

INSPECTION REPORT

MOULSECOOMB PRIMARY SCHOOL

Brighton

LEA area: Brighton and Hove

Unique reference number: 132028

Headteacher: Mr Charles Davies

Reporting inspector: Mrs Helen Ranger
OFSTED No: 22223

Dates of inspection: 26 February – 1 March 2001

Inspection number: 230823
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior with nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Highway
Lewes Road
Moulsecoomb
Brighton
East Sussex
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Postcode:

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Anne Meadows

Date of previous inspection: Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Helen Ranger Ofsted number: 22223	Registered inspector	History Music Equal opportunities	How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Lee Kuraishi 11450	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Yvonne Bacchetta 31801	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Information and communication technology	
Jill Bavin 16038	Team inspector	Under fives and the Foundation Stage Physical education	
Mohindar Galowalia 20832	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Robert Isaac 23080	Team inspector	English Religious education Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Moulsecoomb Primary School opened as a new school in 1999 when the former infant and junior schools were amalgamated. It is a large community school with 383 full-time pupils aged between 4 and 11 years. A further 81 children in the nursery and reception classes attend part-time. The school is situated in the Moulsecoomb area of Brighton in a recently designated Education Action Zone. It is part of the East Brighton 'New Deals for the Community' scheme. Almost all the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage, but about 3 per cent of the full-time pupils come from various ethnic minority groups and, of these, 5 have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (58 per cent) is very high in national terms. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (81 per cent in the main school) is extremely high. When children enter the nursery, their attainment varies greatly but is, overall, very low.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Moulsecoomb Primary is an improving school working in challenging social circumstances. Since its amalgamation 18 months ago, it has provided an increasingly good quality of education for its pupils. Most pupils make at least sound progress in their learning, although the standards achieved in national tests remain much lower than national averages. The good teaching reflects recent improvements in teachers' skills and supports pupils' progress well. The headteacher provides energetic and caring leadership. With his vision and his high expectations for the school, he has led the staff and governors to take action to raise standards in all aspects of the school's life. The school uses all available resources to the full and gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Provides a caring, stable environment for its pupils and has high expectations of what they can achieve in their work and personal development.
- Gives good teaching in many lessons.
- Has very good ways of supporting pupils' social and moral development.
- Offers high quality arrangements for the many pupils with special needs.
- Has a well-respected headteacher who has secured rapid improvements.
- Gives a good start to the education of children in the nursery and reception classes.
- Achieves standards that are above those usually seen in information and communication technology in both key stages.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science.
- The behaviour of a minority of pupils who disrupt their own learning and that of others.
- Attendance levels, which are currently well below the national average.
- The extent to which parents are involved with the school in supporting their children's learning.
- The role played by subject leaders in raising standards.
- The levels of external support accessible for pupils with special educational needs.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan. As a new school, the inspection team did not judge it in relation to the reports that were written previously on the separate infant and junior schools.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	n/a	n/a	E*	E
mathematics	n/a	n/a	E*	E
science	n/a	n/a	E	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The school's results in 2000 showed that the performance of its oldest pupils in English and mathematics was within the lowest 5 per cent nationally. The school did not have any targets set by the local authority for its performance in its first year. The group of pupils taking these tests included a very high proportion who had special educational needs. The school has set targets for itself for future years. These are very challenging and, if achieved, would bring the standards close to the current national average.

Inspection findings are that pupils' achievements are at least satisfactory in relation to their very low attainment on entry to the nursery and in the context of a school that has exceptionally high levels of special learning needs. In the Foundation Stage (the nursery and reception classes), the oldest children in the reception classes do very well to meet the nationally expected standards in their physical development. Their attainment is well below average in personal and social development, language, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development. At the age of seven, pupils' attainment in English is very low, in mathematics it is below average and in science it is well below average. The standards attained by 11-year-olds are well below average in English and mathematics and below average in science. Standards in information and communication technology are above the expected levels in both key stages. Pupils attain the expected standards in art, design and technology, history and music, but below expected levels in geography, religious education and physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy attending school and are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory behaviour from most pupils in the classroom and playground, but a minority behaves poorly and disturbs others.
Personal development and relationships	Most pupils relate well to each other and to adults. A minority shows too little care and respect for themselves and others.
Attendance	Well below national averages.

The school is, overall, a friendly and orderly community, but a minority of its pupils show unacceptable behaviour and attitudes to others which disrupt the learning of the majority.

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.

In the lessons seen during the inspection, most aspects of teaching and learning were good. Additional evidence was gained from looking at the pupils' previous work and from talking to them and to their teachers about what they had done in the recent past. The teaching in 94 per cent of lessons was at least satisfactory; 40 per cent of lessons were good, 9 per cent very good and 1 per cent excellent. Five unsatisfactory lessons were seen. These lessons were weak mainly because teachers were unable to control pupils' behaviour and failed to hold their attention.

