the school's emphasis on personal and social development.

10. Standards in geography and history are satisfactory. Learning is supported by clear schemes of work and a lively approach that stimulates the pupils' interest. The pupils understand simple plans and maps and can describe local features. The pupils are interested in history and they make good progress. They show an understanding of how to use evidence from a range of secondary sources such as photographs, pictures and diaries such as that of Samuel Pepys.

11. Standards in art are average. The pupils develop a range of skills and are sensitive in their approach to their work. Art is used well to support learning in other subjects such as mathematics and history. The pupils' work is well displayed and it is used effectively to enhance the learning environment. The pupils' work in design and technology is supported by a clear scheme of work and standards are in line with expectations. The pupils achieve satisfactory standards in physical education and music. The pupils make satisfactory progress in each of these subjects.

12. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress. The teachers ensure that the tasks set are both challenging and achievable. Consequently, pupils with special educational needs rise to these high standards and make good progress. Equally, those pupils with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Attitudes to learning are very good throughout the school, especially in the reception classes. Behaviour is good and there have been no exclusions. Relationships in the school are very good. These are important strengths of the school, which have a positive impact on children's learning. Parents are very pleased with the attitudes and values promoted by the school and feel very satisfied with behaviour in the school.

14. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They are keen to come to school and punctuality is good. They are very well-motivated, concentrate very well and show great interest in their lessons. They are enthusiastic and purposeful learners. They listen very well to their teachers and to each other. They respond very well to challenge and persevere. They take pride in their achievements and work well independently. They enjoy being at school.

15. Behaviour throughout the school is good and in the reception classes it is very good. Pupils know how they should behave. In assemblies and when moving around the school, pupils are courteous and thoughtful. Praise from adults is highly valued. There is no evidence of bullying. Pupils are open

and friendly to visitors. They treat resources with respect. There have been no exclusions in the past year.

16. In small groups and in whole class situations the pupils with special educational needs confidently volunteer answers to questions. They are encouraged to take part in school activities and are fully included in all activities and lessons. The pupils with special educational needs have very good relationships with the adults who support them individually, when working in small groups and in whole class activities.

17. The pupils willingly undertake responsibility and there are many good opportunities for them to do so. Within classes, the pupils have tasks which they take seriously: for example, in a reception class, the pupils took pride in being in charge of their groups in a mathematics activity, acting as “teacher”. Other pupils responded very well and were very co-operative.

18. Relationships within the school are very good. Adults act as good role models of courtesy and consideration. Pupils treat each other with kindness. They are considerate of each other’s feelings and of the feelings of their teachers.

19. In the short period since the school has been open, attendance has been below the national average and authorised absence slightly above the average figures. The reasons for this are known and understood by the school and there are effective systems in place for monitoring and improving attendance.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. The overall quality of teaching is good and it enables the pupils to make good progress throughout the school. In all of the lessons, the teaching was satisfactory or better. In 48 per cent of lessons, the teaching was good and in a further 17 per cent of lessons it was very good. All of the lessons in the Foundation Stage were good or better.

21. The quality of teaching in the reception classes is good. The teachers carry out a programme of baseline assessments when the children start school and they use this information to plan suitable work. The good monitoring of the children's progress ensures that any child with special educational needs is identified early and appropriate action is taken. The teachers have high expectations of the children in terms of behaviour and attainment. For example, in a physical education lesson, the teacher successfully enabled the children to achieve more than they expected. The personal development of the children is well promoted through the rich variety of practical experiences that are presented to them. For example, in a role play activity based on the theme of a pirate ship, the children learned the importance of co-operation as well as building on their vocabulary. Adult support is used very effectively to ensure that pupils remain on task and follow instructions carefully.

22. This good practice is a common feature in the reception classes. The quality of learning is good. The staff work well as a team and clearly understand the needs of young children. They plan well together and set challenging and interesting tasks, which are linked to the areas of learning. The members of the team place a strong emphasis on the use of language. They encourage the children to work independently and to make choices in their work. By the end of their reception year the children’s attainment is close to the national average across the areas of learning. They have a secure foundation in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. The quality of work in the Foundation Stage represents a significant strength of the school.

23. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and it enables the pupils to achieve satisfactory standards in almost all subjects. The teacher’s planning is well structured and takes account of the range of ability of the pupils in the class. Lessons have clear learning objectives which are shared with the pupils at the start of each lesson. Literacy and numeracy lessons are consistently well taught. The teachers are skilled in their use of questions to establish what the pupils know at the start of lesson. In the literacy lessons, the teachers foster a love of language and books. They use a range of methods to

motivate the pupils and are imaginative in their use of the plenary. For example, in a successful numeracy lesson in Year 1, the teacher reinforced the pupils' understanding of odd and even numbers by asking the children to hook plastic ducks from an imaginary pond. When the pupils successfully identified whether the duck's number was odd or even they were entitled to a prize. This activity also helped the teacher to check which pupils had fully understood the concept and those that had not.

24. A common feature of all of the lessons observed was the very good quality of the relationships between the teachers and the pupils. The pupils and their work are valued and there are high quality displays in the corridors and classrooms. The teachers make effective links between the subjects to raise the interest level of the pupils. For example, in Year 2, mathematics work is effectively linked to a history project such as the Tudors. Although there are weaknesses in the teachers' subject knowledge in information and communication technology, where teachers recognise their need for further training, the staff plan well to use computer programs to support learning in different subjects. The new information technology suite has ensured that the school now has the means to teach information technology skills in a systematic way. It is used well and the pupils are now making good progress in this subject. The quality of the specialist music provision is good. Homework is used satisfactorily to support learning. Many parents expressed the view that they were pleased about the expectation of what was required from each child and many support their children's learning by hearing them read at home.

25. There are very few weaknesses in the teaching. Occasionally, the pace of lessons is slow because too much time is spent on the introduction at the expense of the pupils engaging in the planned activity. On other occasions, the teachers' plans are too ambitious for the time allowed. Marking is carried out conscientiously but the quality is inconsistent. Where it is effective it shows pupils how they can improve their work.

26. The class teachers, together with the special educational needs co-ordinator, prepare detailed individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs. The work is well matched to pupils' needs and identifies the small steps needed for them to make good progress. These are used in the classes and the plans are carried out with good liaison between the class teachers and the support staff. The classroom assistants manage the pupils very well and maintain good standards of behaviour; they use a range of teaching methods to enable the pupils with special educational needs to make good progress. In most cases clear gains towards targets are being regularly recorded, although the approach to this is not yet consistent throughout the school. The children who have English as an additional language are well supported and have access to the full curriculum.

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

27. The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided for all of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, are good. The school meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There are appropriate plans for the governing body to consider whether sex education should be taught, but the curriculum does not include a programme of drugs awareness.

