

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **CARDEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 131789

Head teacher: Mrs L Corbett

Reporting inspector: Geoff Jones  
11816

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> January 2001

Inspection number: 230759

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	County Oak Avenue Hollingbury BRIGHTON Sussex
Postcode:	BN1 8LU
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Pat Hawkes
Date of previous inspection:	2 <sup>nd</sup> December 1996 (Infant School); 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 1998 (Junior School)

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G Jones 11816	Registered inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs J Darrington 13418	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs C Canniff 18703	Team inspector	Geography Music Design and technology	Equal opportunities
Mrs E Wilson 20653	Team inspector	English Art English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
Mrs C Gordon-Smith 18598	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education	
Mr Peter Dexter 14976	Team inspector	Mathematics History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
Mrs J Cooke 2351	Team inspector	Special education needs Speech & language units	

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London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Carden Primary School has 427 pupils on roll and is much larger than most other primary schools. It has recently been formed from the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools on the same site. It serves the Hollingbury area of Brighton, which statistically lies within the top ten per cent of the most deprived areas in England. There are 14 mainstream classes, a 100-place nursery and three speech and language learning centres. The latter includes an 'I-Can' nursery unit, which is jointly funded by the local education authority, the health service and the 'I-Can Charity' and is managed by the local education authority rather than by the school. A new head teacher and deputy were appointed at the time the schools were amalgamated and there were many staff changes. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. There are ten pupils from minority ethnic groups and the percentage of pupils speaking English as an additional language is low. Over a quarter of the pupils in the mainstream school are identified as having special educational needs. This is above average for primary schools. There are eleven pupils with statements of special need as well as 16 full-time and 20 part-time pupils in the speech and language units. When children are admitted to the reception classes their levels of attainment are well below average.

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

Carden Primary School is a rapidly improving school. The head teacher and staff work very closely together to provide a supportive ethos in the school where pupils of all abilities are nurtured in their learning. The very good leadership and support of the head teacher have encouraged a strong sense of teamwork amongst the teachers and support staff and a strong commitment to improve the work of the school. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly and advice on how to improve is offered. The very good school development plan is put together taking the views of all concerned with the school into consideration and provides a driving force for the school's improvement. There is a clear sense of purpose to the school that emanates from the head teacher. Improvements in pupils' standards of attainment have been brought about through a rigorous introduction of a series of measures. Pupils' answers in the national tests are analysed to identify curriculum areas that need development. Although the overall attainments of the pupils in English, mathematics and science are below national averages at the end of Key Stage 2, these are improving very quickly. This good progress results from the good quality teaching provided for the pupils. The good teaching has also enabled pupils to develop positive attitudes towards school and their learning. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The outstanding leadership and clear sense of direction of the head teacher;
- The shared commitment to improvement of all the staff and their capacity to succeed is excellent;
- The teaching provided throughout the school is of good quality overall;
- The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very effective;
- Relationships with partner institutions are very constructive;
- The highly effective monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance and very appropriate action taken to improve;
- The very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.

#### **What could be improved**

- Improve standards further in English and mathematics in Key Stage 2;
- Pupils' attainments in music, history and geography in Key Stage 2;
- Monitoring of pupils' individual education plans in the speech and language units and monitoring of their progress against National Curriculum targets;
- Improve pupils' skills in music, geography and history in Key Stage 2;
- Procedures for monitoring health and safety arrangements.

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

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

The school has only recently been formed from the amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools. The infant school was inspected in December 1996 and the junior school in February 1998. The behaviour of the pupils was a first priority for the newly amalgamated school and this has been successfully managed so that the problems of a number of pupils have disappeared enabling other pupils to concentrate and make progress in their learning. The quality of teaching throughout the Foundation Stage is now consistently good

or very good. There is a good level of challenge, a clear structure to the curriculum and a sense of purpose to the teaching. The co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is now very good and the co-ordinators ensure the provision is of very good quality. Whole-school systems for assessment and recording are now used consistently throughout the school. Although the percentages of pupils achieving what is expected nationally are still below average they have trebled in English and have more than doubled in mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. However, they have fallen in music due to the greater concentration in effort and time on improving English, mathematics and science. Although there were a small number of unsatisfactory lessons the quality of teaching has improved overall with just over one in every five lessons being very good or outstanding. This is a tribute to the system of monitoring lessons regularly to ensure that the quality of teaching is kept consistently high throughout the school. The content of the curriculum has improved through rigorous monitoring of teachers' planning by subject and key stage co-ordinators

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	n/a	n/a	E	D	well above average    A above average        B average                C below average        D well below average    E
mathematics	n/a	n/a	E	E	
science	n/a	n/a	E	E	

The school has improved the proportions of pupils achieving national expectations in the annual national tests since the former infant and junior schools have been amalgamated under the leadership of a new head teacher. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in their learning. The school is on course to meet the targets set by the local education authority for 2001. Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are below average for reading and writing and above the national average for mathematics. Present standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 are well below the levels expected nationally but this is mainly due to the above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Years 2 and 6. Most other pupils attain levels that equate with, or are above, national expectations. Pupils' levels of attainment in information and communication technology and art are above what is expected nationally at the end of both key stages and also history and physical education in Key Stage 1. Pupils' attainments in religious education are satisfactory at the end of both key stages. Their knowledge, skills and understanding in design and technology and geography are satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 but unsatisfactory at the end of Key Stage 2. Attainments in music, history and geography at the end of Key Stage 2 are below what is expected nationally. No judgements in design and technology in Key Stage 2 were made because it was not possible to observe sufficient lessons.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy attending school and are interested in the work planned for them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good overall with examples of very good behaviour throughout the school. Where a few minor incidents of poorer behaviour were observed it was found amongst the older pupils. Some of these had only recently joined the school and had yet to learn the positive attitudes and social conventions expected in the school.
Personal development and relationships	In the main, pupils are trustworthy, courteous and show respect for property. The vast majority are friendly and caring towards each other and adults.
Attendance	Levels are unsatisfactory. Attendance rates are well below the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence is double the national average.

There has been a considerable number of exclusions from school during the past school year but these have been necessary and resulted from inappropriate behaviour directed at teachers by a small number of older pupils. The introduction of a behaviour policy, including rewards and sanctions, is understood by pupils and has been influential in improving behaviour. The unsatisfactory attendance rate is due the absences of a number of traveller children and also to pupils taking more than the allowed number of days for family holidays each year.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Thirty-seven per cent of the lessons seen were very good or better and 33 per cent were good. Only four per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection were less than satisfactory. The teaching of literacy is good overall. Teaching is very good in the I-Can nursery unit and in the Key Stage 1 speech and language unit. Teaching is satisfactory overall in the Key Stage 2 speech and language unit. The good teaching in the rest of the school, particularly of basic skills in reading and writing, contributes significantly to pupils' good progress and to the good attitudes they have to their work. Teachers are knowledgeable of the numeracy strategy and the quality of their teaching is also good. Teachers set specific goals for pupils and their progress results from careful planning of lessons so that the needs of pupils with differing levels of attainment are met. The weaknesses in teaching were concerned with not ensuring all pupils are listening when teachers are talking to them or pupils spending far too long being inactive during lessons. Almost all pupils work hard, are interested in their lessons and concentrate well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the support they receive is of high quality. Their needs are clearly identified and a large team of well-trained and skilled classroom support assistants is very effective in helping them to learn.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The foundation curriculum for children in the reception and nursery classes is well organised and provides a very well balanced programme of activities. The curriculum for the rest of the school is sound and provides a satisfactory range of activities for pupils
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good in the school and in the units. Mainstream pupils are given carefully constructed individual educational plans. Pupils are well supported in the classrooms by classroom assistants and class teachers to meet their varying needs such as social language development or anger management.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Work for the small number of pupils who learn to speak English as an additional language is planned carefully. Extra support is provided during lessons and pupils have extra help on a weekly basis.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Provision for pupils' personal development is good. Teachers know the children in their class well and take appropriate steps with any problems that may occur. Pupils have good opportunities to undertake responsibility. Provision for pupils' spiritual, social and moral development is good and provision for their cultural development is sound.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for child protection are sound. Arrangements for storing cleaning fluids and equipment are not secure and the sand play area lacks a cover to keep the sand clean. Monitoring and promoting positive behaviour are very effective. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good.

## 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 head teacher is outstanding. She provides a very clear sense of direction for the school. The assistant head teacher and other key members of staff work very closely with the head teacher to improve the work of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They hold frequent meetings and play a very effective part in shaping the direction of the school. They monitor the school development plan, the budget and other important aspects of the school very efficiently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The head teacher monitors teaching and all teaching staff analyse test results. Teachers evaluate the success pupils are having in meeting their targets. Class targets are linked with whole-school targets to keep the momentum of improvement going.
The strategic use of resources	The budget is used wisely and is used to improve and administer the school. Teachers are deployed well. The school bursar, school secretary and other office staff work very efficiently and provide a very good service for the school. The learning assistants are well trained and work very closely with teachers to enable pupils to make good progress.

The staff is well qualified to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and religious education. The accommodation is spacious but in need of attention owing to problems with toilets and a very drab and unwelcoming exterior appearance. The school's priorities for development are highly appropriate and are aimed principally at improving pupils' standards in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The school applies the principles of best value very well. It consults with parents and other bodies and ensures that, whenever appropriate, decisions on purchases are made with best value in mind. It compares its own performance data very rigorously with other schools.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like coming to school;</li><li>• The quality of teaching is good;</li><li>• The school is well led and managed;</li><li>• Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best;</li><li>• Children behave well in school;</li><li>• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The amount of homework children are asked to do at home;</li><li>• The information they get about how their children are getting on in school;</li><li>• The provision of an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li></ul>

The inspection team agrees with all the positive views of parents. It disagrees with two of the main negative points arising from an analysis of the parents' questionnaire. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities. These include art, football, line dancing, design technology, computers and signing activities. The school also participates in the annual Brighton Festival Parade. Annual written reports on pupils give detailed information to parents and provide targets for each pupil to work towards. The inspection team considers that arrangements for homework could be improved. There is no homework policy and arrangements for homework are inconsistent across the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The nursery class attached to the school admits children from the age of three and many of the children need much support to develop their language so that they can express themselves clearly when speaking, and have very low attainments on entry. Children in the I-Can nursery unit make very good progress in improving their communication and language skills because they are very well taught by a skilled team of a teacher, nursery nurse and speech and language therapist. They also make very good progress along the stepping stones towards the Early Learning Goals. Initial assessments carried out on the children who have transferred from the nursery to the school's reception class show that their attainment is well below the level expected for their age. By the time they are five, most of the children are not yet ready to commence work on the National Curriculum. Their standards in language and literacy, mathematics and knowledge and understanding of the world are all well below what is expected.
2. In the most recent national tests for seven year olds, pupils' standards in reading and writing are below the national average and above average for mathematics. The boys' results have been consistently worse than the girls' between 1998 and 2000 in reading. Steps have been taken to improve the situation and this is already having an impact on boys' reading attainments. In comparison with similar schools the school's results for seven year olds were close to the average in reading and writing and well above average in mathematics. Teacher assessments of pupils' levels of attainment in science show that they are above average overall.
3. At the end of Key Stage 1 a significant number of pupils leave the school to transfer to junior and other primary schools in the area. Such pupils are often those whose attainments tend to be in the higher range. This had a marked impact on the school's most recent test results at the end of Key Stage 2 when they are well below the national average in English, mathematics and science.
4. There is a higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs in the school compared with schools nationally. This, together with the units for speech and language, has a negative effect on the school's test results when they are compared with national averages or with similar schools. This accounts for a marked difference between the test results and the achievements of pupils seen in lessons. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the support they receive is of high quality. Their needs are clearly identified and a large team of well-trained and skilled classroom support assistants are very effective in helping them to learn. Pupils make particularly good progress in improving reading and spelling through individual tutoring using well-chosen materials and strategies. For these short sessions, pupils are withdrawn from their lessons. Occasionally progress is slowed during lessons because activities chosen are too difficult or rely too much on reading skills that are beyond the pupils. Pupils who have English as an additional language are making good progress in their learning.
5. The progress of pupils in the speech and language units is satisfactory. This is slower than other pupils in the school due to staffing difficulties, which have led to a lower standard of work from the pupils. However, since the beginning of this term, the progress of the pupils in the Key Stage 1 unit has improved considerably and is now very good. This is because they are being taught very well by the new teacher in charge. Pupils in the Key Stage 2 unit, while making satisfactory progress overall, do not do as well as they could at times, because they are not taught effectively. Pupils in both units make most progress in improving their language and communication skills. Language is emphasised and taught in every lesson and opportunities are made for pupils to talk. The skilled support and teaching of the nursery

nurse, the teaching assistant and the speech and language therapists make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