The key skills of English and mathematics are taught effectively in all age groups and show evidence of recent improvements. However, pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy have not been developed well enough to support their learning in all subjects. Teachers in all age groups plan interesting activities and most pupils are keen to take part. Pupils are provided with suitable work to match their capabilities in most lessons. Teachers' explanations and questioning of pupils are good and help to make the work understandable. Teachers give good feedback to pupils about how they have done in lessons, but standards in marking vary considerably. The work given to pupils to do at home and the involvement of parents with homework do not yet support pupils' learning enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The statutory curriculum is in place and there is a good range of additional activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision by the school for the majority who have special learning and behavioural needs. A significant minority of these pupils do not easily gain access to the support they need from outside agencies.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory provision on an individual basis for the small number who are learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The provision for pupils' social development is very good and it is good for their moral development. Satisfactory consideration of pupils' spiritual and cultural development, but too little promotion of Britain as a diverse multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Levels of care are high and a secure, welcoming environment is created for pupils. The information available about pupils is increasingly used to raise standards in the school.

The school provides a rich variety of interesting and stimulating experiences for its pupils. It does not yet encourage better attendance sufficiently. Parents are generally supportive of the school, but many do not work closely enough with the teachers to help their children's education and overall development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. The senior managers have created an increasingly effective team. Many subject leaders do not yet play their full part in monitoring the work of the school and in raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors support the school well. Most are active and well informed. They question sensibly what the school does.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school increasingly collects information on how well its pupils are doing. The written development plans successfully communicate detailed initiatives for the short-term and a longer-term strategic vision.
The strategic use of resources	Available funds are directed very well to areas of priority and their use is controlled and monitored well.

The school retained several able and committed governors on amalgamation who work very effectively and support the school well. The newer governors are being trained to play a fuller part in managing the school. The school seeks 'best value' well in its spending decisions by questioning what it does and ensuring that money is spent wisely. Levels of staffing, accommodation and practical learning resources are good.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The proportion of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire was very low at 9 per cent (39 responses). Only eight parents attended the meeting with inspectors.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The teaching in the school is good. • Their children enjoy school. • The school is led and managed well. • The school expects children to do their best. • The school works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The levels and quality of homework. • The behaviour of a minority of pupils. • The amount of information available about their children and how they can contact the teachers. • Incidents of bullying and how they are dealt with.

Most parents expressed positive views about the school and the inspection team broadly agrees with these. The team shares parents' concerns about the poor behaviour and attitudes shown by a minority of pupils and about the quality of homework. However, inspectors feel that the school has good procedures in place to deal with any unacceptable behaviour or bullying.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the national tests for its oldest pupils in 2000, the school's results showed performance in relation to national averages that was:
 - very low in English and mathematics (among the lowest 5 per cent of schools); and
 - well below average in science.
2. When pupils' results are compared with those in schools with similar intakes, they were:
 - well below average in English and mathematics; and
 - below average in science.
3. This group had an extremely high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and this limited their attainment in the tests.
4. This is a newly amalgamated school and there is no information yet available to show how it compares with other schools over time. The school did not have targets set for it by the local education authority in 2000 and is unlikely to meet those set for the coming year. However, it has now started to establish its own targets based on the assessment of pupils' current achievements and has set targets for 2002 that are very challenging. These are realistically rooted in information about the pupils involved and, if achieved, would bring the school close to current national averages.
5. Inspection findings for the current Year 6 group show them attaining well below average standards in English and mathematics and below average in science. While these standards are relatively low, they represent a continuing improvement and indicate the success of recent initiatives in these three 'core' subjects. Pupils have low standards in literacy and numeracy and these have an impact on their attainment across the entire curriculum. This is especially the case in subjects such as geography and religious education that require competence in reading and writing. Pupils find it difficult to read efficiently or to express their ideas in writing and they do not easily apply their mathematical knowledge to practical situations. However, in relation to their very low levels of attainment on admission to the school, pupils achievements are sound in all three subjects. This includes the very high proportion who have special educational needs and the small number whose first language is not English.
6. In Key Stage 1 in 2000, pupils' performance was:
 - very low in reading and writing; and
 - well below average in mathematics.
7. When compared with similar schools, performance was:
 - well below average in reading, writing and mathematics.
8. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment in science were very low. The group of pupils tested in 2000 contained a very large proportion who had special behavioural and learning needs. This was confirmed by inspection observations of the same pupils who are now in Year 3. Inspection findings are that attainment in Year 2 remains currently

very low in English and is well below average in science. In mathematics, while there are indications of recent improvements, attainment is below average. Again at this key stage, pupils' low standards in literacy and numeracy limit their attainment across the wider curriculum. This is a significant factor in their work in science where written recording is poor. In spite of these low overall standards, pupils' achievements have been at least sound over time in relation to their very low starting points on admission.