28. The curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage is well planned and covers all of the areas of learning. It provides a good foundation for the children's entry to the National Curriculum. The teachers in the reception classes plan an interesting programme of work. There is a clear emphasis on developing the children's skills of reading, writing and number, linked closely to the national Literacy and Numeracy frameworks, and the children make good progress. Whilst many of the activities are directed by the teachers, there is good provision for imaginative play and appropriate opportunities for the children to make choices. Strong emphasis is placed on developing the children's personal and social skills, through planned activities and informal play, and they make very good progress in this area. The children have appropriate opportunities to develop their physical skills indoors, but the current lack of suitable outdoor facilities restricts their progress in this area of learning. The school has appropriate plans to overcome this.

29. In Key Stage 1, schemes of work are based on the national recommendations of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA). These are being customised to meet the needs of the school and to set out how and when subjects will be taught and what will be covered in the topics. This is providing the basis for the pupils to learn systematically as they move through the school. The teachers work effectively in year teams to produce medium-term plans that are clear about what will be taught. Good support is provided by the subject co-ordinators for this aspect of the teachers' work. The school has implemented the national strategies for Literacy and Numeracy effectively. The guidelines are well understood and clearly followed and standards are improving. There is a clear emphasis on developing these skills in all of the school's work. The introduction of a new computer room has broadened the range of opportunities provided for the pupils and there are early indications that standards in this subject are rising. However, the school recognises that for many pupils the morning lessons which are mainly literacy and numeracy sessions are too long to command the pupils' attention. Equally, the afternoon session is too long without a break for the pupils.

30. There are good procedures in place for the initial identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs, and for the assessment of their progress against the targets set in the individual education plans. The pupils are taught in a mixture of situations, being supported in whole class sessions, working in small groups, and individually. All the support is given within the classes, the teachers and support staff ensure that pupils' individual needs are met and that they have full access to the curriculum provided. The pupils' individual education plans are reviewed each term and targets are set; these are clearly focussed and in small enough steps to enable good progress to be made. This makes a significant contribution to their progress; integration into the class curriculum is carefully monitored and extra support given when necessary.

31. Good support is given to pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties with clear behaviour management strategies in place. This allows the pupils with these special educational needs to be fully included in the activities that are provided and to make good progress against the targets in their individual education plans.

32. The school makes good provision for the pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils' spiritual development is promoted successfully through assemblies and lessons. Assemblies provide a strong sense of the school 'family'. There are good opportunities for the pupils to consider a range of social and moral issues and time is given for them to reflect upon their lives and experiences. An assembly led by the pupils in a Reception Class and attended by many parents was particularly successful. The assembly made a good contribution to the children's personal development and their performance was appreciated and celebrated by the audience. In lessons, the teachers receive and value the pupils' ideas and opinions and the large number of floral displays and works of art exhibited around the school enhances this aspect of the pupils' development. Work in religious education makes a strong contribution. The spiritual dimension is further developed outside of the classroom, for example when the pupils plant polyanthus to improve the school environment.

33. The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good and these are strengths of the school. The teachers encourage the pupils to understand right from wrong. The pupils in the Reception classes quickly develop an awareness of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. The system of rewarding appropriate behaviour is clearly understood by pupils throughout the school, who enjoy the celebration of their good work, behaviour and kindness to others in the 'Golden Time' sessions and in the 'Golden Books'. The teachers provide good role models. The school expects good behaviour and the pupils are encouraged to be well mannered and polite. They are encouraged to work and play harmoniously and there are many examples of the pupils, including the youngest, sharing resources and co-operating in pairs and groups. As a result, relationships are positive in lessons throughout the school, which supports the good progress made by the pupils. They are encouraged to take responsibility for their belongings and, from an early stage, to tidy resources after use.

34. The school makes satisfactory provision for the pupils' cultural development. Appropriate use is made of the local area to support their learning in history and geography, for example when the pupils express their opinions about what they like and dislike in the locality. Their awareness is raised through art. In previous years, the pupils have visited local churches, temples, farms and the local environmental park and there have been visits from theatre companies. There are appropriate plans to continue with this provision. There is a satisfactory range of resources to enhance the pupils' knowledge of other world religions, supported by interesting and thoughtful displays around the school.

35. Links with the junior school on the same site are satisfactory and they are developing. Teachers from each school exchange pastoral and academic information and records on pupils. There is a satisfactory number of visits and meetings between the schools. Good links are being developed with the new Early Years Centre nearby, especially in the exchange of information about children with special educational needs.

36. The school has continued previous links with local police and fire services and the schools' police officer visits the school with the Getting it Right programme. There are developing links with the local church. Pupils from local secondary schools have presented programmes of music and dance. Visits are to be resumed by theatre groups. Local businesses have sponsored the school's calendar.

37. Extra-curricular activities have been in abeyance since the start of the school year, but the school plans to revive the choir and art club. Football and computer clubs are also planned.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school is a caring community, which has done well in a short time to establish good procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. The local authority guidelines have been adopted and all three members of the senior management team have been trained. Training has been given to all staff. There are good links with outside agencies. Health and safety procedures are good, and the governors are dealing with a number of issues to do with the exterior of the building. Arrangements for dealing with the pupils' medical needs are good and there is a good number of staff with first aid qualifications. The medical room is supervised and well-stocked.

39. The level of supervision at lunchtime is good. The role of supervisors is as yet underdeveloped, although training in positive play and traditional games is planned. The playground is very bare and there is little for pupils to do. There are no quiet or shaded areas and no separate area for the under fives.

40. The positive behaviour policy introduced at the beginning of the year has proved very successful. Golden Books are displayed outside each classroom. The pupils are very clear about how they should behave. Behaviour management is very good. Co-operation and teamwork are promoted in assemblies.

41. Procedures for monitoring the pupils' personal development are good. The teachers know their pupils well and are concerned for their welfare. They share their knowledge and concerns well with other staff.

42. The pupils with special educational needs receive effective support from both teaching and support staff within the school. There are systematic arrangements in place to make good use of support from external special educational needs staff and other agencies. All statutory requirements with regard to special educational needs are carried out and very good support is provided for the pupils with statements of special educational needs. There are good procedures in place for monitoring the pupils' academic progress and personal development with particular attention being given to the pupils with behavioural and emotional problems.

43. Since the formation of the new school, appropriate procedures have been put in place to assess the pupils' attainment and track their progress. A baseline assessment is made shortly after the

pupils enter the reception classes and this is used to identify pupils with particular needs. Across the school, a system of assessment 'overviews' is used to record the results of the assessments made and a sample of pupils has been identified for tracking purposes. However, there are inconsistencies in the way in which the arrangements are implemented from class to class that will reduce the usefulness of the information exchanged when the pupils transfer to their next classes. The school plans to review assessment procedures at the end of the first year of their implementation and recognises the need to refine the arrangements and improve consistency. Day-to-day assessments are used appropriately by the teachers to plan the next stage of the pupils' learning. The setting of targets for the pupils has been given a high priority and the results of the assessments are well used to support this, although the use of assessment information to inform curricular planning is at an early stage.