6. The findings of the inspection show that Key Stage 1 pupils have made good progress in reading since they were first admitted to the school. Pupils' listening skills are good but their speaking skills are below average at the end of both key stages. The school is aware of this and has improved curricular opportunities to encourage more confident speaking skills. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss issues and build on each other's responses. This assists in developing speaking skills. Their standards have improved from being well below average on entry into the nursery classes to reach a level that is just below the national average at the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils' progress in mathematics is also good and is reflected in standards that have risen to above the national average at present from a level that was well below average when they started school. This is also true for science, where children's scientific knowledge and understanding when they first entered the school was well below average and is meeting national expectations at the end of the key stage.
7. Through analysis of pupils' difficulties in reading and writing the school has identified strategies that are beginning to improve the standards of literacy throughout the school. For example, there is now a much firmer structure to the teaching of letter sounds and spelling. This is improving attainment levels for seven year olds but is slower in having an impact on standards for eleven year olds due to the reasons given previously. Standards in mathematics are still below those expected nationally for pupils aged eleven but they are improving. The numeracy strategy has been managed well and has enabled sound progress in pupils' learning. In the process of finding out why boys' mathematics test results are not as good as the girls', teachers have identified that the boys needed more visual resources when learning new mathematical ideas and this approach is now used consistently with success. Levels of attainment and pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 are sound in science. A greater emphasis on experimental and investigative science during science lessons has enabled pupils to understand different scientific concepts more easily and their knowledge, skills and understanding are improving all the time.
8. Standards have improved since the previous inspection of the separate infant school. At the end of Key Stage 2, although standards are still below average, the improvement has been even more dramatic. The percentage achieving the level expected in English has increased threefold, and is well over double in mathematics and science compared with the results of the junior school at the time of the last inspection.
9. Attainments in information and communication technology are above what is expected nationally for pupils aged seven and eleven. Pupils are particularly skilled at handling computer operations independently. They use information and communication technology mechanisms to make alarms and sensors and have experience of a wide variety of simulation and modelling programs. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education meets the guidance produced by the local education authority for this subject.
10. Pupils' attainments by the age of seven are above what is expected in history and art and design. They reach the level expected for their age in geography, design and technology and physical education. Attainments at the end of Key Stage 2 are above what is expected nationally in art and design, below what is expected in history, geography and music and meeting national expectations in physical education. It was not possible to make a judgement in design and technology owing to the lack of lesson observations.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

11. Most pupils enjoy attending school, arriving punctually and starting the day in a purposeful manner. Younger pupils arrive enthusiastically and settle quickly before the start of the school day. In the main, pupils have very positive attitudes towards lessons and learning and they consequently make good progress. Many pupils take part in the good range of activities

offered by the school both within and outside the curriculum. This is particularly evident in sporting activities such as the mixed girls' and boys' football club.

12. The behaviour of pupils is mostly good with some examples of very good behaviour. Where behaviour and attitudes are very good, it is as a direct result of very good pupil management strategies and notable standards in teaching. Where behaviour is less good it is usually found amongst the older pupils in the school. Some of these pupils have recently joined the school and have yet to fully understand the social conventions and positive attitudes towards learning that are required in school. Bullying or oppressive behaviour is rarely experienced, particularly by younger pupils but it happens occasionally amongst the oldest. However, the introduction of the whole-school behaviour reward and sanction system is proving to be effective. It is understood by all pupils and there has been a steady improvement in the standard of behaviour.
13. In the main, pupils are courteous and trustworthy, and demonstrate respect for their own and the school's property. Pupils have a clear understanding of the school rules. There have been a considerable number of exclusions during the last academic year. However almost all of these exclusions have been as a result of inappropriate behaviour directed at teaching staff by a small number of the oldest pupils in the school, and in some incidences by their siblings and where previous measures have proved ineffective.
14. The vast majority of pupils are polite, caring and friendly towards one another, staff and other adults. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and in the main show respect for each other and a willingness to listen to each other's points of view.
15. Sound arrangements are made for pupils to take on increasing responsibilities as they move through the school; pupils respond very well to these opportunities. The planned introduction of the School Council will provide more extensive opportunities for pupils if it proves successful. Opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative are less well planned for, but when it happens there is a good response to pupils' initiatives, such as the Blue Peter Appeal.
16. A number of pupils with special educational needs have improved their self-confidence and their concentration considerably through working with support staff. They learn to share and take turns by playing specially chosen games. These pupils develop very good relationships with the staff that work with them. They make good progress in improving their behaviour. They learn to use successfully a range of strategies to help them, such as how to deal with their feelings particularly when things go wrong.
17. Children and pupils in the I-Can nursery unit and in the Key Stage 1 speech and language unit are extremely keen to learn and want to do their best to please the staff. They behave very well. A number of the pupils in the Key Stage 2 speech and language unit lack confidence and find it difficult to concentrate unless they work directly with an adult. However, they all respond well when they are physically active, for example acting out a story they have read in a literacy lesson. Older pupils work hard with the teaching assistant and behave very well during the Social Use of Language Programme (SULP) sessions taken by the speech and language therapist. In these lessons there are clear instructions and expectations of good behaviour.
18. Levels of attendance are unsatisfactory. The attendance rate during the last reporting year was well below the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence was double the national average. Although these figures are due in part to a number of traveller pupils there are a considerable number of pupils taking more than the allowed number of days for family holiday each year and other unauthorised absence. Recently introduced measures to monitor and promote attendance, such as first day contact on pupil absence and half-termly pupil attendance certificates, are beginning to indicate an improvement in levels of attendance.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The teaching observed was satisfactory in 26 per cent of lessons, good in 33 per cent, very good in 33 per cent and excellent in 4 per cent. Four percent of lessons were judged to be less than satisfactory. Good, very good and excellent teaching was seen in both Key Stages 1 and 2. In the Foundation Stage teaching was never less than good, being good and very good in almost equal measures. These findings show a significant improvement since the previous inspection in the quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 where there is now a much higher percentage of good, very good and excellent teaching. There is also an improvement in the Foundation Stage, where previously children did not have equality of access to effective teaching. Now it is consistently good or better. In Key Stage 1 the high percentage of good and very good teaching has been maintained.
20. These high standards of teaching have a positive impact on pupils' learning, which is good throughout the school. Pupils are attentive and enthusiastic and respond well to the challenges presented by the teachers. The good attitudes and behaviour displayed by pupils throughout the school are used to advantage in creating a positive learning environment. Where there are difficult pupils or potential for disruptive behaviour, teachers use good management strategies to ensure that learning does not suffer.
21. Teachers have good skills in teaching literacy and numeracy at both key stages. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented effectively and the well-planned structure of English and mathematics lessons is having a positive impact on standards. Teaching is good in both key stages in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and art and design. In the lessons seen it was sound throughout the school in design and technology, music and religious education. Teaching was sound overall in geography, and in physical education it was good in Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stage 2.
22. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. This is mainly due to the very good use of well-trained and skilled nursery nurses and classroom assistants. These members of staff liaise with teachers, plan their support carefully and keep detailed records of their work. This ensures that pupils build on previous learning and make good progress. Levels of expertise are high. For example, the special educational needs co-ordinator and support staff help pupils, where necessary, to improve their co-ordination, have better control of equipment, develop social skills and improve their attitude to their work. Class teachers are very aware of the needs of the pupils in their classes and help them work towards meeting targets on their individual education plans. Although the targets are clear, a significant proportion are too wide and this makes it difficult for pupils' success to be measured. At times, teaching and learning are very good particularly when classroom support staff work with individual pupils using published schemes. For example, pupils learn about word patterns to help them spell correctly. On a few occasions teaching has weaknesses, notably when plans made with support staff are changed at the last minute or activities are not well suited to the skills of the pupils. In one lesson a group of pupils with low reading levels were asked to find out about rain forest animals from books. The choice of the poster format for recording was helpful but the reading too difficult.
23. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the I-Can nursery unit. The teacher, nursery nurse and speech and language therapist work very closely together ensuring a common approach so that the children know what is expected of them. Instructions are clear, activities are well chosen and they last for the right amount of time. As a result, children get down to work quickly, are interested in what they are doing and concentrate well. In the I-Can nursery unit and in the speech and language units, signing and symbols are used very effectively by staff as a means of communication and to cue children into an activity. For example signs and words are used to indicate to children what they will be doing, and to signify a change of activity, they are asked to move the sign.

24. In the Key Stage 1 speech and language unit, teaching and learning are consistently very good. Lessons are well planned and activities carefully chosen to make learning fun. Work is pitched at the right level of difficulty for each pupil and is made suitably hard so pupils get a sense of achievement when, for example, they count to 30, or backwards from 20. As in the I-Can nursery unit, the close liaison between the class teacher, the nursery nurse or teaching assistant and the speech and language therapist is very effective in the speech and language units. In the Key Stage 2 unit, teaching is broadly satisfactory but on occasion it is unsatisfactory. The use of praise and encouragement works well to get pupils started on their work and the choice of 'games' captures their interest. Pupils lose interest, however, when the work is too easy or if there is not sufficient for them to do.
25. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are taught well and they make good progress. The proportion of such pupils is very small, affecting one class in the school. The class teacher and learning support assistant find time to provide extra support, for example, through explaining to the pupils individually, what a task is about and checking that they understand what to do. They use resources well, such as special pictorial timetables to help the pupils to understand how their day will be spent. Pupils who are relatively new to English have additional weekly help from specialist teachers employed by the local education authority. These teachers also play a useful role in establishing the importance of recognising the child's home language and culture. As a result of the positive and welcoming atmosphere in the classroom, new pupils make friends easily and benefit from the support of their peers in developing their English language skills.
26. Teaching has many strengths. These are the resultant effect of the importance that the school attaches to the professional development of teachers and support staff. The staff's high commitment and enthusiasm to succeed through teamwork and the implementation of effective teacher monitoring procedures are followed by support and guidance. It is through such developments and drive on the part of the staff that the school has addressed earnestly the recommendations of the previous inspection reports.
27. Thorough treatment of the key issues from the last reports has led to very good planning and good assessment of pupils' learning. Improved assessment means that teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities, particularly in English and mathematics. In the best lessons, teachers share their aims for the lesson with the pupils so that they know what is expected of them and the purpose of different activities. This motivates pupils well and enables them to discuss their successes and failures openly and profitably. An excellent example of this was seen in a mathematics lesson in a Year 5 class when the aims for the lesson were repeatedly revisited throughout the lesson, so that learning was kept highly focused with pupils eagerly and confidently on task. Teachers share their plans with support staff who make a valuable contribution to the progress pupils make.
28. Where there are weaknesses in otherwise satisfactory teaching it is due to explanations being too long and pupils lose interest and are disinclined to listen. Examples of this were seen in both key stages during art, literacy, and information and communication technology lessons. On such occasions, time is lost hindering lesson pace and pupils' progress. Teachers do not always plan for pupils to develop their writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. Consequently chances are missed. Although teachers take care to link homework to work in class, there is no homework policy to guide teachers as to the amount of work to be set for each age group. As a result younger pupils at times receive too much homework and older pupils not enough. The quality of marking is very good in some classes, but not all. There are examples of less useful marking in a few classes, when teachers' comments are not specific enough to enable pupils to know how to improve their work. On the few occasions when teaching was unsatisfactory this was due to a lack of pupil management skills at Key Stage 1, which detracted from lesson pace and pupils' progress.
29. Teachers develop good relationships with pupils in their classes through trust and mutual respect. They expect pupils to behave well and to try hard. On almost every occasion teachers

constantly reinforce success whenever possible and firmly manage almost all pupils' behaviour that falls short of their expectations. Such strategies results in a positive learning atmosphere and, coupled with those to encourage pupils to discuss their work as mentioned above, are beginning to build confidence and self-esteem in pupils who previously lacked such qualities, particularly older Key Stage 2 pupils.

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

30. The school is committed to providing worthwhile learning experiences for all its pupils. It does this well, starting at admission to the nursery. Pupils in the Foundation Stage experience a well-planned active learning day, which includes all the Early Learning Goals. There is a deliberate and effective emphasis on language, particularly spoken language, as the majority of pupils have well below average language skills on admission. All pupils are soon assessed, and pupils with special educational needs, or those who are particularly high attaining, are identified and placed on a register. The registers identify clearly these pupils in every year group in the school, and the progress of the pupils is tracked from the Foundation Stage onwards.
31. All pupils have full access to the National Curriculum at both key stages. From Year 2 to Year 6 pupils are organised well into ability groups for literacy and numeracy, based on test results and teacher assessments. Pupils with special educational needs, and those from the speech and language classes, are supported very effectively by learning assistants. Pupils with higher skills benefit from this organisation also, and they are encouraged to join in extra activities such as the Discoverer's Club. The school has been included in a bid for government funding for a Saturday morning club for the gifted and talented titled the Children's University. If successful this will start next term. All pupils and staff know and use some Makaton sign language so that those from the speech and language units feel thoroughly included in the school. Good examples of this were seen in class lessons and assemblies, such as when all the pupils sang 'Together', and the signing was led by a member of staff. The very good behaviour policy, implemented very successfully in all classrooms, ensures all pupils now work and play together harmoniously. Parents comment on the improvement in behaviour since amalgamation. Literacy and numeracy lessons are taught consistently well and the good teaching is driving up standards in basic skills. Government funding is used effectively in support of basic skills learning, for example, extra literacy lessons, or mathematics after school using a government sponsored initiative. Gender and attainment issues are addressed well in the school's literacy and numeracy strategies.
32. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good in the school and in all the units. There is an appropriate mix of support in lessons and specialist teaching. There is also a range of very good sessions to specifically meet the varying needs of pupils. One very good example is the Social Use of Language Programme, which helps pupils communicate more effectively. Another is the anger management class where pupils learn to control their temper to improve their behaviour. The specialist provision made by the speech and language therapists complements and supplements the work of the school staff very effectively.
33. A great deal of care is taken to ensure that pupils in the speech and language units join classes in the main school for some of their lessons. The right amount of support is given to help them learn and get the best out of the experience. Reception age children join a reception class on a Wednesday afternoon. Older pupils go to numeracy, literacy, music and physical education lessons with appropriate year groups. This helps them practise their communication skills and make new friends.
34. The school provides all of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education together with schemes of work to guide planning. However, the history and geography schemes of work do not include details of the skills pupils should develop in both key stages. The school provides a balanced timetable and also organises a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits. It includes music, sport and some subject links. For example there are clubs in art,



computers, improving writing and mathematics. Pupils visit well-chosen places of interest to enrich the curriculum. For example, visits to Preston Park Manor support their work in history. However, there is no homework policy that would give all parents regular opportunities to support their own child's learning outside the school day.