9. In English, pupils' listening skills improve as they get older, but they find difficulty expressing themselves in speech and the oldest rarely use the conventions of Standard English. Standards in reading show a steady improvement, but the oldest pupils do not tackle the expected range of texts satisfactorily for their age and their research skills are very limited. Writing standards are built on steadily in both key stages, but too few of the oldest pupils use a clear joined script and the structure and length of their written work are well below expected levels. It is acknowledged that the school has correctly identified the weaknesses in pupils' writing and is taking urgent action to improve standards.
10. In mathematics, pupils understand simple calculations, but very few are working with large numbers efficiently. In Year 6, pupils have poor mental recall and calculate slowly. They have a weak understanding of aspects of mathematics such as shape, space, measure and data handling. In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 5 are often working at a similar level to, or higher, than pupils in Year 6. This is an indication of the high levels of special needs among the oldest pupils. In science in Key Stage 1, pupils show low levels of skill and factual knowledge, often because they do not have the skills in English to learn or to express themselves. In Key Stage 2, pupils build well on their previous learning, but, by Year 6, do not achieve the expected levels of factual knowledge or scientific understanding in any of the main aspects of the science curriculum.
11. In information and communication technology, pupils have made recent rapid progress since the opening of the computer suite and they attain above nationally expected levels by the end of both key stages. They show an impressive breadth of knowledge and speed of working. Among the oldest pupils, attainment is well above what is expected in their ability to prepare multimedia presentations. At the end of both key stages, pupils attain the nationally expected levels in art, design and technology, history and music. In these subjects, pupils achieve at least satisfactorily, and often well, in relation to their starting points. They respond well to the more practical elements of these subjects where they do not always need to rely on their literacy and numeracy skills to achieve well. Their achievements are sound in geography and religious education, but the standards attained are below those expected, usually because pupils are limited by their levels of literacy. Attainment in physical education is below average by the end of Key Stage 1 and well below average by Year 6. Pupils enter the school with poor physical skills and hand-eye co-ordination. They make at least sound progress, but their level of skill remains low. This weakness was rapidly recognised by the headteacher when he joined the school and he has put in place a series of appropriate initiatives to improve standards in physical education.
12. When children enter the nursery at the age of three, their levels of attainment vary considerably. Overall, they are very low especially in the key areas of their personal and social development and their language skills. The assessments carried out on admission to the nursery and by the findings of the speech and language specialist appointed by the Education Action Zone confirm these very low levels. Many of these young children need (and get) good teaching for them to make even satisfactory progress. Skilled teaching in the nursery and reception classes enables children to make at least this satisfactory progress in all areas of their learning. The good teaching often promotes good progress in their personal, social and emotional development, in aspects of their language and communication skills and in their creative development. In spite of achieving well in these

areas, children's attainment by the age of five is well below average in their personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development. Children reach the expected standard in physical development. They achieve particularly well in this last area where they are less impeded by their low levels of attainment in language.

13. In the lessons seen, there was no significant variation between the rates of progress made by boys compared with girls, although the upper groups in mathematics in Key Stage 2 contain more girls than boys. The majority of the pupils in all year groups are identified as having special learning needs. This represents an extremely high figure compared with schools nationally. These pupils make satisfactory progress whether taught in mainstream classes or in withdrawal groups. The progress of some is not better than this because, although their needs are identified by the school and the local education psychology service, their entitlement to extra provision is too often delayed by factors outside the school's control as the local authority and external agencies become involved. Also, pupils' parents sometimes do not arrange for a necessary medical diagnosis to be made in cases where the school suspects that a complex behaviour disorder may need attention. The school has a low number of pupils with statements of special need considering the very high levels of learning difficulty.
14. Overall, the progress of pupils who have English as an additional language is satisfactory and enables them to have access to the same curriculum as their classmates. Class teachers and classroom assistants offer good support in helping them learn basic vocabulary and language structures. The school currently does not have any pupils whom it identifies as especially gifted or talented, but plans to ensure in future that the needs of any such individuals are assessed and met.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

15. In the Foundation Stage, children are very keen to come to school and they show enthusiasm for all the activities they are involved in. Their attitudes to school are very good. They concentrate well and show confidence when attempting new activities. Children work well, either as a member of a group or individually. They respond well to their teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants.
16. The vast majority of pupils are enthusiastic about their school. Many name their favourite subjects and were seen to enjoy working on the computer or making pancakes. They name their favourite extra-curricular activities and give good reasons for their choice. The youngest children have no difficulty in coming into the school and leaving their parents and carers. Parents answering the inspection questionnaire strongly endorse the views that pupils in all age groups enjoy school and are happy in it.
17. Pupils' attitudes to their work are mainly satisfactory. They concentrate well and listen to teachers and each other. Pupils particularly enjoy practical and investigational activities and most teachers provide well for these. On the few occasions when the tasks set by the teachers provide insufficient challenge, their concentration wavers and their efforts slacken. This particularly affects pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties and a significant minority in Years 3 and 6. Overall these findings closely reflect the opinions of those parents who responded to the questionnaires. They indicated that the behaviour of some of the older children is particularly challenging and this adversely affects pupils' learning at times.
18. The school tries hard and successfully to foster enthusiasm among older pupils through a good range of activities organised outside lesson times, such as its out of hours clubs and

the visits to cultural events and residential activity centres. Older pupils have the opportunities to join the wide range of clubs that meet regularly. Younger children from Year 2 enjoy a fitness club.