44. Procedures to promote good attendance and monitor patterns of lateness or absence are very thorough. Registration takes place very promptly and ensures a calm and orderly start to the day. Punctuality is good. There are good relationships with the Educational Welfare Officer and other agencies.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents at the meeting and in response to the questionnaire showed that they are pleased with the school and the way it has coped with the amalgamation of the two schools. They appreciate all it does for their children. They are pleased with the standard of teaching and with the standards attained. They feel the school promotes good attitudes and values. Some parents felt they did not know how well their children were progressing. The only area in which parents were not satisfied was in the provision of extra-curricular activities. The findings of the inspection support the positive views of parents. The school provides satisfactory information about pupils' progress. Extra-curricular activities are currently lacking, but are planned for the future.

46. The school has effective links with parents. The information provided for them is satisfactory. The prospectus is of high quality, attractively presented and easy to use. There has been no Governors' meeting for parents as yet. Good information is provided each term on the curriculum to allow parents to help children with their learning. Further information booklets, for example on starting school and on helping children read are not yet available. The headteacher regularly sends friendly newsletters to keep parents informed of events. The format planned for annual reports is clear and allows for comments by parents and children as well as setting targets. Home/school agreements have been signed by a good number of parents. There is a good range of consultation meetings and curriculum meetings are planned. Questionnaires are to be sent to parents to gain their views on aspects of the school development plan.

47. The school works well in partnership with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. They are invited to the regular reviews of their children's progress and know the targets that are set for them. Good advice is given to about the support that can be given at home. The parents are supportive of the work done at school.

48. Homework is felt to be the right quantity for the age of the children. Home/school books were felt to be inconsistently used at first. However, practice has now improved and the books now form a useful means of dialogue between school and home.

49. Parents feel that the teachers are very accessible and willing to listen to their concerns. A good number of parents and other adults regularly help in the school. Their efforts are appreciated. The Parents' and Friends' Association was set up at the beginning of the year. It has already proved to be an energetic body willing to run a good range of activities to help the school. Very good numbers of parents attend assemblies and productions.

50. The “Share” scheme has been set up in collaboration with the local authority to help parents with their children’s learning at home. Parents meet weekly with the energetic teacher in charge of the scheme. A good number of parents is involved and the scheme is proving successful.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management of the school are very good. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and, with the effective support of the deputy headteacher, key staff and the governing body, she has enabled the newly-formed school to operate effectively within a short time. She maintains a clear vision for the school’s future development and has moulded and motivated an effective team to enable the school to reach its goals. The best practice from each of the former infant schools has become the policy of the newly formed Valentine Infant School. There is a positive ethos that reflects the school’s commitment to a broad and enriching curriculum and to improving standards.

52. The leadership has been very successful in overcoming resistance to the new school within the community. The headteacher has developed a very good balance between her strategic management and the pastoral elements of her role. In each respect she is very well informed. A learning environment has been created where hard work and talent are prized and the pupils feel secure and valued. The pupils behave well and links with parents and with the local community are developing well. A culture of corporate decision making and responsibility is being developed where the impact of major decisions is considered carefully. The school development plan reflects this corporate approach. It is carefully costed and includes timescales and success criteria. It is a working document that clearly sets out the priorities for improvement.

53. The school has successfully introduced the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The school is refining its assessment procedures to ensure that the pupils are grouped according to their ability in these lessons. The school has increased its information technology capability significantly and pupils are involved in a regular programme to develop their skills in the computer suite. The staff are growing in confidence and the class-based computers are being used both imaginatively and effectively. The school makes good provision for those pupils who have English as an additional language and they receive good support.

54. The school manages its support for those pupils with special educational needs well. Its overall approach to the pupils’ individual education plans is thorough and well organised; it ensures consistency in the recording, reviewing and reporting of special educational needs. The newly appointed co-ordinator is conscientious and is becoming increasingly effective. All members of staff are aware of the procedures for identifying, assessing and providing for the pupils with special educational needs and parents know who are their main points of contact in the school. Teaching and support staff work closely with the co-ordinator and the provision for special educational needs is well integrated into teachers’ planning.

55. The governing body has a good overview of the work done to support the pupils with special educational needs. There are governors for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, all of whom are well informed. The contribution of the governing body to the effective running of the school is good. The governors` committees have appropriate terms of reference. Although they have no mission statement, they have established an action plan that will enable them to fulfil all statutory requirements with the implementation of carefully considered policies. However, they have not as yet included a drugs awareness policy on their agenda. The governors take their responsibilities seriously and are committed to raising standards and are sensitive to how the school is perceived locally.

56. Financial administration is efficient and effective. The school administrator has systems that can readily provide accurate financial information to guide the headteacher and governors in making their spending decisions. However, the school is currently working to a planned overspend in this financial year to allow for the anomalies presented by the merger of the two schools. It will begin the next financial year with a clean sheet. In addition to its budget, the school receives specific grants for

supporting pupils with special educational needs, for staff training and for improvements to its provision and performance in information technology. These grants have been used effectively for their designated purposes, and very careful records of expenditure are kept. The school seeks best value for money in its spending decisions by comparing prices and evaluating the quality of its purchases and the services that are provided. It considers different strategies of how to fund identified areas efficiently and how to target the money it spends. The school provides good value for money.

57. The school has a good number of teaching and support staff to support the curriculum. All staff are trained in the infant phase. When the school was opened, good attempts were made to match staff competences with co-ordinators' roles. Good training has been provided to enable the subject managers new to their roles to carry out their roles effectively.

58. The accommodation is spacious and the interior is recently refurbished to a high standard. The school makes very good use of the accommodation. The library and the new computer suite are attractive and stimulating (although the chairs in the computer suite are inappropriate). The school is enhanced by a very high standard of display of the children's work.

59. The exterior of the school is highly unsatisfactory and in some places it is in a dangerous state. Pupils have no access to the playing field. Their only play area is a bleak and barren expanse of uneven tarmac, surrounded by walls of uneven height and texture. A number of concerns have been communicated to the governors. Although the site manager and his staff maintain the space well, vandalism is a serious problem. There is no separate play area for the under-fives.