35. The provision for spiritual development is good. Acts of collective worship are of high quality. The termly plan identifies a theme for the week and small assemblies build effectively on the main school assembly taken on Monday morning. One such school act of worship followed the theme 'happiness and sadness'. It was exemplary, and gave everyone present an excellent opportunity to reflect sensitively on values, meaning and beliefs. Religious education lessons, Christmas concerts, and the stories and work in such subjects as humanities, English, science and information and communication technology provide pupils with further good opportunities for reflection about their place in the world.
36. The provision for moral education is good. It is built around the very good code of conduct displayed in every classroom in simple everyday language, and Makaton. It emphasises moral values such as truthfulness, honesty and respect for others. The behaviour policy is followed rigorously, and all pupils are reminded regularly about right and wrong behaviour during the school day.
37. Personal, social and health education is good throughout the school. It is matched closely to the non-statutory guidelines in the National Curriculum through three well-planned progressive themes. Each year pupils learn about 'Healthy Body, Healthy Life, Self Awareness, Rights Responsibility and Citizenship'. Sex education and drugs awareness are part of this programme. Although the provision is in place and working well, policies have yet to be agreed by the governors.
38. There are good opportunities for pupils' everyday social development. They are developing a good understanding of community living through class rules, by working co-operatively in groups, and by being reminded regularly about the need for self-discipline. Teachers are excellent role models. They are courteous, calm and understanding. The school is now planning to increase the opportunities for pupils to take more responsibility and to act more on their own initiative, for example, by introducing a School Council.
39. The school's links with the wider community and other schools are very good. The I-Can charity provides a nursery class for speech and language, and the school has developed a family literacy class. There are good links with the music, learning, and traveller support services. Brighton has a good policy to ensure smooth secondary transfer. But the school reaches out deliberately into the wider community. Pupils enjoy taking part in the Brighton Festival, working with an arts group called Same Sky, or reading their stories at the Brighton Pavilion. Activities include designing a garden, mathematical games at a local supermarket or designing costumes for the carnival.
40. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions well. Pupils learn about their own way of life through the well-balanced curriculum, through visits to important cultural sites, and through visitors in art, literature and music such as Brighton's Hanover Band. Although the school is committed fully to equal opportunities for all, and values everyone, it would benefit from a multi-cultural policy which included the different ways of life of the various ethnic and communities of this country.
41. Overall the curricular and other opportunities offered to all pupils are good. Progress has been good since the last report. Much of that progress has been achieved since amalgamation.

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

42. The school continues to provide a caring learning environment for all its pupils. A good standard of general pupil care is evident and provided by caring class teachers with good

support from classroom assistants, mid-day and administrative staff. Good liaison and support arrangements for welfare and health services enable all pupils to be appropriately supported. Good administrative procedures and systems enable all staff to be fully informed and aware of any changes in individual pupils' needs.

43. There are sound systems and procedures in place for the regular monitoring and maintenance of general health and safety requirements and first aid provision, including a number of staff who are fully qualified in first aid. The systems in place for advising all staff of individual pupils' medical needs are very good. However some arrangements for ensuring pupil care and minimising potential risks in the school building are unsatisfactory and need to be reviewed. Detailed arrangements are in place for child protection with all members of staff fully informed of procedures to follow in the event of any concerns. However, the designated person with responsibility for child protection has not received appropriate training.
44. The recently introduced whole-school approach to monitoring and promoting positive behaviour and the elimination of bullying is proving to be mostly very effective and as a result most pupils behave well. Where behaviour is less good, notably amongst older pupils at times, some pupils feel that extra vigilance, particularly after incidents of oppressive behaviour, would be beneficial to groups of pupils as a whole.
45. There are good arrangements to establish the extent of pupils' special educational needs and to check whether they are making sufficient progress. Where appropriate, a range of support services, including the educational psychologist, occupational therapist and learning support service, are consulted and they work with a relatively large number of pupils. Information and expertise from these services is used effectively to enable pupils to make progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator has helped staff to improve the quality of the individual education plans, which are reviewed termly. However, a small but significant number of plans have targets that are still too broad and continue from one review to the next. As a result it is not easy to measure pupils' success in these instances. There are similar difficulties with some of the targets on individual education plans of pupils in the units.
46. In the speech and language units the assessment of pupils' communication and language is very well carried out and used effectively as a basis for planning what needs to be done next. However the assessment and recording of pupils' progress and achievements in academic subjects is unsatisfactory. In one lesson, because there were inadequate records, pupils were given work which was not hard enough. Steps are being taken to make improvements; for example, portfolios of work are currently being developed.
47. Annual reviews of statements of special educational needs are well organised and the provision outlined in the statements is in place.
48. The school has recently put in place some very good procedures for monitoring and improving pupil attendance such as first day contact on pupil absence and half-termly attendance certificates in order to reduce the high levels of unauthorised absence. This is gradually having an impact on pupils' attendance but the school has not yet reached a level that is near the national average.
49. Assessment procedures were one of the key issues for action in both schools in the previous inspection reports. Since amalgamation there has been a considerable improvement. There is now a clear, comprehensive assessment and marking policy that gives good guidance to staff. Assessment is very good in the Foundation Stage. There are good procedures in both key stages for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in numeracy and literacy. Pupils take standard assessment tests at the end of each key stage. In the intervening years they take relevant optional tests. The school also uses a range of other standardised tests. The results of all these tests are very carefully analysed and the information gained is well used to form teaching groups. Teachers then match the level of difficulty of the lessons and the associated activity to the ability and stage of development of the pupils. There is a good home reading

scheme throughout the school. Numeracy is also assessed in the light of termly curriculum and lesson plans. Individual progress in both literacy and numeracy is carefully tracked so that teachers can help pupils to raise their standards of attainment.

50. The school has developed a comprehensive system of target setting within which pupils are encouraged to set their own challenging targets. Parents and teachers review the progress made toward meeting them regularly. The procedure for assessing science is still being developed and is not yet at a stage to have had an impact on standards. Progress in information and communication technology is carefully tracked through a good system of assessing individual work. All lesson plans contain points for assessments, which are monitored by the assessment co-ordinator, but there is no whole-school scheme for recording assessments in religious education and the foundation subjects. In a recently introduced strategy a piece of work for each pupil is assessed against agreed criteria at the end of each topic. To this end, portfolios of examples of work are being collected and agreement trials have begun. Class and topic work are marked with informative annotations but the marking does not focus well enough on sentence structure and spelling which are often poor.
51. The school's procedures for monitoring personal development are good. The school keeps a record of achievement for every pupil with examples of work, test results and notes about progress towards the targets set. Each pupil keeps a personal record card listing noteworthy achievements. There is also a well-structured scheme for managing unacceptable behaviour when it occurs. The pupils discuss their personal progress regularly with their class teacher. The assessment co-ordinator monitors the way all procedures are implemented and there is a good system to ensure that information is transferred from class to class.

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

52. The school has maintained and continued to build upon its sound partnership with parents, which was evident at the last inspection. Parents feel that there has been a notable improvement in overall standards since the amalgamation of the two schools under new leadership and that pupils now make good progress. The significant improvements since the last inspection noted by parents are early identification of pupils with special educational needs together with appropriate support provided. They feel that there has been considerable improvement in the standards of pupils' behaviour, higher expectations of pupils by teachers, improved internal decoration of the school and the introduction of new initiatives by the school in order to improve both the building and standards of achievement by pupils. Most parents feel that the staff work very hard. Parents, in the main, feel well informed and that the school works closely with parents with good arrangements for them to communicate with their children's teachers. A small number of parents think they are less well informed and parents generally feel that there is inconsistency in the setting of homework. A minority of parents suggest that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons and concern was raised by a very small number of parents about the adverse state of the school grounds.
53. The inspection finds that the school has developed very effective links in many and varied ways to ensure that parents are well informed. There are regular and detailed letters and newsletters, written mostly in a friendly and accessible style, and information sessions for parents. The new family literacy arrangements have proved to be very popular and helpful to parents and their children. Written information for parents on the planned curriculum for each term is not always free of educational terms, making it inaccessible to parents at times. The parent teacher association provides a number of varied family social events throughout the year which also raise money to enhance resource provision. The school offers open access to parents outside of lessons. A number of parents and volunteers help regularly both within the classroom and in extra-curricular activities, such as the young engineers club. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities.

54. There are good arrangements to ensure that parents of pupils with special educational needs have opportunities to discuss their children's progress. Most attend annual review meetings and meet regularly with class teachers. Home-school books, in the units, provide a very good means of communication between parents and the school.
55. Individual pupil reports provide detailed information on each pupil's progress and achievement and include targets for each pupil to work towards. Parents and pupils are given the opportunity to comment on the reports and formal consultation evenings are held each term. Parents are fully involved when pupils are identified as having special educational needs and they have regular opportunities to discuss progress, both formally and informally.
56. The provision of homework is inconsistent throughout the school. There is no homework policy containing a structured framework for the provision of homework for pupils of different ages. This does not provide parents with sufficient information to be able to support pupils' learning at home and to further their help in partnership with the school.
57. Parents are supportive of school productions and events and many regularly attend the Friday assembly for parents and pupils. Parents are consulted regularly about major decisions concerning the life of the school.

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

58. The head teacher has an exceptionally clear idea of the direction the school should take and together with key members of staff provides very good leadership. The amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools has been managed with skill and potential difficulties with the blending of two sets of staff have been overcome. This has been managed so well that the staff's commitment to improvement and its capacity to succeed is outstanding. Members of staff work closely as a team, are enthusiastic to develop the school positively and are working successfully and very hard to improve the standards of the pupils and to develop the work of the school. The successful approach ensures all staff are included in the decision-making process, guided by a very clear vision from the head teacher and deputy head teacher, who work very closely together to manage all the ongoing new initiatives.
59. When the amalgamated school first opened the head teacher and deputy had to make important decisions about the most urgent priorities. They decided that the unacceptable behaviour of some of the pupils was impairing the school's ability to improve overall educational standards. As a result, a positive behaviour management programme was introduced and all teachers adopted this approach, using rewards and sanctions successfully and consistently in the classrooms and elsewhere in the rest of the school premises. In addition, every action that was threatened, was carried out by the head teacher, including temporary exclusions from school. These measures have improved the overall behaviour in the school and allowed the staff to focus on improvements in pupils' levels of attainments. All teachers consistently show pupils they are valued by acknowledging effort in work and behaviour. One good example of this is for all pupils and staff to use Makaton signing for communication during whole-school events to demonstrate that all pupils, including those in the speech and language units, are of equal importance. Staff and pupils receive regular training to build on their signing skills.
60. The school has used a number of different measures to raise standards. The curriculum has had to be changed in order to achieve progression in pupils' learning and to raise standards. All teachers have been trained in making more accurate judgements of standards. This resulted in raised teachers' expectations of what pupils were capable of doing successfully. In addition, the senior management team has received training from the head teacher and deputy on managing change. Learning support assistants have been provided with continuous training in additional literacy support for pupils and this has helped in raising attainment levels. Whole-school, whole-class and individual targets for pupils have been set and this has also raised standards. Lessons are monitored, and the outcomes are recorded in writing and

followed by discussions at the end of the observations. This has helped improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and it now shows a very significant improvement in the proportion of lessons that were regarded as good or better, particularly in Key Stage 2.