19. The behaviour of most pupils in class is satisfactory. There are clear school rules, which pupils understand, know and follow well. Pupils appreciate the recognition given to good effort or behaviour during the lessons. Interviews with pupils show that they know the rules for good behaviour and what to do if they are bullied. They are confident that the teachers and the headteacher would deal with any incidents effectively. Pupils play well together at playtime and lunchtime. They generally move around the school in an orderly manner and respond well to the effective supervision. However, some older pupils exhibit poor behaviour while entering or leaving the building during the playtime. A small, but significant number of lessons are disturbed by the unacceptable behaviour of a minority of pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school's recent strategies for dealing with such disruption in the lessons are proving effective overall, but this is a continuing issue which has a negative impact on the progress made by pupils in the school. In the first year of the new school, there were 17 short-term exclusions of pupils for reasons of poor behaviour. This is a very high number for a primary school, but reflects the school's determination to deal with such behaviour. Since then, the exclusion rate has declined and the oldest pupils are quite clear that the school expects high standards of behaviour.
20. Overall, the personal development of most pupils is satisfactory. The expectation that children will act responsibly is effectively promoted from the early days of the Foundation Stage as children begin to understand that they must do things for themselves, such as cleaning up at the end of the session. Throughout the school, pupils readily assume responsibility as register monitors and older pupils act as 'buddies' to younger children in the reception classes. There are, however, a significant number of very challenging pupils in the school who act and speak in an unacceptable manner. Several parents expressed concern that there is lack of tolerance and respect for those who are different from the majority. However, the majority of parents who commented considered that such behaviour originates from problems or incidents beyond the school environment. The school is working very hard to eliminate oppressive and racist behaviour. As result, pupils are beginning to understand that all people are not the same and that the differences should be celebrated and not used as a reason to ridicule. The school has introduced anti-bullying awareness through its curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 6 were able to demonstrate more consideration and awareness of others through participating in a lesson about feelings. A large majority of the parents who returned questionnaires are happy that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
21. Relationships are generally satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils like and respect their teachers. They respond well to good teaching and are anxious to succeed and make progress. In group work, pupils co-operate well and discuss issues sensibly. They handle and share materials and equipment with care and respect. Pupils show initiative in managing their own learning, for example in using equipment in the school's information and communication technology suite. A good example was seen during a geography lesson in Year 5 when pupils supported each other well, worked collaboratively and handled maps and other resources sensibly.
22. Pupils of different ethnic heritage, age groups, gender or abilities form satisfactory relationships with each other and with adults. Pupils talk freely about incidents of bullying and racism in the community and both teachers and pupils agree that the school works hard to control oppressive behaviour. Pupils are sufficiently motivated through rewards and sanctions (such the 'Golden Time' system where they earn their free choice of

activity) and learn to enjoy their own and others' successes. Many children enter the school with poorly developed values and staff work hard to teach all pupils to take responsibility, to develop self-confidence and to care for their environment.

23. The school works closely to improve pupils' attendance with the Education Welfare Officer who visits regularly. There are indications that attendance rates are rising, but, overall, the figures remain well below the national average. Pupils are often absent through illness and there is a relatively high level of casual absenteeism. The school has a strict and appropriate policy for authorising absence. Its rates of unauthorised absences are much higher than the national average and are monitored rigorously. Attendance registers are completed twice daily and meet statutory requirements. Some pupils arrive late for school, but most of the lessons start promptly. The school has recently started a breakfast club, which is having a positive effect on punctuality among some of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 who used to be casual attendees.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

24. The quality of teaching is good in all age groups. Many of the pupils in the school, particularly the very large proportion with significant special educational needs, need skilful teaching to enable them to make satisfactory progress in relation to their low starting points on admission. They receive this at Moulsecoomb. As a result, their learning in both key stages is satisfactory. Learning is often good in the Foundation Stage where the children make rapid gains in their personal, social and emotional development and in aspects of language development in their early years in school.
25. In the 82 lessons seen during the inspection, most aspects of teaching were good and indicated improvements over the life of the new school. Additional evidence was gained from looking at pupils' previous work and from talking to them and their teachers about what they have done in the past. Forty-four per cent of the lessons seen were judged satisfactory; a further 40 per cent were good, 9 per cent very good and 1 per cent excellent. The 6 per cent of unsatisfactory lessons seen represents five lessons. These were taught in both key stages, but most were in the lower end of Key Stage 2. Apart from the unsatisfactory lessons, there was no significant variation between the teaching seen in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
26. The quality of teaching in the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage and the subjects of the National Curriculum based on the lessons seen and other supporting evidence is as follows:

AREA OF LEARNING	QUALITY OF TEACHING
Personal, social and emotional development	Good
Communication, language and literacy	Good
Mathematical development	Good
Knowledge and understanding of the world	Satisfactory
Creative development	Good
Physical development	Good

National Curriculum subject	Quality of teaching Key Stage 1	Quality of teaching Key Stage 2
English	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory
Science	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Art and design	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Design and technology	Good	Good