60. Resources are good overall and very good in the computer suite, the library and in music. Resources for outside play and resources for the under-fives' outside play are unsatisfactory.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. The headteacher, staff and governors should now:

- (a) improve standards in information technology (paragraphs 8 & 107)
- (b) reappraise the use of time to ensure an equitable balance for all the subjects of the National Curriculum and to avoid a loss of teaching time (paragraph 29)
- (c) further develop the use of assessment information to set targets for groups of pupils and to provide greater challenge for pupils of differing abilities across the curriculum (paragraph 43)
- (d) take steps to ensure compliance with statutory requirements with regard to the implementation of a drugs awareness policy (paragraphs 27 & 55)
- (e) improve the quality of the external accommodation to provide a suitable recreation area for all pupils and develop a secure play area for those children in the Foundation Stage to enable them to access their full entitlement to the curriculum (paragraphs 28, 58, 60 & 68)

(f) PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	17	48	35			

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

	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	238
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	78

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	62

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
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	58	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	51	48	53
	Girls	55	57	57
	Total	106	105	110
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (N/A)	91 (N/A)	95 (N/A)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	49	53	46
	Girls	57	56	55
	Total	106	109	101
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (N/A)	94 (N/A)	87 (N/A)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	230
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR- Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	222

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
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	£
Total income	619968
Total expenditure	654711
Expenditure per pupil	£2750
Balance brought forward from previous year	4052
Balance carried forward to next year	- 30691

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	219
Number of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	28	2		
My child is making good progress in school.	55	42	2		
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	52		2	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	58	5		
The teaching is good.	45	50	5		
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	30	48	22		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	50	45	2	2	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	40	57			2
The school works closely with parents.	36	49	10		5
The school is well led and managed.	40	52		2	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	37	58		3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	34	21	13	13

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

62. The children start school at the beginning of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were 80 children on roll in three reception classes. A teacher, assisted by a learning support assistant, leads each class. In addition to these staff, two learning support assistants work with two children who have Statements of Special Educational Need in one of the reception classes. Many of the children have experience in a variety of pre-school settings, including nurseries and playgroups. Their attainment on entry to the early years unit is below that found nationally, although the school's baseline assessment of the children as they first start school indicates that their social and emotional skills are well developed.

63. The teaching in reception is good and often it is very good. As result, the children make good progress in communication, language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. They make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development and satisfactory progress in physical development. They achieve well and most of the children are likely to meet the national expectations by the age of five. The teamwork between the teaching and support staff work is a strong feature. They have gathered together a good range of resources and the classrooms and corridor are well used to support the children's learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. The children settle quickly into the secure and stable environment of the reception classes. The teaching is very good in this area of learning and, as a result, the children make very good progress. Very good routines and clear and consistent expectations in each of the classes ensure that the children know what is required of them and they respond very well. They are very well behaved and develop positive relationships with the adults and each other. The children gain confidence and become progressively more independent. The well-organised classrooms and activities such as 'circle-time' aid this development. The children are very enthusiastic about their learning, listen well and show good perseverance when faced with difficulty. They learn to work and play together and share resources. The adults provide very good role models for the children and have high expectations of what they are capable of achieving. For example, the children are expected to concentrate for increasingly longer periods during the literacy and numeracy sessions.

Communication, language and literacy

65. The children achieve well and make good progress in developing their language skills. Most of the children are on track to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Early reading skills are encouraged through the sharing of books and stories. They know that the title of a book gives them an idea of its content. Most children are able to recall the main points of a story they have heard recently and they use that knowledge to predict what might happen next. They learn the sounds of letters and recognise some frequently occurring words. The children use clues from pictures to describe what is happening in the story and they are beginning to use their knowledge of letter sounds to assist their reading. The most able children are developing a good sight vocabulary. The children learn to form letters correctly and they are encouraged to write independently from an early stage. They learn to spell simple words. Their communication skills develop well through the many opportunities for the children to speak and listen. The adults talk to the children about their work, encourage them to express their ideas and show the children that they value their contributions. Teaching is good. The planning is thorough and takes good account of the early learning goals and the

National Literacy Strategy. The teachers have a good understanding of how young children develop their language skills and the classroom displays are a rich and supportive resource for this aspect of the children's development. Very good use is made of puppets to make the work more interesting and to inject a brisk pace into the lessons.

Mathematical development

66. Every opportunity is taken to develop the children's mathematical confidence and familiarity with numbers and they make good progress. The children extend their mathematical language and learn to count, sort and measure through class activities, group work and many informal activities, including registration, rhymes and song. Most of the children can count confidently to 20 and, with support, back again. They are developing a sound mathematical vocabulary. They can identify the larger of two numbers and are learning the names of simple shapes. Those children with special educational needs are well supported and this enables them to take an active part in the lessons. More able children use their knowledge of numbers to play a game using dice. The teaching of mathematics is good. The planning is very clear about what the children will learn and the lessons, using the national framework, are well organised. There is a very positive learning environment, with very good relationships and good use of mathematical displays, that enables the children to achieve well. Good use is made of rhyming activities and songs. For example, in one lesson the children were extending their understanding of subtraction by singing 'Five Little Speckled Frogs' and 'Ten Green Bottles'. The learning support assistants make a good contribution to the children's learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

67. The teaching in this area of learning is good and an interesting range of activities is planned to enable the children to make good progress in understanding of the world around them. The children are developing an awareness of where they live and can talk about their favourite activities. They learn about the changes that take place as they get older and develop a sense of chronology through completing birthday charts and calendars. The children are developing a sound knowledge of the five senses. For example, in their topic on 'Toys', they observe, describe and compare toys that are hard and soft or quiet and noisy. They learn about hot and cold places. Good use is made of the children's artistic skills to further this understanding when they paint pictures of heat sources and winter scenes. There are appropriate opportunities for the children to explore sand and water. They use construction toys confidently and are set tasks to extend these skills, for example when making a box with a lid and something hidden inside it. There are many opportunities for the children to develop their computer skills. They use a paint program with increasing control and consolidate their number skills. They have begun to use the school's new information technology suite on a regular basis. The teaching in this area of learning is good. Good use is made of the support staff to ensure that there is a clear focus on what is being learned.

Physical development

68. The children have appropriate opportunities to develop their physical skills indoors. However, the current lack of suitable outdoor facilities restricts their progress in this area of learning. The school has appropriate plans to rectify this deficiency. In their physical education lessons, most of the children can hop, skip and jump with satisfactory control and can stop promptly when instructed by the teacher. They are developing the skills of throwing up and catching a ball, whilst standing and walking, and sending and receiving a ball with a partner. Suitable warming up and cooling down activities are a regular feature of the lessons. The school has an appropriate range of wheeled toys but there are too few opportunities for the children to develop these skills at present. The children are progressing well in the development of their skills of cutting, gluing, constructing, painting and drawing. The teaching was good in the physical education lessons seen during the inspection. The planning for these lessons is clear and ensures that increasing demands are made of the children.

Creative development

69. The teaching is good in this area of learning and a good range of activities is planned. The children make good progress and most are in line to achieve the early learning goals. They use their imagination in structured role-play situations and are able to express their ideas and feelings. For example, they play the role of pirates landing on an island and customers and staff in their 'café'. The children are given good opportunities to explore a range of media and create pictures and there are many examples on display around the school. They are able to design and make a rattle for a baby and make collages of party food. The children enjoy joining in with rhymes and songs. They sing tunefully and enthusiastically. A few children are confident enough to sing individually to the class. They play a range of percussion instruments - and can name some of them - as they explore loud and soft sounds and fast and slow tempo. They handle the instruments very sensibly. In an assembly presented to parents, a group of children were able to co-operate to play a simple tune on chime-bars.