61. The deputy head teacher's main role is to manage and organise professional development and its funding. All these duties are carried out very efficiently as well as teaching and managing a class of pupils successfully. Priorities for training of all personnel are identified according to the school development plan so that professional development is part of a co-ordinated plan to improve the school systematically. Mid-day assistants are trained effectively in pupils' behaviour management. The two key stage co-ordinators and the Foundation Stage co-ordinators very effectively ensure that pupils make continuous progress in their learning throughout their time at the school.
62. Subject co-ordinators play a large part in improving the work of individual curriculum areas by monitoring planning, ensuring that teachers are aware of developments and checking that pupils in each year group are making good progress in their learning. As yet, only numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology lessons have been monitored. Assessment is playing a key role in improving standards throughout the school. The assessment co-ordinator monitors the implementation of the school policy to check that it is being used to match work to pupils' needs and to make sure that pupils are involved in assessing their own achievements.
63. The large team of nursery nurses and classroom assistants is very ably led and managed by the Foundation Stage Co-ordinators, Speech and Language Co-ordinator and Special Needs Co-ordinator. They have a high level of expertise in many areas, including special educational needs, and organise the deployment of the staff efficiently and effectively. The quality of the work of the team is monitored well by the co-ordinator observing their work and reading their records. She has ensured they are trained by herself and by attending courses. Support staff feel valued and skilled. An established system of regular meetings with the support staff and with unit staff helps ensure resources are used efficiently. The special educational needs co-ordinator has a high profile in the school and is appropriately a member of the senior management team, as is the teacher in charge of the units. The I-Can nursery unit is very well led and organised by the teacher in charge. She liaises closely with the nursery team and with the speech and language therapist attached to the unit. The teacher in charge of the speech and language units is a very recent appointment but has already demonstrated very good leadership through assessing how to improve standards. Her priorities are correct; for example, she has quickly increased the progress of the pupils in the Key Stage 1 class and is taking steps to introduce common procedures to both units.
64. The school development plan is of good quality. There is a wide range of consultation before the plan is constructed and decisions about priorities are taken on the basis of the greatest number who see the issues as having an important need for development. Teachers, support staff, all pupils, governors and parents are all given opportunities to complete questionnaires. The initiatives identified in the development plan are linked well to the school budget and have been chosen with care. The action plans to meet the objectives are carefully constructed. However, the success criteria linked to the various initiatives are not always linked to improvements in pupils' attainments whenever it is possible.
65. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties effectively. Governors work hard and meet regularly and frequently to discuss issues, to make decisions and to consider strategies for the improvement of the school. They work very closely with the head teacher and know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. They are closely involved in deciding the priorities of the school development plan and in monitoring the outcomes of the various initiatives involved as part of their work in monitoring the effectiveness of the school. Governors have a very clear idea of the educational direction the school should take and are committed to a continuously improving school. The finance committee monitors the budget regularly and carefully with the assistance of the school's bursar. The chair of governors and

the head teacher communicate regularly about the administration of the school and work very well together to ensure that problems are solved quickly. Owing to sums of money carried forward from the infant and junior school budgets the school has a healthy surplus. This is being used wisely to safeguard the advantageous staffing levels until a time, which the school hopes will arrive, when there are sufficient pupils to generate the amount of money needed.

66. The school applies the principles of best value very effectively. Parents, teachers, pupils and mid-day assistants are consulted about their views on the effectiveness of the school by issuing them with questionnaires. The school compares its performance with that of other similar schools, including pupils' attainments, expenditure, rates of exclusions of pupils and attendance. Whenever purchases are made, the school compares prices from a number of different sources and decides on the best value for money.
67. New members of staff to the school receive a good induction to enable them to familiarise themselves with the school's procedures as soon as possible. The school's use of new technology is good. It uses a computer program to track pupils' attendance but even though the school has a computer program to use an optical reader for quick and easy marking of pupils' attendance's, there is no optical reader to facilitate this. Pupils' assessment details are logged using information and communication technology and predictions of their expected levels are made and used effectively. The new computers in the school office are networked but, as yet, the office staff have not yet had sufficient training to use the facility effectively.
68. The school's accommodation is satisfactory for the teaching of the National Curriculum. There are two large assembly halls and a small Key Stage 1 swimming pool for physical education lessons, a music room and group rooms for use with pupils who have special educational needs. However, the distances pupils have to walk if they need to go to the toilet are unacceptably long and they waste too much time when undertaking this. One of the toilets in Key Stage 1 has an offensive odour that affects pupils working in classrooms nearby. The exterior appearance of the school is very forbidding and parents have commented on the negative feeling the deterioration and lack of colour engenders in any visitor to the school. Teachers are deployed effectively in the school and the resources for learning are at least satisfactory to enable pupils to gain knowledge, skills and understanding in National Curriculum subjects and religious education.
69. The school's aims and values are reflected well in its work. Pupils are generally respectful and tolerant towards each other and adults in the school community.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further and ensure good progress for all pupils the head teacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Build on the good practice already established in the school and improve pupils' standards in English further by:
  - providing strategies for writing that will improve pupils' sentence structure and punctuation in both key stages and for teachers to apply the same standards in foundation subjects as for English; (Paragraph 101)
  - providing more chances for pupils to read aloud in guided reading groups to raise their self-confidence. (Paragraph 100)
- (2) Improve standards in mathematics further in Key Stage 2 by:
  - ensuring more consistent use of targets when teachers mark pupils' work; (Paragraph 110)
  - providing opportunities for pupils to practise and consolidate newly acquired mathematical skills in subjects across the curriculum. (Paragraphs 109, 110)
- (3) Introduce a homework policy that enables pupils to consolidate learning from lessons through work set for them to do at home. (Paragraphs 34, 56)
- (4) Develop the existing good practice in the speech and language units to help members of staff to construct clear and specific targets for pupils' individual education plans. (Paragraph 71)
- (5) Build on Key Stage 1 pupils' earlier learning in music, geography and history lessons to improve attainments by the age of eleven and:
  - encourage pupils to draw conclusions from the range of information they have found out during history and geography lessons; (Paragraph 129)
  - promote opportunities for pupils to write about history and geography in their own words to help clarify their thinking; (Paragraphs 129, 134, 136)
  - developing existing practices further in music lessons so that pupils' singing and playing skills can be improved.

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- ensure that the cause of the offensive odour in the Key Stage 1 pupils' toilets is eradicated; (Paragraph 67)
- review arrangements for ensuring overall care and minimising potential risks in the school building; (Paragraph 43)
- provide amendments to the schemes of work in geography and history to include details of the skills to be developed by pupils in both key stages; (Paragraphs 34, 127, 135)
- make sure that all teachers provide opportunities during physical education lessons for pupils to exert themselves. (Paragraph 152)

## OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

### The speech and language units

70. Over the last year there have been considerable changes in staffing in both classes including periods where there have been temporary teachers. This has slowed pupils' progress to satisfactory overall and lowered their achievements resulting in standards which are not as high as indicated at the last inspection. However, the achievements of those in the Key Stage 1 unit (children aged four to eight) have improved dramatically in the short time since the arrival of the new teacher in charge. They are now making very good progress due to the high quality of her teaching. A new teacher for the class for older pupils (aged between seven or eight to eleven), the Key Stage 2 unit, is due to join the school this half term. Whilst overall, the progress of these pupils is satisfactory, at times they do not do as well as they should. This is partly because there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching.
71. Pupils often have very low levels of attainment when they join the units. They frequently find it difficult to make themselves understood and do not always understand language used by others. By the time they are seven, although their attainment continues to be low, they have improved their communication skills and their understanding of language extensively, which helps them to learn in other subjects. A few pupils make sufficient gains to enable them to attend their local school with additional support rather than continue at the units. Very few pupils transfer from the Key Stage 1 unit to the unit in Key Stage 2 because the local authority judges that the needs of pupils in other schools who have failed to make progress are greater. Pupils who do not transfer, join their local school with additional support rather than continue in the Key Stage 2 unit. When they join the units pupils have low levels of attainment and poor self-esteem. Although there were no pupils in the unit from Year 6 during the inspection, evidence of pupils' work and teachers' records indicate that they make satisfactory progress by the time they leave the school. Most do not achieve high standards but they do make good progress in subjects where they join classes in the school and are well supported. Progress would be better for all pupils if their individual education plans had more specific targets that are measurable to make it easier to assess whether pupils have achieved the target or not.
72. The very good improvements made in language and communication are due to the strong emphasis on teaching language through all subjects and the effective use of Makaton signing and symbols. For example, in a science lesson investigating the properties of materials the words including 'soft', 'hard', 'rough', 'smooth', 'plastic' and 'wood' are written on cards with the symbols and taught as part of the lesson. The work of the speech and language therapists is invaluable. They use their specialist expertise to great effect through working with pupils either away from or in the classes and they sometimes lead sessions. During one session, for example, led by a therapist, older pupils made clear gains in their understanding of the use of body language and listening skills in order to communicate clearly. Therapists plan with the teachers particularly for subjects, such as science, geography and mathematics, where the language and the ideas may be difficult for the pupils. This ensures that, as much as possible they reinforce what is being learnt. From having little or no language, pupils develop their vocabulary, sign as a matter of course and become more articulate. This has a positive effect on their behaviour and attitude to their work because they find that they can succeed and their concentration improves.
73. The National Literacy Strategy is used very effectively. For example, in the Key Stage 1 unit when reading 'The Ginger Bread Man' together, the children looked carefully at the pictures and describe what they saw, for example " a house and a lady", "lady cooking". Older pupils read some of the words. They know to look at initial letter sounds to help them read words and are beginning to look at other parts of words. Writing is developing well. The youngest trace over words and draw pictures to represent a story. Older pupils write sentences carefully, developing clear joined up writing. They spell commonly used words accurately and attempt new words using the correct sounds. Pupils in the Key Stage 2 unit enjoy the big book stories about the characters from Wellington Square. Their language was improved and their listening



skills sharpened through graphically acting out the rescue of the dog from the dragon using their own words. Some pupils are beginning to look at the middle sounds in words. Most read simple stories and are becoming more fluent. They correct themselves if it does not make sense. More able pupils read with expression and predict what they think will happen. One pupil asked the inspector which was their favourite Roald Dahl book and then went on to explain their own well-reasoned choices. Handwriting is developing, although some pupils are yet to join their letters consistently and need substantial help with their spelling. They sequence stories and write sentences, sometimes using the computer to help. Those that attend lessons in the school write poems, descriptive pieces and stories, some at length. They use capital letters and full stops, spell common words accurately and use sounds well to spell unfamiliar words.

74. Pupils in the Key Stage 1 unit make very good progress in mathematics through skilled teaching and very good use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Children count to five and are beginning to go further and match numbers to ten. They count on and understand the difference between long and short. Older pupils count in twos and fives and add and subtract. The greatest breakthrough is in pupils beginning to calculate in their heads, remembering to start with the largest number. They have made charts when comparing the weight of items showing some accurate predictions of which will be the heaviest. Pupils taught in the Key Stage 2 unit make slow progress in mathematics because their work is often too easy. Records show they count in twos and fives, understand tens and units and name two-dimensional and some three-dimensional shapes correctly. Older pupils, who join lessons in the school, make good progress and become increasingly accurate in their calculations.
75. In science pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but do really well when they are asked to find out things through practical activities. All members of the Key Stage 1 unit can name the main parts of the body. Children have begun to look at the properties of different materials. Older pupils explore the changes in body shape from infancy to old age. They learn to identify and classify different types of materials including fabric, plastic, wood and wool. Through simple experiments they develop their ability to predict and to investigate, for example, the differences in look and taste of different varieties of apples. Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils learn to make bulbs light in simple electrical circuits, explore plants and growth and the properties of gasses. Older pupils are surprised when they discover that air is not weightless and they take great care to ensure they carry out a fair test.
76. Pupils make satisfactory progress in other subjects. Information and communication technology is used well to help pupils learn. They practise their writing and reinforce what they have learnt in mathematics. The youngest pupils use a computer independently, moving the cursor key with increasingly accurate mouse control. Older pupils load programs and select what they need. Most know how to change the size, colour and type of writing and print their work unassisted. Pupils make connections between what they are taught and how they should behave. For example, the study of the Old Testament story of Joseph by pupils in Key Stage 2 widened their understanding of the destructive effects of jealousy. Pupils' sketchbooks show they make satisfactory progress in improving their brush control, colour mixing and observational drawings in art. In geography pupils learn about the area around the school and the weather in other countries.
77. The quality of teaching and learning is now consistently very good in the Key Stage 1 unit. The teacher ensures pupils enjoy what they do. Activities are presented as exciting and the work is pitched at the right level to ensure every pupil succeeds and has a sense of achievement at the end of the lesson. Lessons are planned very well to ensure excellent use is made of the nursery nurse and, where appropriate, the speech and language therapist. For example, the class is sometimes taught together or in groups and individual pupils often work on a one-to-one basis with the therapist. The pace of the lessons is maintained through changes of activity and very good questioning by the staff. This helps pupils to concentrate and keeps their interest. Staff in each unit have good levels of expertise and the use of signing and symbols is very effective in helping pupils learn language and communicate.

78. In the Key Stage 2 unit teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although at times teaching is unsatisfactory and pupils do not learn as well as they should. Pupils often work in groups according to their age, which is effective in ensuring they learn the right work for their year group. Practical activities work well. For example, pupils use language very well when they act out stories and improve their attention spans through playing memory games. The general assistant notably insists on high standards and as a result pupils present their work particularly well when she teaches them. The speech and language therapist works very effectively with the teacher using probing questions to gauge pupils' knowledge and understanding. Where teaching has weaknesses pupils lose interest because they are not given sufficiently difficult things to do and often the pace of lessons is too slow. Teachers do not have an adequate grasp of what pupils already know and pupils spend too long on simple whole-group activities. For example, in a mathematics lesson a great deal of time was spent in all pupils identifying coins and taking turns to put prices on items for a shop.
79. The teacher in charge of the units has made a significant difference for children and pupils in the Key Stage 1 Unit. Their standards have improved considerably. The high quality of her leadership is based on setting very high standards and providing an excellent role model for the staff. The very good action plan for the units is based on an accurate identification of strengths and weaknesses and clear steps over a reasonable time span to make improvements. A system of staff meetings has been put in place and the monitoring of pupils' work and the quality of teaching are planned to follow shortly. The appointment of the second teacher seeks to solve the major staffing problem. The capacity for the units to improve further is very good indeed.