Geography	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
History	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information and communication technology	Good	Good
Music	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Physical education	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Religious education	Good	Good

27. The school gives a high priority to teaching the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are implemented in the school. The National Literacy Strategy in particular is being modified well to suit pupils' needs, but would benefit from further attention to developing pupils' oral skills through drama. The timing of literacy and numeracy hour sessions is satisfactory, but sometimes teachers spend too long on the introductions and do not leave enough time for individual or group work or to conduct a thorough summary session. This means that pupils may not have enough time to practise their skills of writing and recording, which are weak across the school. Teachers have transferred the 'beginning-middle-end' format from these lessons to other subjects to good effect. A strength of the school is its teaching in information and communication technology. Teachers make good use of the extensive resources provided in the new computer room. They increasingly develop pupils' computer skills through the wider curriculum, although the failure to take opportunities to do this was a weakness in several of the lessons.
28. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is consistently good. Given the high and diverse levels of their needs, teaching needs to be good for pupils to make even satisfactory progress. Class teachers are aware of their pupils' needs and work in close conjunction with the special educational needs co-ordinators and support staff to meet these. Teachers deploy learning support assistants effectively. These assistants give good support both to individuals and small groups.
29. Teaching and learning for pupils who are learning English as an additional language are satisfactory. Teachers in the school are aware of the needs of these pupils and involve them in discussions or put them in groups which provide satisfactory models of language. This enables them to build steadily on their language skills. While in most classrooms pupils deal with each other in a friendly manner, there are times when the pupils are subjected to unacceptable language or racist remarks. The school takes such incidents seriously, but is not yet at a stage where these are monitored and dealt with well enough.
30. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of subjects and of how children learn is secure in most respects and is good in the Foundation Stage. A few teachers lack confidence in aspects of music, physical education or science. Very good use is made of specialist staff in music tuition and language development and of visiting specialists such as those leading the weekend art sessions.
31. Teachers' lesson planning is good overall. Teachers have clear objectives for their work and share these profitably with the pupils. They frequently refer to the objectives in the course of the lesson and use them at the end to discuss how successful the lesson has been in promoting pupils' learning. The lessons planned are interesting and serve to motivate pupils to succeed. Most cater for the wide range of attainments by planning activities that are matched to pupils' capabilities. 'Setting' pupils into attainment groups in English and mathematics in Years 4 to 6 helps pupils achieve well. Teachers increasingly review the lessons they plan to ensure that they are suitable for the current stage in their pupils' development. They do this in relation to the units of work adopted from recent national guidance on the National Curriculum. However, this review is, understandably, at an early stage and not all the chosen units are yet tailored well to

pupils' needs. The school does not yet have a clear policy for identifying and supporting the needs of pupils who may be especially gifted or talented in any subject. Within the year teams, teachers plan closely together and this ensures a consistency in pupils' experiences. However, a few lessons taken by temporary or supply teachers were weaker because these staff were inadequately briefed.

32. Teachers have increasingly high but realistic expectations of their pupils and communicate these in their lessons successfully. Most convey high expectations of behaviour and establish an orderly, purposeful atmosphere that enables pupils to use their time efficiently. However, their expectations of how their pupils will move around the school and into the playground are not high enough. Good relationships generally prevail between adults and children and support a pleasant climate for learning. In the Foundation Stage, the warm, supportive atmosphere is a key feature in lessons where the teaching is good. Pupils' social skills are promoted well in all age groups by planned opportunities for paired, group and collaborative learning. As a result, many pupils are developing confidence and a respect for others. However, the most significant factor in the unsatisfactory lessons was the teachers' failure to control pupils' behaviour sufficiently. This led to unsettled lessons where several pupils showed challenging or disruptive behaviour. The rest of the class lost valuable learning time as a result. A significant number of pupils are unsettled or distressed by such incidents.
33. Teachers' methods are good. They give clear explanations of activities and engage pupils' attention. They use question and answer sessions well in many lessons. This helps to develop pupils' skills in listening and speaking, encourages them to consider and share their ideas and often enables them to extend their answers to questions. The use of time, support staff and practical learning resources is generally good. Most lessons move at a pace that is appropriate for pupils' learning, often giving them valuable time to think about their ideas. Ancillary staff are used well to support the learning of all pupils and are well briefed by teachers. Lessons are resourced well with a wide range of equipment, books, software and artefacts to bring learning to life.
34. Teachers assess pupils' learning well during lessons by their questions and examination of the work completed. They increasingly use the information gained to modify their subsequent lesson plans as necessary. Particularly good practice was noted in Year 2. However, the quality of marking is variable across the school. In the best cases, teachers give readable, useful feedback and advice, but, too often, the marking is cursory or expressed in complex language which pupils cannot read or understand. The quality of homework also varies from class to class, but does not, overall, support pupils' learning well enough. This is partly because the tasks set lack imagination or do not link to other learning and partly because parents do not yet contribute to ensuring that homework is effective.