ENGLISH

70. Standards in the 2000 national tests in reading and writing were average and above those found in similar schools. The girls performed better than boys in writing. On the evidence of lessons observed, scrutiny of work, and pupils heard to read, standards this year are likely to be in line with national expectations in reading and in writing. A small number of pupils read and write very well by the end of the Key Stage. Standards in speaking and listening are satisfactory. Although there is a range of attainment, many pupils have below average skills when they start school. The overall progress of the pupils in all aspects of English is good.

71. Standards in speaking and listening are in line with those found nationally. Throughout the school, both boys and girls listen and respond well to the texts they share in whole-class work and class discussions are an important part of the literacy hour. By the end of Key stage 1, the pupils know what is expected of them in literacy sessions; they are very interested in their work and in making contributions to discussions about stories and non-fiction accounts. The pupils learn rhymes and poems by heart and enjoy reciting them with their teachers or other pupils. Across the curriculum, good opportunities are provided for the pupils to use speaking and listening skills. In assemblies, the pupils are involved in explaining their work and describing events such as the Balloon Release and Fun Day. In some religious education and geography lessons, much of the work is oral and the pupils participate confidently in conversations about themselves and their feelings and emotions or what they know. Opportunities are given for the pupils to discuss their work in small groups, with the encouragement of a supportive adult. All of these activities promote the pupils' confidence and progress. They express themselves well using a range of vocabulary and are frequently able to give detailed explanations and offer their opinions.

72. The school's successful implementation of the literacy hour is having a positive impact upon standards and the pupils are making good progress in reading. Attainment in reading is in line with national expectations. Overall the pupils are enthusiastic readers. They enjoy reading a wide range of fiction, poetry and non-fiction books. During the Literacy Hour there is an appropriate emphasis on the learning of phonics. This is helping to raise standards significantly and enabling pupils to feel confident about their reading and writing. The pupils use their phonic skills systematically to help them to read unfamiliar words and have learnt to use other strategies such as word recognition and picture clues. The pupils enjoy identifying words with the same consonant cluster endings and recognising rhyming words. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils know how to use the contents, index and glossary sections of information books. They find information in reference books, dictionaries and atlases quickly and efficiently. When the pupils read aloud, they use good expression and are beginning to show a good understanding of the plot and characterisation. They can support their views with examples from the text. The good progress seen is due to strong reading habits which are formed by the good work in school and the partnership between work in school and the help given by parents and other adults. The pupils regularly read to teachers, support staff, parents and other adults. In the younger classes, the parents come in before school starts to choose books to read to their children at

home. The pupils make good use of the attractive and well-organised library to support their reading and many have developed a good understanding of how to use the classification system to find books.

73. The pupils are making good progress in writing, and standards are in line with the national average. The pupils are making good progress in word and sentence work throughout the key stage. They are beginning to pay attention to the spelling of regular or common words and some of the more able pupils can spell words that are more complex. By the end of Key Stage 1, most of the pupils are able to use capital letters and full stops and some can correctly use speech marks, and question and exclamation marks. There are very good opportunities to write for a range of purposes in the Literacy Hour and teachers ensure that writing tasks are relevant and interesting. The pupils write individually and in shared writing sessions. They work on character profiles and identify adjectives to describe the appearance and behaviour of personalities from traditional tales, such as *Little Red Riding Hood*. They write about the contrasting settings in stories they hear and they write dialogue for speech bubbles and instructions for finding a hidden toy in their bedroom. A particular strength is the way links are made with other subjects to provide more scope for writing, as when learning about the Great Fire of London, the pupils write accounts in the style of a dramatic newspaper report.

74. Overall the pupils' presentation of written work is good, significant progress was seen in the way the pupils are developing a fluent joined script and using it consistently. The style of writing has only been in place since the school opened in September. Handwriting is taught systematically and many pupils can form their letters correctly. However, in some pieces of work the pupils have problems writing on unlined paper.

75. The teaching is good across the school, and no unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented. The teachers have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. They are clear about what will be learned in lessons and plan work that builds successfully on what the pupils already know and can do. They ensure that the learning support assistants are well briefed about the learning objectives for each lesson and the role that they will take in working with individuals or groups. The teachers choose appropriate texts and all of the adults ensure that the pupils have access to a wide vocabulary to promote the use of interesting descriptive words. The teaching groups are accurately formed on the basis of prior attainment and targets are set for reading and writing. The pupils' work is regularly and carefully assessed. However, there are occasions when the way in which this is done and the use made of the information is inconsistently applied across the school. In the best lessons the teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and work rate and the pupils settle quickly to work. The guided reading activities are planned to take place outside of the literacy hour. This is enabling the teachers to work with small groups on a shared text, whilst the learning support assistants work with groups of pupils on consolidating activities. Teachers keep careful and detailed records during such activities, identifying the pupils' progress and further learning needs. This has helped pupils to develop their reading skills. Computers are beginning to be used to support the pupils' writing.

76. The pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual action plans. These are followed carefully and the teaching is focused on the areas for development. The learning support assistants are well briefed about their role and they give good support within the literacy sessions. This enables the pupils with special educational needs to fully access the curriculum at the appropriate level, work confidently and make good progress.

77. The subject is well managed. The recently appointed co-ordinator has a clear overview of the subject and together with the other teachers has identified the priority areas for development. The good work done to establish consistent planning systems has ensured that the teachers have confidently and effectively implemented the Literacy Strategy. The planning also provides for opportunities for the teachers to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning. The resources for teaching English are very good and well organised to support the literacy hour. There is a good range of reading books for the pupils to use at home. The library is a vibrant and interesting area, and there is a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books of good quality.

MATHEMATICS

78. Standards are average by the time the pupils leave the school. This represents good progress from the low levels of achievement found when children enter the school. The 2000 national tests, the first set of results for the recently amalgamated school, showed that attainment at Key Stage 1 was broadly in line with the national average. However, the pupils achieved well in comparison to those from similar schools.

79. The work seen during the inspection confirms that standards at the age of seven are average, but there are strong signs of improvement, particularly in the proportion of pupils likely to attain the higher levels. The school is determined to improve attainment, particularly for the more able pupils and positive measures are now in place. For example, assessment information is being used effectively to organise the different ability groups within each class. In addition, the school is beginning to analyse the pupils' performance to identify strengths and weaknesses in their knowledge and skills, and a more challenging curriculum is planned to extend those able to attain higher levels. Furthermore, the school ensures that those pupils with special educational needs receive appropriate support. However, the school is still working hard to adopt the best practice from the two former schools and recognises the need to refine its assessment procedures to ensure consistency in practice.