### **The I-Can Nursery Unit**

80. The I-Can nursery unit provision is very effective and the children make very good progress in improving their communication and language skills. When they join the unit, many children have very little or no speech and their understanding of language is often poor. By the time they leave, many have improved significantly and are able to attend their local schools. They all participate in the main nursery activities with well-targeted support, often by a specialist nursery nurse. They make very good gains towards achieving the stepping stones of the Early Learning Goals in all areas. Children also spend time working with the teacher in charge of the unit and the unit's speech and language therapist, usually individually or in pairs, on specific targets set out in their individual education plans. This regular teaching and therapy ensures they make very good progress. Additionally, group activities are arranged to include children from the nursery with a few of the unit children. This is very successful in improving speaking, listening and attention skills. It also gives children from the unit opportunities to watch, listen to and talk with children of their own age that communicate more effectively. For example, in one such session, a 'pass the soft toy' activity, a variation on 'pass the parcel', encouraged children to locate and name parts of the body and to follow instructions. Playing 'Fizzy Bubbles' entailed them remembering the names of other children and listening to the words to know when to stop 'fizzing'.
81. Children learn well because they are effectively taught. Lessons are very carefully planned and focus on the learning that is to take place. Activities are very well chosen to be fun, to interest the children and to develop their attention spans and concentration. For example, in a one-to-one session, a child was encouraged to talk about what he was doing and became engrossed in playing with toy kitchen equipment. The teacher prompted, encouraged and described his actions and by the end of the session, sounds had blossomed into clear phrases as the child commented on his 'cooking', 'put in fridge', 'turn on oven' and 'not in there'. The speech and language therapist makes a strong contribution to the progress the children make, working closely with the teacher in charge. As a result there is a consistency in language and procedures from all adults, including the nursery nurse. This helps children to have the confidence to respond and try new things. High expectations of work and behaviour are established. For example, children are reminded how to sit which focuses their attention and signals the start of the lesson. They are also taught to take turns and to share toys and

equipment with other children. They have very good relationships with the staff that work with them and try their best to do what they are asked.

82. The leadership and management of the unit are very good. The teacher in charge works closely with the nursery in the main school. This ensures children in the unit are taught an appropriate mix of specialist language and communications teaching, therapy and the wider areas of learning in the nursery itself. This forms part of the strong links with the school even though the teacher in charge reports to the local education authority rather than to the school governors. There is a clear action plan for improving the unit's work and high levels of staff expertise are maintained through good levels of training.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	106
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	33	33	26	4		

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	41	380
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	78

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	47
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	20	125

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	34
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.7
National comparative data	5.9

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	1.0
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	35	23	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	33
	Girls	20	22	23
	Total	47	50	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (77)	86 (84)	97 (89)
	National	83	84	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	33	31
	Girls	21	24	22
	Total	48	57	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83	98	91
	National	84	88	88

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

## Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	26	21	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	14	17
	Girls	16	10	13
	Total	28	24	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (55)	51 (39)	64 (63)
	National	75	72	85

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	13	13
	Girls	11	13	12
	Total	17	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	36 (43)	55 (24)	54 (29)
	National	20	72	79

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	427
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	14	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	22.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.6
Average class size	20.2

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	248

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.5

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10.25
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	199/2000
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	£
Total income	613855
Total expenditure	562227
Expenditure per pupil	1335
Balance brought forward from previous year	51947
Balance carried forward to next year	103575

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	427
Number of questionnaires returned	89

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	37			1
My child is making good progress in school.	54	42	3		1
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	51	2	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	47	10	4	3
The teaching is good.	65	33	1		1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	30	12	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	25	3		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	34	2	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	43	10	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	56	38	1		4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	36	6	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	36	13	7	11

## **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**

83. Children enter the nursery when they are three. They transfer to the reception classes, usually after one year, in year in which they become five. The school has a very good suite of rooms for the Foundation Stage and the quality of education provided is very good.
84. The work of the unit is very well managed by the two co-ordinators who share a clear vision for its direction. They lead a strong, enthusiastic team of teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants who enter fully into all the activities of the four classes. They also work very closely with the staff of the I-Can unit attached.
85. There is a very good admissions procedure. Before they start school the teachers and nursery nurses visit the children at home, forging links with their families which are strengthened after they are admitted to the nursery. Staff welcome daily contact with the parents so that they can form a partnership which will extend and enhance the work of the school and involve them in their children's education. There is a very good home reading scheme. Children take a book home every day so parents have the opportunity to share in and comment on their progress.
86. When they first start school many of the children need a lot of support as their use and understanding of language is very poor. Throughout the Foundation Stage all the staff work hard to teach speaking and listening skills, to extend the children's vocabulary and to encourage them to express themselves clearly, speaking distinctly. They provide many activities that encourage children to listen and they look for opportunities to engage them in conversation. There are many opportunities for children to dress up and take part in role-play. During the inspection, children in the nursery were seen taking the baby out to the shops. In the reception classes they were making appointments for patients at the clinic and doctors were administering first aid to the injured. Teachers use a wide variety of rhymes, action games and songs and practise them often so the children learn to enjoy words and appreciate the rhythm of poetry. They learn to listen carefully to distinguish musical sounds and learn new tunes.
87. Story time is an important part of each school day. The teachers choose books very carefully to interest the children, to excite their imagination and to introduce them to literature. Each class has access to a comfortable and inviting book corner. As a result, the children soon learn to enjoy books and stories. Teachers use a variety of strategies to teach early writing skills. During the inspection the children in the reception classes were starting to make their own class books, each contributing a page.
88. Many kinds of mathematical activities give the children experience in counting, in adding on, in finding the difference and in recognising numbers. They sort and match objects according to colour, size, shape and texture. All the time the staff are seeking to teach the children the correct mathematical vocabulary without which their mathematical development will be hindered. Sometimes the tasks are presented as games or as creative activities. An example of this occurred when children were making beautiful butterflies. They were counting and matching coloured spots to make both wings alike. They were also learning about symmetry and, incidentally, about a feature of living butterflies. In other activities the children learn about space, distance and direction by following an outdoor track with their wheeled toys. Well-devised activities and good teaching help the children to make good progress in learning basic mathematical concepts. By the end of the reception year the majority are likely to have achieved the Early Learning Goals although delayed language development prevents rapid progress for some pupils.
89. Throughout the Foundation Stage the teachers provide a wide range of activities specifically designed to enhance the children's knowledge and understanding of the world about them.



They handle a good variety of materials such as sand, water, fabrics, threads and ribbons. They work with play dough, glue, and papers of different types. During the inspection, groups of children were experimenting with paint on wet paper watching how the colours run and mix and the effect of sprinkling powder colour on top. The home corner and role-play areas give opportunities for the children to act out some of the lessons and stories they have been taught, developing and consolidating their learning and co-operating and sharing with others. In the spring and summer they plant seeds in their garden plot and watch them grow. This helps the children to begin to understand a little more about the time scales, which they also discover in the context of their own growth and development and the changes in the toys they have played with since babyhood. As part of the work in this area of the curriculum the children are taken outside the classroom. Initially they explore the school and its grounds. Later, in the reception year they go on local visits to the library, the shops or the museum. They also learn to use a computer and to control a 'mouse' as when nursery children 'colour in' shapes and pictures outlined on the screen.

90. Creative development is good in all classes in the Foundation Stage. On entry to the nursery many of the children have had little experience of creative activities so teachers devise tasks that attract them and encourage them to practise hand/eye co-ordination. They provide activities that promote creativity and give experience with crayons, felt tips, paint and small tools such as scissors. Whenever possible these opportunities are also arranged to consolidate learning in another part of the curriculum. This happened when children in the reception class were arranging and gluing geometric shapes to make a picture or pattern. In another lesson the children looked at a few well-chosen examples of portraits painted by well-known artists and they tried out the ideas of Paul Klee for themselves. Later, as they looked carefully in a large mirror and drew self-portraits they became aware of specific features and their relative positions. Other aspects of their creative development are addressed when the children have a music and movement lesson in the hall, or when they sing together, listen to recorded music or play percussion instruments. Although many of the children have had little opportunity for creative self-expression before they start school, the good provision in the nursery and reception classes enables the majority to achieve expected standards by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1
91. The children's overall physical development is satisfactory and as expected for children of their age. The Foundation Stage unit has a very good, secure play area with a safe surface part for the climbing equipment, a large sand pit, a garden plot, a grassy bank and a large paved area for wheeled toys and ball play. Since the previous inspection when reception children did not have access to the special play space, adaptations have been made and both reception and nursery children use it. The teachers devise imaginative activities always with an appropriate focus for specific physical and language development. During inspection week the focus was travelling up, down and along on a specially designed climbing frame challenge. For the wheeled toys there was a track marked out with arrows for turning left and right. The children made good progress in controlling their limbs, in steering accurately and in learning the associated vocabulary. The staff supervise all these activities most carefully. They adjust the level of difficulty for each child by posing questions or changing 'the rules'. At the same time they assess the children's performance so that the challenge presented is always appropriate.
92. Social and personal development are emphasised constantly in the Foundation Stage. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming, calm and purposeful. It is a hive of activity, full of interest and excitement. From the start of their time in the nursery the children are given increasing opportunities to learn to become independent. They soon learn to put on their own clothes and by the time they leave the reception class they are able to manage by themselves except for the most difficult fastenings. All the classroom equipment is set out so that the children are able to get it out and put it away for themselves. Teachers expect them to tidy up their own work. The children co-operate well both with staff and each other. They share well and help each other when necessary. All the staff set a very good example of polite, courteous behaviour to both adults and children. In the rare instances when children behave

inconsiderately teachers deal with the incident promptly. They are always gentle and kind but firm and consistent. As a result the children feel secure and confident and their social development is good.

93. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is at least good and it is often very good. Since the previous inspection differences in the standard of provision between classes have been resolved. Teaching and progress are equally good in all four classes. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the growth, development and needs of young children is very good. On entry to the nursery, children's attainments are carefully assessed. The teachers know their pupils very well and they work very hard to provide activities which meet the needs of each child. The curriculum is planned very carefully to cover all the areas and is often extended by activities that cover several aspects at once. Throughout all lessons the staff strive to emphasise vocabulary and pronunciation to help the children to learn to speak clearly and to express themselves well. They assess every activity and keep very detailed records for each child, and they use the information gained constantly to enable them to make the best possible provision. All the adults involved in the work of the Foundation Stage unit work very hard to make the rooms bright, attractive and stimulating. Money has been used wisely to buy new equipment. This has been well used to make sure that there are suitable resources for all areas of the curriculum. All the books and equipment are well used and very well cared for.
94. The children respond very well to the caring atmosphere. In areas of the curriculum that are dependent on language and communication skills, progress is good but for a significant number of the children attainment is below average. Children are assessed on entry to the reception year and this shows that by the end of the nursery year, the children have made good progress. This continues in the reception classes in all areas of the curriculum. In personal and social development, creative development, physical development and in parts of the mathematics curriculum standards of attainment are average and most of the children are on course to achieve the related Early Learning Goals by the time they transfer to Key Stage 1. The school gives children a very good start to their formal education.

## **ENGLISH**

95. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in speaking, listening, reading and writing. By seven they attain average results when compared with similar schools. This is because teachers plan work in class lessons and in the literacy hour, which is matched well to pupils' abilities and needs. By eleven, pupils have benefited from this recently implemented good provision, and the gap is closing between the school's results and the levels achieved in similar schools but standards are still well below average.
96. Although standards in the national tests improved last year in school, when compared with the national average for all schools, they were still below average for pupils aged seven and well below the average for eleven year olds. Current inspection findings indicate that by the age of seven and eleven, attainment standards are below the expected standard overall, but are continuing to improve. This reflects the clear focus the school has had on improving standards. Information gained from analysing test results, tracking pupils' progress and assessing pupils' written work, has helped to identify areas for improvement. For instance, all pupils have highly focused personal targets based on information gained from these procedures.
97. Pupils of all ability groups, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in building speaking and listening skills. However, by the time pupils are seven and eleven, their listening skills are good but speaking skills are below average. The school is alert to this and has consciously increased curricular opportunities to develop confident speaking skills. For example during daily assemblies pupils are involved by saying a prayer to the assembled group or taking part in discussions about objects of sentiment that trigger feelings of happiness. In classrooms, teachers use good questioning techniques to encourage pupils

to discuss issues across the curriculum. For instance, a Year 2 class usefully and confidently discussed their responsibilities within the class, during a personal, social and health education lesson. They built on each other's responses, all the time growing in confidence, as they knew that the teacher was valuing their contributions. Similarly in a Year 6 art lesson, pupils were skilfully encouraged to discuss their finished work on moving images. This they did, making comments on the effect of the different techniques used to create movement through background blurring. They were confident about giving their points of view, though were still learning to use a rich and wide choice of words. Careful planning of curricular opportunities and the good relationships teachers have with pupils enable them to make good progress towards developing proficient speaking skills.