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

35. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements, including those for daily collective worship. At the moment, provision for sex education does not meet legal requirements because the governing body has yet to agree its policy. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is planned well to cover all the recommended areas of learning in proportions that are appropriate to the children's needs. All subjects of the National Curriculum, the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and personal, social and health education receive teaching time which is planned to be broadly similar to the national picture. However, the time allocation given to several subjects would benefit from being reviewed. The lessons seen in religious education and personal and social education were often too short and broken into more than one short

session. This did not support pupils' learning and contributed to the weaknesses in attainment. Drama is currently under-represented in the English curriculum. Geography is taught in blocks of time and, for example, in Year 6, pupils can go for several months with no practice of their knowledge or extension of their skills. This is a factor in the lower than expected levels achieved by the end of Key Stage 2.

36. Although a formal policy and provision for sex education are not in place, steps have been taken to remedy this situation for the summer term. In the meantime, Year 6 pupils are taught sex education as defined in the pre-merger policy document and this is satisfactory for this stage in the new school's development. Provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory and includes a programme of drugs awareness. There is equality of access and opportunity for all the pupils in the school. The school's strategies for teaching literacy skills are good. The strategies for teaching numeracy skills are satisfactory. The successful implementation of the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy has had more of a noticeable impact on pupils' performance in Key Stage 1 and in the first two years of Key Stage 2 than at the upper end of Key Stage 2. This is because standards of pupils in Year 6 at the beginning of the school year were very low and there was more ground to be covered.
37. The school has not yet developed formal subject policies. At present it has very brief guideline statements to allow time to consider issues either arising from the amalgamation or from the recent introduction of the nationally recommended units of work in all subjects. While the introduction of these schemes of work has met the need for providing a consistent curriculum across the school, their modification to match the specific needs of the pupils in the school has yet to be considered. Recently appointed co-ordinators have not received training so that they can monitor teaching and support colleagues who might need help in certain aspects of the subjects. Long term plans for subjects and teachers' collaborative weekly planning in the year group teams are satisfactory. Medium-term plans are waiting to be developed following a review in the summer term.
38. Provision of the curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. Their individual education plans are constructed well, providing achievable targets for each pupil. The support given by classroom assistants is highly effective in making the curriculum accessible to these pupils. The school adopts a flexible but effective system of support within class, in small groups on a withdrawal basis, or one-to-one, according to the level of individual or group need in a class. Pupils with special educational needs study the full range of National Curriculum subjects and the work is matched carefully to meet their individual needs and abilities. Teachers include them fully in school life and the high levels of support ensure that these pupils have access to the whole of the school's curriculum. In language sessions, pupils are given many opportunities to write for a range of purposes. Teachers introduce ideas in the literacy sessions in a practical and visual way and this greatly enhances learning for this group. Provision for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is satisfactory and enables this group to work fully alongside their classmates.
39. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good. There is a wide range of well attended activities such as breakfast club, happy club, football, netball, dance and samba clubs. Residential trips are organised in Year 2 and Year 6 to extend pupils' experience of the wider world.
40. The school has good links with its partner institutions, for example, the local secondary school. Personnel from the social services, police, neighbourhood trust, Moulsecoomb library and local businesses visit the school on a regular basis. For example, a telecommunications company and a community scheme provide several voluntary

helpers to support pupils' reading. The Education Action Zone provides funding which enables the zone's headteachers and literacy and numeracy co-ordinators to share experiences and strategies. This helps them to meet more effectively the challenges presented by the schools in the zone.

41. Provision in the school for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is closely interwoven with pupils' personal, social and health education. It is good overall. Teachers help pupils with special educational needs to develop spiritually, morally and socially by giving them their personal commitment, their skill and their guidance in understanding the difficulties that life sometimes presents. An example of this was observed in the lunchtime football training sessions run by the headteacher. Pupils are not always able to cope with the prospect of losing an encounter or a game. However, his underplayed but firm management of their behaviour enables them to come to terms with their feelings without loss of face. Similarly, the co-ordinator for special educational needs handles the learning difficulties of pupils who have suffered tremendous losses with great patience and sensitivity. The deputy special educational needs co-ordinator makes an effective contribution, too, through his knowledge and understanding and by helping pupils to manage their anger more appropriately.
42. The provision made for all pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The overall atmosphere promoted by the school celebrates the positive aspects of the human spirit in its widest sense. The school provides a daily act of collective worship in assemblies which increases pupils' understanding of how the school values individuals and of the school as a community. However, the words and activities used in assemblies too rarely imply the recognition of a 'supreme being'. A calm, reflective atmosphere is created for pupils to consider how to help each other, but this idea is not reinforced enough when the 'thinking candle' is lit. For example, in an assembly about the meaning and traditions of Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday, opportunities were not taken to reflect on how the Christian tradition of Lent can be used as a time for doing something positive. Opportunities for pupils to deepen their spiritual awareness of why we are here and our place in the world are not fully exploited throughout the school day. Insufficient experiences are provided for pupils to enjoy beauty in collections such as the lovely displays in Year 4, or in the music, art and living things such as flowers which are provided. Good opportunities are provided on residential courses, which include an 'Imagination Day'.
43. The provision made for pupils' moral development is good and the school places emphasis on 'inclusive education' for all its pupils. Teachers have a shared commitment to consistency aimed at encouraging and reinforcing good behaviour. In each class, pupils are involved in deciding upon a moral code as a basis for good behaviour. Teachers refer to this when necessary to give guidance to the minority of pupils with poor listening skills. Effective use is made of 'circle time' sessions in which pupils respond to the feelings, beliefs and values of others and develop their sense of fairness and self-esteem. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in developing the school environment and in their work. Their efforts are valued and displayed, for example, in picture frames in the corridor outside each class. Achievement and effort are recognised each week in a 'Praise Assembly' and good behaviour is rewarded with 'Golden Time' when pupils have a free choice of activity. The few occasions when teachers show inadequate control of classes detracts from the overall strengths of this aspect of provision.
44. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. All concerned with the life of the school share a vision where pupils develop a greater awareness of their personal responsibilities when living in a community. The school is a secure, caring place where pupils are valued as individuals. Teachers provide very good role models and relate well to each other and to the pupils. Pupils value their teachers, for example, by applauding