80. This picture of improving standards is due to the rigorous introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, the good teaching and the successful management of the subject. The Numeracy Strategy has provided the teachers with a clear structure that allows them to plan work that builds effectively on that which has gone before. Throughout the school the pupils clearly enjoy their mathematics lessons. The whole class mental work is approached with enthusiasm and nearly all of the pupils join in confidently and this enables very good learning to take place. Only on a small number of occasions, when the teaching was less well paced or where the work was not so effectively matched to the pupils' abilities, was there any sign of inattention or misbehaviour. In most classes the pupils are appropriately challenged by the work and those with special educational needs, as well as the higher-attaining pupils, make good progress.

81. In Year 1, the higher-attaining pupils sequence numbers correctly, count on in tens accurately and recognise zero. They know where the hands of a clock are placed to show o'clock and understand the language of length and weight when measuring. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of a variety of two- and three-dimensional shapes and can use them to make pictures and repeating patterns. In Year 2, they build on this work by describing a variety of the attributes that distinguish shapes. In particular they are familiar with common three-dimensional shapes. They are making good progress and by the age of seven, the higher-attaining pupils can use bus timetables to work out the length of a journey. They have an understanding of fractions and can work out a half and a quarter of given numbers. They are familiar with block graphs and can use them to display the incidence of birthdays for any particular month.

82. The pupils in the middle ability band and those with special educational needs make good progress. They respond well to work that is well matched to their developing abilities and by the age of seven can measure objects using standard and non-standard units. They recognise coins of different value but have difficulty in working out which coins to use to make different amounts. The pupils can make a right-angled turn and can plot points by using simple co-ordinates. By the age of seven, most pupils can work with numbers up to one hundred when adding and subtracting.

83. Number skills are taught well throughout the school. The pupils learn a good range of strategies to complete written and mental calculations. They explore number patterns and older pupils are beginning to learn their multiplication tables. In Year 1, the pupils are able to count and sequence numbers. They recognise the relationship between units and tens and mentally can subtract one and two digit numbers by counting backwards.

84. The good quality teaching strongly supports the pupils' progress. The teachers are well prepared and it is clear that they plan well together to ensure that the pupils within the same year

group are taught the same skills. Learning targets are shared with the pupils in all classes and so they are enabled to measure their performance. The teachers have high expectations of the pupils' learning and lessons progress with good pace. The teachers use questions well to establish what the pupils already know at the outset of lessons and the plenary sessions are used well to reinforce learning. There is no consistent practice in the use of homework to support learning. However, the teachers are very skilful in using opportunities in other subjects to support learning. For example, the pupils use their time lines in history to work out how long ago events took place. The pupils practise their data handling in science when they are recording the results of their investigations and their understanding of symmetry is supported well in their artwork. Information technology is used well to support the pupils' learning work.

85. The subject is managed well by the co-ordinator who has worked hard to implement a revised scheme of work that reflects the demands of the Numeracy Strategy and the best practice of the two former schools. This has resulted in positive action to improve standards.

SCIENCE

86. The pupils in Year 2 reach the standards expected for their age. The teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, based on the results of the two existing schools just after their amalgamation, were below average. However, since the school has been functioning on one site, the pupils have had the benefit of good teaching and the evidence from the scrutiny of their work and the observation of lessons indicates a rise in standards. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Those pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

87. The pupils make good progress in science. In Year 1, they have a satisfactory knowledge of how to conduct a fair test, for example when investigating which materials would be best for protecting an egg. They explore the best materials for making an umbrella. The pupils identify how sounds are made by a variety of objects and can sort them accordingly. They develop their listening skills by identifying the sources of sound on a walk around the school and use these skills to play a lotto game when listening to pre-recorded sounds. The pupils use appropriate language to describe how loud or soft a sound is. They develop their observational skills by using magnifying glasses. The pupils can sort materials according to a range of properties, such as those that are shiny, transparent or have holes, and can identify whether an object is living or not. They are able to match animals to their young and know that human babies grow into adults. The pupils accurately identify and name parts of the human body and find out what makes a healthy diet.

88. The pupils extend their skills of sorting and classifying in Year 2, where they are able to identify their own criteria for sorting materials. They know that some materials are naturally occurring, while others are manufactured and they are able to suggest the material from which an object is made. The pupils are able to compare and describe plants according to their characteristics and investigate cress grown in different conditions. They suggest ways in which people are similar or different. Good links are made with their work in mathematics as the pupils investigate the links between hand span, shoe size and height and record their work in a variety of ways. They find out how to make a circuit to light a bulb, are able to draw a simple labelled diagram and learn about the uses of electricity in their homes.

89. The quality of teaching and learning seen across the school are generally good. Where the best teaching is seen, the planning is clear about what the pupils will learn. The teachers make good use of these learning objectives to set the scene at the beginning of lessons and they refer to them towards the end, when summarising what has been achieved. They have high expectations of the pupils' capabilities and a good knowledge of the work they are teaching; they ask challenging questions to focus the pupils' attention and value the pupils' contributions to the discussions. The pupils respond well to this good teaching. They listen attentively, answer questions thoughtfully and sustain good concentration throughout the lesson. Teaching is less successful when there is a loss of pace during discussions, which leads to a lack of concentration by some pupils. However, class control and

management are good across the school and the teacher is soon able to re-establish the pupils' attention. The learning support assistants make a positive contribution towards the good progress made by most pupils. They are well briefed about the tasks and are particularly effective in supporting groups of pupils during the lessons. There were few examples, during the inspection, of pupils using computers to aid their learning in science.

90. The teachers mark the pupils' work conscientiously and ensure that the pupils receive praise for their efforts. At its best, the marking also suggests ways in which the work might be improved. Appropriate systems have been established to assess the pupils' attainment and track their progress, although they are not yet implemented consistently across the school. The subject co-ordinator has recognised the need to develop a portfolio of assessed work to aid consistency. The setting of targets is a strong feature of the work and in some classrooms they are displayed prominently so that the pupils can refer to them as they work. The subject co-ordinator has made a good start to organising the subject in the new school. Good use is made of the national guidelines for teaching science and she has ensured that there are sufficient resources to teach the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

91. By the age of seven, the work that the pupils produce is of the standard expected for their age. The pupils with special educational needs and the higher-attaining pupils make satisfactory progress. This is evident in the work that the pupils produce in lessons and in displays around the classrooms. The pupils build up their knowledge and understanding of a range of techniques. They mix paint, learn to control their brush strokes and show an understanding of colour. The pupils have the experience of working with a range of materials in two- and three-dimensional forms. For example, they learn the basic techniques of modelling when using clay to create prehistoric creatures. They learn to draw what they see and to control their pencils when drawing different houses.