98. Analyses of test results show that girls attain higher standards in reading than boys by the ages of seven and eleven. The school has been particularly proactive in addressing this. Very useful advice and guidance from the local education authority has been sought, received and used well by the school. Acting upon this guidance, a thorough audit of library and classroom books has been carried out. Many titles have been replaced with new up-to-date books especially suitable for nurturing reading skills in boys, while at the same time maintaining suitable material for girls. New titles, including both fiction and non-fiction examples, have been introduced into the vibrant and stimulating refurbished library. This adjoins the information and communication technology suite, which together are serving not only to motivate boys to read but to give them a wide selection of reading experiences. Teachers have attended courses and knowledge gained is being used profitably in lessons. For instance there is now a much greater structure in teaching letter sounds and spelling throughout the school, supported by new resources. To gain the support of parents in the reception classes a series of family meetings was held and attended by 50 per cent of parents. Additionally volunteers from the community read and listen to pupils reading. All of these initiatives are having a positive effect on boys', as well as girls', attitudes to reading, enabling them to make good progress.
99. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in reading, including those with special educational needs. However, by the end of both key stages pupils' attainment is below average. Their poorly developed phonic skills contribute significantly to this. By seven, pupils know initial sounds and most blending sounds. Unfortunately they still lack confidence in applying their knowledge to make sense of unknown words. By eleven, a significant number of pupils have underdeveloped skills in letter sounds. They are receiving very focused help with this in the school's comprehensive plan to raise standards. For instance, the deputy head teacher is working with Year 5 pupils, providing intensive and extensive experiences of essential reading skills in an earnest endeavour to advance attainment.
100. As a result of such whole-school initiatives in reading, together with the provision of well-structured literacy lessons, pupils' enthusiasm for books has increased and by the ages of seven and eleven, they are keen to explore books and read with enjoyment and growing fluency. Time is also devoted to promoting reading skills in guided reading lessons. While this is useful on the whole, there is an inclination to give too little opportunity for pupils to read to others during these sessions. The absence of a homework policy to ensure regular and consistent home reading practice across the school also detracts from otherwise very good reading provision. However, the newly introduced home/school reading diary goes some way to addressing this. Pupils throughout the school are building dictionary skills and book vocabulary well. Research skills too are increasing well through the use of the school's newly refurbished library and computer suite, particularly among older pupils. They enjoy using these facilities and talk enthusiastically about the books and programs they have found useful for their project work. Great effort is exerted in providing a worthwhile book week, which involves authors, illustrators, poets and storytellers, who interact usefully with pupils and nurture positively their love of reading.
101. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in building writing skills. However by the time they are seven and eleven, pupils' attainment in writing is below

average. The huge drive in reading has served well to increase pupils' imaginative skills in writing, but their writing lacks accuracy in sentence structure and its accompanying punctuation, in both key stages. The pupils spell with increasing accuracy due to the introduction and consistent application of the whole-school spelling policy and scheme. Teachers give very good guidance during literacy lessons about the structure of different writing forms such as poems and stories and the use of story boards, and this enables pupils to bring greater structure to their writing. Teachers mainly provide a good variety of opportunities for pupils to write factually, imaginatively and personally, in literacy sessions and additional writing lessons, set aside specifically for this purpose. However, at Key Stage 1 there is a lack of factual writing. Moreover, there are too few opportunities for pupils throughout the school to develop writing skills in other subjects. There is a general untidiness in pupils' handwriting. One of the main reasons for this is that pupils are becoming used to a new style of handwriting that involves joining letters. Among younger pupils, words are poorly spaced making the writing difficult to read.

102. The quality of teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching in both key stages. The outcomes are very positive. Pupils have consistently good attitudes towards their work and behave well. There is a keen sense of purpose and drive among all staff in promoting pupils' English skills. This is evident in lessons, when teachers and learning support assistants display an enthusiasm for the subject. It is also reflected in the thoroughness of teachers' plans, which map out highly structured, clearly focused and well-resourced lessons. Such plans are prepared by teachers of specific year groups, who plan together to ensure equality of curricular provision. Additionally, the recommendations of the previous inspection report have been addressed well and the use of assessment information to inform planning is good, so that work is matched well to pupils' needs and stages of development. This thorough preparation ensures that pupils are presented with a broad and balanced curriculum within which basic skills are taught well. In turn, the effort pupils put into their work, the different group sizes within which they work, the variety of opportunities that they experience and their consistently responsible behaviour influence well their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

103. The subject is led and managed very well. Co-ordinators and the senior management team monitor teaching and planning effectively. All teachers are involved in monitoring pupils' work. Findings gained from these processes have prompted improvement in provision of all strands of the subject. After monitoring, subsequent practice is informed by expert advice, supported by teacher training and incorporated into the school development plan. The newly structured policies for reading, writing and spelling provide good guidance and are helping the school to move forward together. The effort and drive on the part of the staff of this newly amalgamated school to raise pupils' attainment in English are remarkable and commendable.

## **MATHEMATICS**

104. The results of the most recent national tests show that the percentage of pupils in Year 2 reaching the expected level for their age is above the national average. Girls outperform boys. Standards continue to improve and they remain above the national average over the past three years. When compared to similar schools these results are better than most. An examination of pupils' current work confirms these attainment levels are being maintained.

105. The tests for eleven year olds show that the number of pupils reaching the expected level for their age in Year 6 is well below average. Girls perform slightly better than boys. A scrutiny of pupils' work confirms standards have risen sharply since these results, building on the previous year's strong upward trend. Although they still remain below national average figures the gap is narrowing rapidly.

106. There is an above average number of pupils with special educational needs in both key stages. They are taught well in smaller groups of pupils with similar ability, and with the effective support of well-trained learning assistants make good progress. Pupils from the

speech and language classes are integrated into these groups carefully. Teachers use Makaton sign language appropriately to ensure their full involvement.

107. There is a decline in standards when results for pupils aged seven are compared with those aged eleven over three years. Since amalgamation there has been a range of initiatives introduced, built around the numeracy strategy, which has arrested this decline and raised standards considerably.
108. All teachers analyse test results to identify accurately pupils' abilities, and any areas of weakness in mathematics. From this, targets for improvement for each pupil are identified, and these are monitored regularly by class teachers. Teachers found that boys needed more visual resources when learning new skills and these are now used consistently. Pupils are organised into similar ability groups for mathematics from Year 2 to Year 6 and this is very successful. The lower ability groups are smaller and contain more boys than girls. In one group of 15 for example, 14 were on the register of special educational needs, 10 of whom were boys. Two learning assistants supported the group well. Springboard 5, an excellent after-school numeracy class, also has a disproportionate amount of boys. However, all pupils of all abilities are benefiting from these changes, not just boys or pupils with special educational needs. The National Numeracy Strategy has been managed well, and all issues for development from the last reports have been completed successfully apart from the consistent use of target setting when teachers mark pupils' work and homework. However, because the amalgamation is so recent all these important initiatives, which have raised standards so rapidly already, have yet to have their full impact.
109. By the age of seven pupils have a good knowledge of number and work confidently in numbers up to 100. They are developing quick recall of table facts such as  $7 \times 5$ ,  $4 \times 10$ ,  $6 \times 4$  and use these to solve problems in plenary sessions, related to their age and experience. They measure confidently, using centimetres, and use this skill to measure shoe sizes. Pupils recognise simple fractions and common two and three-dimensional shapes. By the age of eleven pupils work with increasing confidence with number to, and beyond, 1000, multiplying and dividing by 10 accurately. Pupils in a lower attaining group know number facts such as  $7 \times 6$  or  $42 \div 7$ . They use information on temperatures from different countries to plot graphs, or draw two-dimensional shapes in the first quadrant. The new computer suite now ensures access to data handling skills. However there are very few examples of pupils using their mathematical skills in other subjects with the exception of design and technology. There is no homework policy so that pupils can consolidate their skills at home. This remains an issue from the last junior school report.
110. Teaching is good in both key stages. Teachers plan well together, most using information and communication technology to prepare high quality weekly plans. Numeracy lessons are structured well and taught at a lively pace, with very good use of questions and encouragement to involve all pupils. Work is matched appropriately to pupils' abilities. Very good use is made of the school's behaviour policy to maintain a very good learning atmosphere in all classes. All teachers have a secure knowledge of mathematics, and use mathematical terms effectively. Resources are carefully chosen to match the aims for the lessons, for example whiteboards for individual pupils, number lines, table squares and pupil tasks. Relationships are very good. All teachers are calm and unruffled by any difficult behaviour. However most opportunities to use and apply mathematics are still mainly restricted to numeracy lessons and as a result pupils' problem-solving skills are not as developed as they should be. Marking is not consistent from class to class and it consists mainly of praise. This does not include useful practices such as setting targets or levelling the pupils' work according to National Curriculum criteria that could be useful in tracking pupils' progress. In some classrooms more use could be made of display to support the learning aims for the week.
111. Pupils try hard in lessons. They work neatly in their books and take pride in their work. Pupils share resources and ideas co-operatively, and get on well with each other most of the time.

They listen carefully and are prepared to join in and answer questions. Some pupils try to misbehave from time to time, but the occasions are few, and the incidents are quite minor. Overall pupils enjoy school and the numeracy hour.

112. The co-ordinators are managing the subject well. Two teachers are leading mathematics teachers for the area. The deputy head teacher is part of a research team investigating under-achievement in boys in literacy as well as numeracy. The school benefits from the quality of the knowledge of these senior staff.

## SCIENCE

113. Teachers' assessments of Key Stage 1 pupils' knowledge and understanding of science in the spring term of 2000 showed that standards were meeting national expectations. The 2000 test results at the end of Key Stage 2 show that the proportion of pupils achieving national expectations was well below the national average. However, the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels was above the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 but well below average at the end of Key Stage 2. In comparison with similar schools the above Key Stage 2 test results were well below average. Standards in science at the time of the previous inspections of the separate infant and junior schools were very close to the present standards. However, close questioning of the present Year 6 pupils indicates that levels of knowledge and understanding are rapidly improving. Significant steps have been taken that have resulted in improvements to pupils' standards in science. For example, teaching has been focused on investigations and practical experience and this has helped pupils to develop a clearer understanding of scientific ideas.

114. The present level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is close to what is expected nationally. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of science shows that most meet the requirements for this age group. For example, they sort materials according to their properties successfully and know the difference between natural and man-made items. Pupils are able to name the major external parts of the human body and that humans reproduce and the offspring grow into adults. They carry out interesting investigations during science lessons such as finding out what happens to ice if they add salt to it or carrying out a fair test to see which type of toy vehicles travel the greatest distances. Pupils recognise when scientific tests are unfair and are beginning to understand that the conditions they impose must be the same for all aspects of the experiment. Compared with the last report on the separate infant school the level of attainment has been maintained.

115. The findings of the inspection show that most Key Stage 2 pupils have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the science National Curriculum to meet the expected level at the end of the key stage. For instance, they can explain the functions of different parts of a flowering plant and have acquired good skills in using a key successfully to classify locally found animals such as those in the school pond. They are able to separate solids and liquids and understand evaporation as a way of separating dissolved solids and water. Pupils construct electric circuits using bulbs, wires and batteries, enabling bulbs and buzzers to be activated. They have carried out investigations into the relationship between light and shadows and have learned how to make sure that investigations and experiments are conducted fairly by changing only one variable at a time. Close questioning of many of the pupils shows that they have retained knowledge learned previously and understand scientific ideas clearly. This is an improvement on the judgements of science standards as found in the previous report where they were thought to be below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the present Year 6 is very high. The rest of the pupils have sound attainments in science. To overcome the literacy problems of many of the pupils the school will be arranging for the questions in the forthcoming national test to be read to them. This will enable the pupils to demonstrate more realistically their obvious knowledge and understanding of the science curriculum

116. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages. In Key Stage 1 most lessons are designed to promote interest and excitement, and to challenge pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, pupils in the speech and language unit learn to sort materials according to their properties through the use of a game. They learned effectively because it was fun and acquired new vocabulary, such as 'fabric' and 'rough' as a result. In another very well planned Key Stage 1 lesson pupils learn through the teacher's skilfully phrased questions, leading them towards an understanding of what to do in order to make a scientific test a fair one. Providing pupils with good opportunities to discuss how to make their experiment even fairer consolidated the learning. Teachers give clear explanations to enable pupils to develop understanding of new ideas quickly. For example, pupils very rapidly understood how to use a key to classify animals from the school pond. The teachers' natural use of scientific vocabulary results in pupils, almost unconsciously, acquiring the meaning of the words and using them in their own discussions. Teachers invariably plan their lessons carefully to facilitate an efficient use of time and this results in good productivity and pace of working from the pupils. Pupils are interested in the work planned for them and concentrate well throughout the lesson. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well by class teachers who are effective in enabling pupils to make progress.
117. The two science co-ordinators work closely together and evaluate teachers' lesson plans to ensure that there is a close match between these and the commercially produced science curriculum. The co-ordinators provide comments so that improvements can be made in future planning. As yet, a scheme of work for the whole school is at an emerging stage as the school is currently amending recent national guidelines to bring it into line with its requirements. There are no planned links with other subjects in the curriculum so that new skills learned in other areas of the curriculum can be used in science lessons to consolidate learning. The head teacher will carry out the first monitoring of science lessons since the newly amalgamated school was open when science becomes a priority in the school development plan in the next school year. The co-ordinators monitor samples of pupils' work to ensure that standards meet with expectations. At the present time there has been no moderation of pupils' work so that examples of agreed levels can be used to judge the standards of other pupils so that their progress can be checked. Assessment of pupils' attainments is at an early stage of development. There are no agreed procedures or formats for recording the information but a common practice used in the school is to ask pupils to draw labelled diagrams at the start of a new scientific topic of what they already know about the particular area of science. This is repeated at the end of the series of lessons so that individual pupils' gains in knowledge can be measured.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

118. The school has continued to maintain the good standards in art identified at the time of the last inspection at Key Stage 1 and has raised them to a good level at the end of Key Stage 2. Work is good and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Displays around the school show a high level of achievement. The reasons for this are the positive influence and enthusiasm of the three appointed art co-ordinators, who have overseen the implementation of the school's new, well-structured scheme of work and who have usefully monitored planning to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are being taught.
119. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages and contributes strongly to pupils' good attitudes towards their work and to the good progress that they make. All teachers plan their work thoroughly and ensure that skills are built upon systematically by using the new written guidance. Most importantly, teachers identify clear aims for lessons, which they share with pupils so that they know what is expected of them. As a result, pupils engage in well-organised and purposeful activities and by the end of Key Stage 1 are particularly proficient in using shape, colour and texture to make colourful patterns, effective fireworks pictures, collage underwater pictures and well designed and sewn hand puppets. They continue to develop these skills well throughout Key Stage 2. In Year 5 they draw splendid containers using crayons, pastels, charcoal and watercolours. They work in textiles proficiently and

produce a very effective 'Friendship Quilt' which they fashioned by tile printing before transferring to fabric. In Year 6 pupils use the background blurring technique very effectively using a variety of media to create, skilfully, the effect of moving images. Drawing skills are not as advanced, since less emphasis was given to this aspect of the curriculum prior to the new written guidelines being implemented.

120. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, gained through a number of noteworthy skills. Most importantly, teachers are very good role models for pupils to emulate. They show by example how to treat each other and behave properly. Added to this their good discipline skills, including reinforcement of good behaviour, have the positive outcomes of pupils knowing right from wrong and behaving well. Moreover, teachers have an enthusiastic approach to the subject, which stimulates pupils to learn effectively. Some teachers do not pay sufficient attention to ensuring that all pupils are listening during times when instructions or explanations are provided and this detracts from otherwise good quality teaching. This meant that lesson pace and pupils' progress were hindered.
121. Procedures to involve the co-ordinators in raising standards through monitoring and evaluating planning are very good. The quality of the curriculum is evaluated each half term and feedback given to teachers on successful and unsuccessful areas. Although pupils' attainment and progress are assessed at the end of each unit of learning, the school has yet to establish a useful and manageable method of recording the findings for future reference, such as reporting to parents.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

122. The work seen in Key Stage 1 indicates that pupils are making good progress in the development of their skills and that standards are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils' learning in Key Stage 2 has not progressed at the rate it should, in part due to the focus on the national priorities of literacy and numeracy. As a result the standards being attained by the oldest pupils are below national expectations. There are gaps in their practical skills and their understanding of structures and mechanisms.
123. Since the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools the co-ordinators have produced a comprehensive subject policy and developed written guidelines to supplement planning. This is based on the national guidance that the co-ordinators have adapted to meet the specific needs of the school. Appropriate curriculum provision is now in place for both key stages. The scheme provides clear guidelines to enable teachers to plan and teach lessons with confidence. The strong focus on the development of skills is already having a positive effect, as can be seen in the Year 3 work on Joseph's Coat. Pupils made templates for cutting out the fabric and joined the pieces using a simple running stitch.
124. Pupils in Key Stage 1 experience a suitable range of practical tasks, materials and techniques. They use pictures and words to explain their ideas and designs and to evaluate their work. Pupils develop skills in cutting and shaping materials and use a variety of ways to assemble the different parts. Year 1 pupils used their knowledge of simple mechanism to create moving pictures of caterpillars and a Jack-in-the-box. Year 2 pupils practised their sewing skills, which they then successfully applied to sampler designs and to making hand puppets. The final products demonstrate the pupils' new skills and careful work. They are colourful and full of character. The work in Key Stage 2 shows that pupils are beginning to understand the importance of the intended uses and aesthetic qualities of a product. Year 5 evaluated a wide range of breads recording their findings in terms of appearance, texture, taste and value for money. They made good use of their mathematical skills as they entered the results onto a computer database. Year 6 is making good progress in their understanding of the design process. After drawing the initial design for a fairground ride they build a prototype. This was evaluated and the design amended. They are thinking along the right lines and are able to identify and justify appropriate elements for improvement. However, they are hindered by their



limited knowledge and experience of a range of materials, and ability to combine components precisely, in particular when utilising electrical circuits to create working models.

125. Three design and technology lessons were seen. The quality of teaching in these was satisfactory overall. Planning for pupils' learning is good and systematically builds pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. One class focused on evaluating wallets and purses. The teacher provided a good range of styles and colours. This helped to motivate the pupils and held their interest. They were keen to express their opinions and enjoyed the lesson. The teacher made good use of questions, such as "Why is this fastening not so good for a purse that holds change?" to develop pupils' thinking skills and help them to understand the importance of evaluating a product for its fitness for purpose. These pupils learned to distinguish between a purse and a wallet and could describe essential and non-essential features of the designs. In another lesson, although pupils were interested in the work on vehicles, they were restless and inattentive. The teacher did not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and time was lost. Pupils were able to carry out the task but did not understand the purpose of the activity or use the term 'axle' when explaining what they are doing.
126. The subject is well managed by the two co-ordinators who have made good progress against targets in the action plan. The newly developed guidelines provide useful support for teachers. Each unit of work ensures that all pupils are taught the skills needed to carry out the focused practical tasks and that the curriculum provides a broad and balanced range of activities, which extend their knowledge, skills and understanding. Assessment is built into the scheme of work although a formal approach has, as yet, not been agreed. The co-ordinators, however, have begun to collect samples of work from each year group to provide evidence of progression.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

127. By the age of seven standards are at the level expected for pupils of this age. However, examination of pupils' past work from Key Stage 2 together with lessons seen indicates that by the end of the key stage attainment is below national expectations. This is due to a lack of development in the pupils' skills. The school is aware of this weakness and has already started to resolve the problem. A new detailed scheme of work, which clearly identifies the geographical skills to be developed in each year group, is now in place to guide teachers' planning. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall where support and tasks are well matched to their needs.
128. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have been introduced to the concept of the United Kingdom and are becoming increasingly more aware of places beyond their own locality. Year 2 pupils are learning about life in the Mexican village of Tocuaro through looking at maps and photographs and discussing aspects of life that are familiar to them, such as housing, shopping and cooking. In the lesson seen pupils looked very closely at the pictures and were able to identify key features, both human and physical – for example, 'all the houses are bungalows'. Through their study of the imaginary Isle of Struay from the books about Katie Morag, pupils know that an island has water all around it. They have studied simple maps and drawn their own marking out the key features of Struay. Pupils are able to use their knowledge to compare Brighton and Struay identifying similarities and differences. Younger pupils have gained some elementary knowledge of travel using different methods of transport. They have benefited from their walk around the local area and have a sound knowledge of the different types of dwelling to be found there. Year 1 pupils identify the local supermarket and library as well as amenities of the town centre, such as the Marina, and the Royal Pavilion.
129. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have knowledge and understanding of compass directions and the use of keys and symbols when using atlases and maps. However, they do not use these skills as a matter of course. Year 3 pupils learn about the weather. They are developing their understanding of climate zones and can identify where hot and cold places are in the world.

They are beginning to recognise England as part of the larger world and suggest that it is neither hot nor cold because it is located 'halfway between the Arctic and hot parts of the world'. Year 6 pupils have learned about the water cycle and their written work shows that they can identify and sequence the different components such as condensation and evaporation. Their diagrams of the course of a river show that they are familiar with the direction in which it flows. They know that large rivers have tributaries, delta and mouth and are aware that physical processes such as erosion can change the landscape. Pupils' own newspaper reports on the effects of flooding are detailed and reflect facts about the event, but tend not to develop geographical interpretation. In a Year 6 lesson pupils demonstrated sound skills in using the Internet for research work. Besides the Internet they search through different sources such as books, photographs, maps and tourist information. However, they are unsure of how to use the information and do not show a clear understanding of what they have studied. In written work, although some relates to questions of a geographical nature and evaluation of evidence, there is not always enough emphasis placed on drawing conclusions.

130. Pupils respond positively to their geography lessons. They are interested in finding out about different places. Most listen carefully to the teachers and are keen to contribute and share their thoughts and knowledge. Pupils are generally well behaved and their relationships with each other are good. They co-operate well with each other when working on joint projects, for example the Year 6 independent research project about mountain ranges. Only when the task is poorly matched to pupils' age and prior learning do they lose interest and become noisy.

131. The quality of teaching and learning was satisfactory overall in the lessons seen but the quality is inconsistent. Lesson planning is good. Teachers make good use of the new scheme of work. Learning objectives for the lesson are clearly defined and shared with pupils so they know what they are to do and learn. Some significant strengths were observed in the lesson on Tocuaro and the lesson on weather conditions around the world. In these lessons the teachers were well prepared with a good range of visual aids and resources to stimulate pupils' interest and involve them directly. The pictures and maps were used to good effect to help pupils develop a sense of wonder at the world around them. Pupils were fully engaged in their learning. In all lessons teachers use and reinforce the key geographical vocabulary that pupils need to use. In two lessons pupils were unable to make significant progress in their learning as the tasks were not sufficiently well matched to their ability or prior learning. For instance, older pupils have not been taught the research skills they need to enable them to learn from the information they have discovered. In another lesson the mathematical content of weather temperature was beyond the experience of pupils in Year 3. Teachers make good provision for pupils with special educational needs through targeted support and carefully planned work to meet their needs.

132. A new co-ordinator for the subject has recently been appointed. He has very good subject knowledge and has identified well-focused targets to help raise standards of attainment and to develop the subject further. He is aware that there has been insufficient focus on the development and consolidation of pupils' geographical skills, knowledge and understanding. The new scheme of work clearly identifies the skills pupils are to develop in each unit. It is too soon to be able to judge the impact of the new scheme on standards but it is clear that skills are now being taught. Resources are adequate and well organised so that each year group has the appropriate resources to match the requirements of the different units. There are too few suitable maps and globes and this affects the development of pupils' map-reading skills. The co-ordinator is aware of this and is taking steps to address the situation. Arrangements for assessment and record keeping are in the early stages of development and there are plans to develop them further.

## **HISTORY**

133. Although only one lesson in history was seen during the inspection there was sufficient further evidence from pupils' previous work, photographs, current displays and teachers' planning to confirm history is carefully planned into the curriculum at both key stages. After interviewing

pupils at the end of both key stages it is clear that pupils at seven have made better progress than those at eleven. Levels of attainment for seven year olds are satisfactory but unsatisfactory for pupils who are eleven.

134. By the age of seven pupils develop their knowledge of the lives of people in the past by using artefacts and events to talk about previous times. For example pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 talk readily about their 'great grandfather or grandfather's time in the First World War'. Even though the work was from the previous term pupils can remember the date 1918, use terms such as 'a long time ago' and explain clearly the symbolism of the remembrance poppy. Although pupils can talk in some detail the work in their books is copied, the same for all, and brief. Everyone wrote 'In the war there were a lot of bombs. Some people wore helmets and everyone had a gas mask'.
135. Pupils at 11 study the 50's, 60's and 70's. This work had been planned and researched at school and written in their own words at home. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about their individual projects, but could not confidently explain differences, or give reasons for those differences, between then and now. The skills evident at seven have not been built on.
136. There is evidence in all pupils' written work of good organisation and presentation. In Year 4 pupils know about Tudor monarchs and details of Tudor life. For example, in one lesson pupils handled artefacts such as different candleholders and talked knowledgeably about the differences between the rich and poor. But the written work in all pupils' books was almost exactly the same. This continues in Year 5, although some higher attaining pupils do further research and write in their own words about the Ancient Greeks. However, it was not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching as only one lesson was observed.
137. The structure for the teaching of history is good. The co-ordinators are knowledgeable and they have organised a very good curriculum based on the units of history in recent national guidelines. The medium-term plans are very good, and the abilities of all pupils are planned for using the phrase 'all, most, some' to represent three different ability groups. Artefacts from previous times are used well to stimulate interest in lessons and as part of colourful and attractive displays. Visits to places nearby for younger pupils, and to Preston Park, a Victorian day, or to Newhaven Fort, for older pupils, are well chosen. Co-ordinators have just begun to assess pupils' work in order to collect samples from different ability groups in each year. All resources have been audited and matched to each history unit. There is a budget to further develop resources. Although co-ordinators monitor planning, and act as consultants to colleagues, there is no time to support or evaluate teaching during the school day.
138. History has yet to be included in the school improvement plan as literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology have been the main focus recently. Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to write down their own ideas in a variety of styles and in their own words.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

139. Standards are above what is expected for the majority of pupils at the end of both key stages. In this respect, the school has made good progress in improving levels of pupils' attainment since the last inspections of the infant and junior schools. At that time the overall level of attainment was judged to be in line with national expectations in both schools. The improvement to information and communication technology facilities is very good and the newly installed computer suite gives the pupils access to the full curriculum requirements. The higher attaining pupils generally have good skills and understanding. The mostly good teaching enables pupils to make satisfactory progress through the school, helped by their good interest and support.
140. At the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils show independence in computer skills. They load programs as well as entering and storing information. When using simple word processing

packages they are able to change the size of the font by highlighting the text and clicking on the appropriate icon. Pupils write short stories using a word processing package to create and amend their work. Most pupils can print their own work and close down the computer successfully. They enter instructions for directing a programmable toy that moves along a set path according to the directions entered. They use art programs competently to draw shapes and change the colour used on the computer screen. Mathematics programs designed to improve their familiarity and skills with number bonds are used frequently by Key Stage 1 pupils.

141. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have built successfully on the skills learned in Key Stage 1 and made good progress in maintaining their good level of attainment. They are competent at using word processing programs and continue to use information and communication technology to create and later amend items of work. Pupils frame instructions, and modify these if necessary, to draw specific and precise shapes using a control program. They use a modelling program successfully to make an alarm system or create a sensor. Pupils use a digital camera successfully and many can download the digital photographs into the computer and print them as well as being able to modify them or alter pictures on the screen. They are able to draw graphs independently using information and communication technology data handling facilities.
142. Owing to a technical fault with arrangements in the information and communication technology suite during the second to fourth day of the inspection plans for lessons had to be changed. As a consequence it was not possible to observe teaching as it would normally have been operating. The lessons observed were all satisfactory but only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1. The levels of pupils' attainments have been judged by interviewing pupils and asking them to perform a wide variety of tasks using information and communication technology. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this has a very quick impact on pupils when the teacher requires quietness and for them to listen. Good, open-ended questions were used so that pupils could frame their answers from a range of possibilities but this section of the lesson tended to last too long and pupils became bored and restless. Teachers are consistent in pointing out aspects of behaviour that are unacceptable and this has a good effect on the whole class. Pupils concentrate well and are very keen to learn new skills and consolidate their existing ones.
143. The two co-ordinators for information and communication technology work very well together. They review teachers' skills annually and ensure that all teachers feel confident about the level of their own personal skills. Co-ordinators provide regular training for the staff to upgrade their personal skills. The system for assessing pupils' achievements very sensibly involves the children themselves. All classes have skills cards for each individual pupil with a list of what might be able to be achieved under attainment target headings. Pupils regularly discuss in groups what additional skills they think they might have acquired since the previous assessment time. They then make arrangements for these to be tested by the class teacher who then records this if appropriate. Monitoring of teaching in information and communication technology is carried out by the co-ordinators and this enables the quality of teaching to be maintained and to ensure that pupils make good progress. The resources for teaching and learning are good. These include a data projector so that the whole class is able to observe demonstrations and a technician who visits the school each week to maintain and repair the hardware.

## **MUSIC**

144. One lesson was observed at Key Stage 1. The standards of work seen are in line with national expectations. At the end of Key Stage 2 standards are below that expected from pupils of a similar age. Pupils' progress has been affected by inconsistent opportunities to develop their musical skills. However, since the amalgamation of the infant school and the junior school, pupils are benefiting from specialist teaching and a new scheme of work, which strongly

focuses on the development of skills. As yet, however, pupils' achievements have not yet reached the required level at the end of Key Stage 2.

145. The Year 2 lesson pupils demonstrated a good sense of pulse. They can maintain the beat in simple clapping and tapping patterns and accompaniments to their singing and the teacher's drum rhythms. The teacher set a brisk challenging pace, but pupils' concentration was good and they rise to the challenge. They accurately performed the rhythmic pattern of a chant associated with the Chinese New Year: 'Chinese dragon dancing down the street.' They then performed the dragon dance chanting the rhyme and moving in time with the beat. The teacher introduced the rhythmic notation for some patterns that they have performed. With the teacher's support they were able to read and perform simple phrases, which included rests. During the lesson pupils became more confident in their ability to distinguish between the beat and a rhythm and to recognise when the teacher was playing a pitched phrase. The teaching was excellent. The teacher has a very good knowledge of the music curriculum and how to sequence pupils' learning in manageable steps. The development of pupils' skills and knowledge were well integrated throughout the lesson. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the musical activities. They listen attentively to the Chinese music and evaluate the music in terms of the musical elements, for example, loud and quiet, faster and slower.
146. Year 4 pupils learned how to create rhythm accompaniments by using patterns from different phrases of a song. Pupils practised the different patterns before attempting to perform on untuned percussion instruments. This enabled them to play with greater accuracy although when two groups play independent parts they found it difficult to maintain a steady pulse. All the class joined in the singing with great enthusiasm but their singing skills are underdeveloped. Evidence presented on an audiotape also supports the judgement that singing is an area of weakness in the school. The music co-ordinator has introduced a weekly whole-school singing session to raise the profile of singing. The curriculum for Year 6 is enhanced by the opportunity to work with a musician from the Hanover Band. Pupils have been introduced to the music of Vivaldi and are being helped to compose a piece of music based on the four seasons. Although their playing skills were insecure by the end of the session they performed layers of repeating patterns with greater confidence and accuracy. They also began to make suggestions as to how the parts might be organised, demonstrating a developing understanding of structure. In their class lesson the teacher focused on similar activities. Pupils evaluated 'Alpha' by Vangelis in terms of mood and the musical elements used to create the effects. They then applied this to improvisation of music that evokes 'space'. The teacher, recognising their limited skills, helped pupils to succeed by providing a suitable range of instruments and a set framework in which to operate. Pupils make good progress during lessons.
147. The quality of teaching seen was good overall. The teaching by visiting specialists was of a consistently high standard. Clear aims for the lessons are supported by a well-planned sequence of activities. The lessons provide balanced coverage of the key musical skills. Assessment is well used in lessons to ensure that pupils make good progress in their learning, although whole-school assessment procedures are not yet established. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by class teachers and learning support assistants and have full access to all the activities.
148. The new co-ordinator works well with the music specialist. Good use is made of the new scheme of work, which is based on the national guidelines for the subject. The very good range of classroom instruments is well used in all lessons. Opportunities to experience the music from different parts of the world and to take part in musical performances both in school and in the local community make a significant contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. Members of the music club have sung in the carol concert at the Brighton Dome and Year 2 pupils in a music workshop with other local schools. A number of pupils learn the violin. Lessons are provided by the local authority music service and these enable pupils to make good progress.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

149. Owing to the arrangement of the school timetable it was not possible to observe either games or gymnastic lessons in Key Stage 1 and athletics, dance and swimming in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainments at the end of Key Stage 1 are above national expectations in dance and at the end of Key Stage 2 their attainments also meet national expectations in games and gymnastics. As far as it is possible to judge, in view of the small number of lessons observed in Key Stage 1, pupils' attainments have improved since the previous inspection of the infant school. Overall levels of attainment have been maintained at the end of Key Stage 2 since the last inspection of the junior school.
150. By the age of seven pupils develop expression, rhythm and movement in dance through improvisation. They use their bodies and faces to express their feelings satisfactorily and to improve their performance of items such as the 'Snowman Dance'. Pupils move around the hall effectively following a pulse provided by the class teacher beating a tambour. They work in pairs to improve their work successfully by discussing, evaluating and suggesting ideas to each other. Their overall progress is good.
151. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils use bounces and chest throws as a means of passing a ball from one to another. They have a satisfactory idea of using space during competitive games but do not always move quickly into a space in order to receive a pass from another. They catch, throw and bowl balls accurately. For example, Year 5 pupils are able to bowl a ball underarm to hit a given target satisfactorily. Their hand-eye co-ordination is sufficiently well developed to be able to strike a ball with a bat successfully. Being encouraged to evaluate their own performance continuously, and to think about ways of improving, enhances their progress. As part of the pupils' work in gymnastics they are given good opportunities to develop trust and confidence in each other when working in pairs or as part of a group. They do this well by trusting a partner to lead them, for example, along a gymnastics bench and under a vaulting stool whilst they are blindfolded.
152. The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stage 2. The teaching in Key Stage 1 uses good strategies to enhance pupils' progress. Teachers share the aims of the lesson with the pupils and this provides a clear focus for what they are intended to learn. They give very clear instructions so that pupils know exactly what is required and the teachers' enthusiasm is passed to the pupils who are keen to extend their ideas and skills during dance improvisations. An encouragement to discuss and share evaluations of the standards of their performance provides pupils with a reasonably clear idea of their own learning and progress. This leads to a more rapid acquisition of skills through hard work and keenness. The sound teaching in Key Stage 2 enables pupils to make sound progress in their learning. The pace of lessons is often slow and too much time is spent on discussion and listening rather than maximising the time spent on physical activity and the acquisition of skills. Sometimes pupils are not provided with opportunities to even become breathless during the lesson. However, lessons are planned well and pupils are given very clear teaching on the safety aspects of physical education lessons. Good use is made of plenary sessions in the lessons to give pupils good opportunities for self-assessment of how they had progressed during lessons. This clearly focuses pupils' thoughts on making their best efforts during the lesson in order to make progress. Teachers give good demonstrations to provide pupils with a good idea of what is required. For example, one teacher gave a very effective demonstration of a tuck jump for pupils and this improved their performance when they came to attempt it themselves.
153. The school's provision for physical education has improved since the previous inspection, especially in Key Stage 1. The previous inspection of the infant school cited a lack of progression in pupils' physical skills, owing to the lack of a scheme of work for teachers to use as a guide for planning. This is not a problem now; the present scheme has example lesson plans together with suggested assessment opportunities for each element of the physical education curriculum.

154. The two co-ordinators work closely together to ensure that physical education is provided for the pupils in a satisfactory manner. All of the members of staff have received training in sports teaching and the resources for pupils' learning are sufficient in quality and quantity for them to make progress in acquiring and improving their skills. Pupils from the speech and language units are integrated into physical education lessons very successfully and this provides them with good opportunities for them to develop their learning. All elements of the physical education curriculum are covered well by the school. There is a swimming pool on site for Key Stage 1 pupils to receive tuition in swimming and Key Stage 2 pupils in Years 3 and 4 are transported to a council-run pool each week. Year 6 pupils have good opportunities to participate in orienteering and map-reading activities in the school grounds. Pupils have the chance to take part in competitive football games involving pupils from other schools. There is clearly an equal opportunity for girls as well as boys to participate in these games; girls regularly take part in such matches.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

155. Standards of attainment are satisfactory at both key stages as was reported in the previous inspection. A lot of the work is expressed through art or role-play. There was a good example of this during the inspection when a Year 2 class acted out a variety of ideas about the causes of anger and its likely effect on others. Some children, especially in Key Stage 1, find it difficult to express their ideas on paper. In all age groups written work is often let down by poorly constructed sentences, poor spelling and indifferent presentation. In many classes teachers' expectations are too low in this respect.

156. By Year 6 pupils understand how Christians put their beliefs into practice. They recognise the need to care for others less fortunate than themselves and the Christian concept of 'love thy neighbour'. They know and understand the principles underlying various Jewish ceremonies such as Barmitzvah to mark the transition from childhood to adulthood. They know a number of the creation stories from a range of religions. For example, they have a sound understanding of the Hindu and Islamic creation stories.

157. Since the schools were amalgamated a completely new policy has been written. The new scheme of work is good. It is based on the locally agreed syllabus supplemented by recommended guidance and materials. The approach is modular. Some of the modules have been specially written by the co-ordinator to meet specific needs in the school. The new scheme of work came into use at the beginning of the academic year. Its impact on the progress of the pupils is just beginning to be evident. The co-ordinator has a structured plan to evaluate its success more formally later in the year. Assessment of the pupils' work is also at an early stage of development. There is no whole-school scheme for recording progress. Teachers keep their own notes and report achievement at the end of each year.

158. The quality of teaching is variable but sound overall. All the teaching observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory and in some classes it was very good or excellent. The pupils are interested in the lessons and they concentrate well. Some of the teachers have limited knowledge and understanding of the subject but all are beginning to realise its value and are committed to developing their expertise. In the best lessons the same learning objectives are approached in a variety of ways or the attention of the pupils is drawn because the lesson content is closely linked to their own experience. This was particularly the case in a lesson about precious things. The class teacher gave a personal example of how and why simple objects can become meaningful symbols and gave the pupils opportunities to explain their own precious possessions. This led to a much clearer understanding of the origin and importance of religious artefacts and enabled the pupils to begin to develop a respect for the beliefs and feelings of other people. Where lessons are less successful pupils may be confused because too many ideas are included at once or the most important points are not properly emphasised. Sometimes pupils are unable to grasp abstract concepts and need more first hand experience.

159. The school is at an early stage of arranging outside visits but has enlisted the help of a local church. The older pupils have benefited from visiting it and from video films that have provided reminders and points of difference for discussion. Resources in school are satisfactory. In some areas of the curriculum they are good but in others there is only a limited number of visual aids which are not always big enough for whole-class use.
160. Personal, social and health education is closely linked with religious education although it has a separate policy and scheme of work and has separate lessons on the timetable. Provision is good. Curriculum plans cover a good range of topics including personal responsibility, citizenship and the moral aspects of sex and drugs education. It was only possible to see a little direct teaching during the inspection but evidence from planning and from scrutinising the pupils' work indicates that the programme of study is satisfactory and has a positive impact on the personal development of the pupils.