their success when trying a new procedure on the computer. Pupils are encouraged to take personal responsibility and responsibility within the school. The school's council set up last September provides a forum for discussion and uses pupils' views and ideas to contribute to the school as a community. The breakfast club provides a warm, happy start to the day when pupils enjoy each other's company and share in games or extend their skills by using computers in the computer suite. Many planned activities take place during lunchtime, such as the 'happy club' where many pupils share several activities together. Morning and lunchtime supervisors provide a very important and positive role in this aspect of the school. The school extends pupils' social development on the annual educational stays in North Wales and Ashdown Forest.

45. The provision for pupils' cultural development is broadly satisfactory, but would benefit from further development. There are few opportunities for pupils to be involved in expressive arts, such as musical performance or drama, or in a range of multi-cultural art, dance or music. While such activities exist on an extra-curricular basis, they are not yet a sufficient part of the basic entitlement for all pupils. Satisfactory emphasis is placed on different beliefs in religious education and in collective worship, but pupils do not yet appreciate and understand religious difference enough. History lessons and discussions about items in the news make a positive contribution to pupils' understanding of British culture, but the school does not yet sufficiently promote an understanding and acceptance of the wide diversity and differences that contribute to modern Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The school provides a secure and enjoyable learning environment for its pupils. As a result, most of the pupils establish happy, confident and trustful constructive relationships with adults and with classmates. Parents' response to the questionnaire shows they strongly agree that their children like to come to school. All teachers make it a priority to ensure children settle well into school, beginning with effective home visits and pre-school meetings between teachers and parents. The school pays good attention to pupils' educational needs and provides appropriate support. For example, it targets pupils with additional learning needs early in their school life. The school then provides extra tuition from learning support assistants.
47. The staff know the children and their families well and provide sound support for their emotional needs. The school complies with the locally agreed child protection procedures. These provide clear instructions about action to be taken and agreed procedures where other agencies are involved. Teaching, ancillary and midday staff are alert to child protection issues and there are properly qualified and nominated 'responsible persons' who have received appropriate training. There are good arrangements for first aid and the staff are aware of the procedures in case of an emergency. Sick children receive good medical attention from properly qualified first aiders in a strategically located medical room.
48. Procedures regarding health and welfare are clearly documented in the health and safety policy, although this has not yet been ratified by the governing body. Regular checks are made on the safety of the buildings, grounds and equipment. There are formal records for the inspection of fire fighting equipment. Fire drills are regularly undertaken and properly recorded by the school secretary. There is a health and safety committee, which monitors the implementation of health and safety procedures throughout the school. The inspectors drew some minor health and safety matters to the attention of the deputy headteacher and the school caretaker for prompt action. Teachers and support staff promote hygiene effectively as part of the curriculum.