92. The pupils respond well to the experience of working in different scales. They take great pride in the characters from folk tales that they have made. For example, a huge giant from "Jack and the Beanstalk" greets visitors to the library and the pupils in Year 2 have made collage characters from "Little Red Riding Hood". The pupils understand that artwork from other countries such as China might appear quite different from the European style. However, there is little evidence to show the pupils have the chance to work in the style of famous artists or craftsmen.

93. A strong feature of the pupils' artwork is the way in which it is used to support their understanding of other subjects. By the age of seven, they make detailed studies of cross-sections of fruit such as pineapples and melons in work that is linked to a healthy eating project in science. They use pencils, crayons, pastels and paint in these observational studies and take great care to achieve the right texture. They produce detailed studies of bulbs and their roots. The high quality displays also include the pupils' work that furthers their knowledge of mathematics and history. For example, the pupils explore pattern when they investigate symmetry and they learn to match colour and shape when they complete segments of pictures taken from magazines. They produce graphic illustrations of the "Great Fire of London" and use a range of materials when working on collages of firework displays.

94. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The teachers are well organised and use their classroom assistants well to support learning. Lessons often involve discussions about techniques and skills and the pupils respond well to the opportunity to talk about their ideas. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and this enables them to guide their pupils away from common pitfalls. For example, the teachers in both year groups show the pupils how to achieve success in their clay modelling. However, some of these discussions are too long and this reduces the time available for the pupils to practise their skills.

95. The co-ordinator has a clear view of the future development of the subject and has made good progress in securing a common approach to the teaching of art in the limited time that the school has been open. There is a shared commitment to succeed and to ensure a good progression of skills and a broad range of experience for the pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. The pupils are making satisfactory progress and are attaining standards in line with what is expected of pupils of this age. Those pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make satisfactory progress.

97. The pupils in Year 1 investigate moving pictures. They observe books and cards with moving parts and devise their own pictures using 'sliders' to move a character. They make puppets with moving arm and legs. As part of a topic on food, the pupils devise a healthy fruit salad. They make attractive papier-mache pots. The pupils design and make a dinosaur with moving parts using split pins in Year 2. They explore wheels and axles when making and evaluating vehicles. They investigate ways of joining two pieces of material and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each method. They are making sound progress in their understanding that joints need to be strong, neat and easy to do. The teachers' planning indicates that there are appropriate opportunities for the pupils to plan and evaluate their work. The pupils make labelled drawings to evaluate their felt hand puppets and identify the materials used. They have satisfactory skills of sewing, cutting and sticking and have access to a suitable range of construction kits.

98. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are well organised with resources made readily available. Classes are well managed and good use is made of the support staff and volunteers to lead groups. Much of the work seen during the inspection had a high level of adult direction. There is a need to extend the opportunities for the pupils to make choices and decisions about their work. The co-ordinator provides good support for colleagues in their planning of the work. Effective use is made of the scheme of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which is modified and supplemented by other materials. This ensures that the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced. There is a satisfactory range of resources to support the pupils' learning.

GEOGRAPHY

99. The standards of attainment by the end of the key stage are in line with those expected nationally. The pupils are interested in geography and they make good progress. Only lessons in Year 2 were observed in geography during the inspection; judgements are based on the lessons seen, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussions with the pupils.

100. The pupils learn about their local area including their route to school and how to make a map of the area. The youngest pupils learn how to write their address and record things seen on a walk. They can identify the features that make the garden of a house nice or nasty such as flowers and grass or rubbish. They learn about the different parts of the British Isles and about journeys abroad. The older pupils learn to identify the differences between their own locality and a contrasting seaside one such as an island in Scotland. They consider the advantages and disadvantages of island life. They are learning about the physical and human features of a village in Mexico. The pupils have opportunities to read maps, find different countries and regions on world maps and in atlases and relate them to their positions on a globe. They make good progress in this and they are quickly able to locate other countries on maps.

101. The teaching of geography is good. The work planned is interesting and relates well to the pupils' previous knowledge. The teachers actively promote the pupils' development of an understanding of environmental issues and the part they can play in improving their immediate environment. They ensure through the provision of good range of resources and activities that the pupils acquire appropriate understanding of geographical concepts and vocabulary. Good use is made of artefacts from Mexico to encourage the pupils to formulate their own questions and to challenge their pre-conceptions about life in a Mexican village.

102. The newly appointed co-ordinator has made a good start in developing the school's scheme of work. He has produced his own action plan to identify the priorities for development in the subject.

The school has long and short term planning which uses the framework suggested by Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Resources to support the work being done in the school have been improved. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.

HISTORY

103. Standards are in line with those expected nationally. Judgements are based on the one lesson seen, a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, and discussions with the pupils. The pupils are interested in history and they make good progress. They show an understanding of how to use evidence from a range of secondary sources such as photographs, pictures and diaries such as that of Samuel Pepys. They make sound progress in their ability to interpret the information from these sources and some are able to suggest explanations for historical events and changes. The older pupils show that they have a good understanding and sense of time past and present when they can talk about a range of events placed on a time line.

104. In lessons, the pupils learn about the past when they compare their toys with those from the past. They can order toys from the oldest to the newest and can identify the differences between old and new kitchen appliances and utensils such as kettles and irons. The older pupils study the work of Florence Nightingale and consider why she took up the work of a nurse. The pupils prepare questions about the Fire of London and suggest how they can find out the answers. They consider what they would save if they have to leave their home in an emergency.

105. The teaching is satisfactory with some strong features, such as good subject knowledge, clear questioning techniques and good use of resources including pictures, books and artefacts as sources of information.

106. The newly appointed co-ordinator has made a good start in developing the school's scheme of work. She has adapted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work to ensure progression and continuity of learning in history and has begun a programme to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the work being done. She has an action plan to identify the priorities for development in the subject. The school has an adequate range of artefacts and other resources. These are being supplemented by the teachers' own resources. The school's long term plans indicate that the teaching of history in the school helps to ensure that the pupils have access to a balanced and broad curriculum and that history makes a good contribution to the social and cultural development of the pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

107. The school has made a considerable investment in developing the pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) by establishing a newly opened computer suite. Standards in the subject are improving, as indicated by the enhanced opportunities for the pupils and by the good teaching seen during the inspection, although the pupils have not yet had sufficient time to benefit from this provision and, overall, standards are below average. The pupils' attainment in the lessons seen is in line with what is expected of this age group and they are making good progress. There is a satisfactory range of pupils' word-processing around the school and their skills in this aspect are broadly average. However, there are too few examples of the pupils' work in other strands of the subject.

108. The pupils are beginning to use the equipment in the computer suite with increasing confidence and appropriate routines for using the room are being established. They are developing the skills of 'logging on and off' and, with support, can locate the appropriate program. The pupils have a sound knowledge of the main keys and are able to use the mouse to move the cursor. They can follow instructions to use a program to identify the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes and are beginning to understand how to correct any errors that they make. Older pupils are quickly developing the skills necessary to modify text by altering the font size and colour, although their skills of saving and retrieving their work are not yet well established. Whilst these skills are well taught and the rate

of the pupils' learning is good, there has been insufficient time for the pupils to cover the full range of the work required. For example, there have been too few opportunities for them to enter and store information in a prepared database and their skills of presenting information in a variety of ways are at an early stage. The pupils in Year 2 have had some opportunity to use a programmable floor robot. There is evidence of the pupils using computers in other subjects, particularly in English, mathematics and art.

109. Since the opening of the ICT suite, the teaching of most of the classes has been shared by the subject co-ordinator and the deputy headteacher. Some of the other teachers are now beginning to assume responsibility for their own classes. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was generally good. The planning for these lessons is good. There is a clear indication of what the pupils are expected to learn and appropriate account is taken of pupils of differing levels of ability. The teachers' good subject knowledge enables the skills to be taught systematically. Explanations are clear and concise. This good teaching leads to a good rate of learning during the lessons. The pupils enjoy their visits to the computer room. They listen carefully to instructions, concentrate well and handle the equipment sensibly. Appropriate opportunities are provided for the pupils to consolidate their learning on the machines that are available in each class base.

110. The co-ordinator has made a good start to leading the subject. There are clear plans for developing the subject. An appropriate system for assessing the pupils' work has been introduced, although it is not yet applied consistently across the school. The co-ordinator has identified the need to ensure that all members of staff are confident in teaching the subject and has carried out an audit of their skills. The school is in the process of agreeing a provider for the national ICT training for teachers, provided by the New Opportunities Fund. It is important that this happens to maximise the benefit of the ICT suite by ensuring that all of the teachers are able to extend the pupils' learning back in their classrooms. The co-ordinator is also playing a leading role in implementing a scheme of work that covers all of the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides effective links to other subjects. The computer suite is a very good facility, although there is some concern over the seating arrangements as the monitors are positioned at a high level and the chairs are too large for the youngest pupils.

MUSIC

111. Attainment in music is in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. All the pupils are provided with a wide range of well-planned experiences that enable them to make good progress in music. Music and singing are enjoyed by all of the pupils and are very positive features of the provision.

112. The pupils listen carefully and explore sounds using simple body percussion, clapping and banging. They use different percussion instruments and their voices. They learn to identify and understand how sounds can have high and low pitch and be of different length. Year 1 pupils are able to use combinations of coloured plastic blocks to compose and play short pieces of music with long and short sounds. The pupils in Year 2 enthusiastically compose a sound picture to accompany the story of *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. All the pupils sing nursery rhymes, hymns and songs and accompany them with appropriate actions. The pupils throughout the school sing a range of songs to support daily assemblies. The children from a reception class are able to confidently perform a song about snowflakes which they accompany with chime bars and signing to enable the pupils with special educational needs in the school to gain an understanding of the words. All of the pupils are enthusiastic, particularly when playing instruments and when working together to compose pieces of music. They listen well when other pupils are playing instruments and respond thoughtfully when given the opportunity to evaluate performances. Throughout the school, the pupils listen to a range of music from different cultures and musical traditions and this is helping to develop their listening and appraising skills.

113. The quality of teaching is good. The planning for lessons gives the pupils appropriate opportunities for performing and composing. The peripatetic teacher provides a good model of teaching

and this is giving other teachers opportunities to extend their knowledge, skills and confidence in teaching music. The co-ordinator is extending this work and is supportive of her colleagues in planning the scheme of work and monitoring and evaluating its implementation. The school uses music across the curriculum, for example when the pupils learn about Mexico in their geography lessons they listen to music from the region. The work done in music makes a good contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils. There is a good range and number of percussion instruments available, they are well organised and readily available for use.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. Standards in physical education match those expected of pupils of this age and the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

115. The pupils are able to follow the teacher's instructions to warm up effectively in readiness for physical activity. Those in Year 1 can identify that their heart beats faster. The pupils can throw up and catch a ball appropriately and most are able to walk whilst bouncing and catching. They are developing the skills of co-operating with a partner to throw and catch and there are opportunities to extend these skills in group situations. The pupils are making satisfactory progress in their understanding of how they can interpret music through movement. In Year 2, the pupils have a clearer understanding of the changes that take place to their bodies when they exercise, identifying an increase in heartbeat, breathing and temperature. Their ball skills become increasingly more developed and, when given the opportunity, they are able to analyse their own performance and suggest ways in which it might be improved.

116. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good teaching was seen in a Year 2 games lesson, where there was a clear focus on improving the pupils' skills. The teacher ensured that the pupils understood what they were learning and the purpose of the activities. As a result of this good teaching, the pupils sustained their interest, co-operated well and showed good improvement during the lesson. The pupils were provided with increasingly challenging situations in which to extend their skills. Lessons are less effective when there is a lack of clarity about the purpose of the activities and the pupils practise skills that are of limited value. This results in a slower rate of progress. Occasionally, insufficient time is spent on consolidating the skills being learned which also hinders progress. Across the school, lessons are well organised, the management of pupils is good and positive relationships are a regular feature. The pupils behave well and show a good level of enjoyment.

117. The subject is generally well resourced. There is a well-equipped hall for indoor lessons and an adequate outdoor hard-play area, although the pupils do not currently have access to a suitable grassed area. Teachers' planning, based on the national guidelines, shows that an appropriate range of activities is planned during the year. There are few opportunities for the pupils to extend their skills in out-of-school activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118. By the end of the key stage the pupils' attainment is average and they are achieving well. The pupils build progressively on their knowledge and understanding through the topics they cover and overall they make good progress.

119. The pupils learn about a range of festivals from Christianity and other religions. They develop an understanding of the symbols and rituals of the Jewish religion. They study the meaning of 'celebrations' such as weddings, parties, Christmas and festivals from Judaism. Stories are used to develop the pupils' religious understanding when they hear about the events surrounding the death of Badger and how it affects his friends. The pupils listen well and are beginning to express their own ideas and feelings about such sensitive matters. Older pupils learn about Palm Sunday and relate it to events in their own lives. The pupils' response to religious education is good, they concentrate well in lessons and assemblies. The subject provides the pupils with opportunities to develop an awareness of

the responsibilities human beings share in relationships, and in caring for the environment. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

120. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. The teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The lessons are well planned and organised and the learning objectives are shared with the pupils. The teachers use effective, well directed questioning to develop the pupils' understanding. The teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and use praise appropriately. The teachers show that they value the pupils' ideas and this helps the pupils to gain confidence in explaining their understanding of issues and concepts.

121. The well-planned scheme of work is based on the locally Agreed Syllabus and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work. The subject manager has supported colleagues effectively, providing valuable help in the planning of topics and ensuring that suitable resources are available. The school has a good range of artefacts and resources to promote the pupils' knowledge of different faiths and cultural traditions.