49. Procedures for monitoring attendance and punctuality are not fully effective. There is little support from some parents who keep their children at home unnecessarily or allow them to arrive late on a regular basis. The information technology system available to monitor and track pupils who are not attending is not used to the full. The school has manual systems to monitor patterns of unsatisfactory attendance and late arrivals. Contacts with the education welfare officer are maintained. The deputy headteacher has recently taken steps to improve attendance and punctuality further, but overall attendance remains low.
50. The school promotes good behaviour through a system of mutually agreed simple class rules that are incorporated in the school behaviour policies. These policies include statements on anti-bullying or anti-racism arrangements. A few parents expressed concern about bad language in the playground and inappropriate behaviour in classrooms that disrupts pupils' learning. There are some inconsistencies and a lack of clear procedures for managing such incidents. As a result, staff do not deal with unacceptable behaviour as effectively as they might. Pupils from different social and ethnic background are taught to respect one another. Most pupils know that good behaviour is expected of them, but a substantial minority in some year groups chose to ignore the commonly accepted rules and act in an unacceptable manner. This offends others who are different from them. Parents feel that their children are safe and secure in the school. If a child is ill, parents are confident that the school will take care of them, including contacting them if necessary.
51. The headteacher successfully encourages staff to consider what and how they assess and to what purpose to support pupils' progress. The school has included aspects of assessment in the recently produced teaching and learning policy and is currently developing a separate assessment policy. While staff know pupils very well, their records of what pupils know, understand and can do are mostly kept individually and in varying styles. One intended outcome of the developing policy is to ensure that staff will share a manageable, agreed format for using assessment to modify their plans. The reasonable expectation of this is that the school will then improve its means of meeting the needs of groups of pupils, such as the more able pupils, and so raise standards.
52. This interest and activity has resulted in the school using a variety of suitable procedures to assess pupils' level of attainment regularly and accurately. Some of the procedures to track individual progress are very new and so have not yet had an impact upon teaching and learning. However, there are sufficient procedures for the school to be in a good position now to monitor pupils' achievements in English and mathematics and to set realistic targets for groups of pupils in these subjects. Senior staff increasingly analyse pupils' results in standardised tests in order to detect patterns that help them to determine strengths and weaknesses in teaching and subject coverage. They recognise the value in developing their work to include analysis by gender and, when appropriate, by ethnicity.
53. The school is successfully developing a culture of evaluating the impact of its teaching and learning. This means that teachers are increasingly effective in assessing the outcomes of their lessons and adjusting their subsequent teaching to meet pupils' needs. They are skilled at providing pupils with constructive feedback as work is accomplished. This has a positive impact on most pupils' learning and attitudes. Subject co-ordinators have yet to work with colleagues to share the best ideas for assessing and planning in each subject. In subjects other than English and mathematics, agreed assessment procedures are yet to be effectively developed.
54. The school's internal procedures for the identification, assessment and review of pupils with special educational needs are good. Most individual education plans are well written and focus well upon pupils' strengths and weaknesses. Teachers take pupils' views of

their own abilities into account, although some pupils lack much understanding of this. Some plans, however, particularly for pupils at Stage 2 on the register of special needs, contain targets which are not detailed enough to encourage good progress. These plans often contain targets to improve literacy, but few identify targets to improve standards in mathematics. Many teachers keep copious records of the progress pupils make in meeting the targets set in their individual plans and these help to assess their success.

55. For pupils who have English as an additional language, the development of English skills is monitored according to agreed stages of learning. The school is aware that it also needs information about National Curriculum levels so that pupils' progress can be monitored more effectively. Indeed, the National Curriculum level of pupils in Years 3 to 5 are established and these indicate that the pupils make satisfactory progress in developing English.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. Fewer than 10 per cent of parents responded to the inspection questionnaire. Most of those who did or who were interviewed during the inspection agree that their children like to come to school, a view supported by the inspectors. Parents are satisfied with the quality of education provided and the standards achieved by their children. They feel the quality of teaching is good and most of the children behave well in the school and that this enables their children to make good progress. Inspectors agree with these parental views. Eighteen per cent of the parents who responded to the questionnaire indicated that they are not well informed how their child is getting on in the school. A slightly lower number feel that the school does not work closely with parents. The evidence gathered during the inspection through meetings with parents does not support this view. Several parents have concerns about bullying and inappropriate behaviour. The inspectors agree with these concerns. However, the school deals with such incidents promptly and does not tolerate bad language or oppressive behaviour.
57. Over a quarter of parents who expressed a view feel that their child does not get the right amount of homework. The inspection team found the amount of homework given is inadequate, but also that many parents do not play their part in supporting their children at home, even when homework is given. Parents are satisfied that they can approach the school and their suggestions and complaints are dealt with effectively. The inspection findings confirm that there is always someone available in the school reception to deal with parents' queries. The school encourages parents to take part in their children's learning and offers courses, such as family numeracy and literacy courses. The annual reports to parents on their children's progress are satisfactory. The school prospectus and governing body's annual report are concise and easy to read, but omit a few of the details required by law. The school publishes a regular newsletter and there is a well-placed notice board for parents to consult.
58. There are good induction procedures for new pupils in the school. Pre-school home visits take place and an introductory meeting at the school tries to establish mutual expectations regarding attendance, behaviour and support for special educational needs. The school encourages parents of nursery age children to come into the school and stay with them for a settling-in period.
59. Most parents are happy about the information received from the school and they feel comfortable in approaching it with concerns about their children. Some parents have signed the home-school agreement. This enables them to share information about children's attitude to learning and the progress made.

60. A small number of parent helpers were observed working in the community room during the inspection and overall links with parents are satisfactory. Some parents take part in the major school events, the Christmas fair and the book club. They raise money for school funds to buy resources. This is much appreciated by the school. However, the majority of parents, including parents from ethnic minority communities, have insufficient involvement in the day-to-day life of the school. The absence of parents from school life was significant during the inspection week. A small minority help their children with homework, but this is not consistent throughout the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to become involved wherever appropriate, although too often they do not co-operate in the support that is offered to their children. The school has very good partnerships with a wide range of outside agencies and voluntary organisations and this has enabled the improvement of support for pupils with special needs in many classes.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. Leadership and management of the school are good. It has established its management procedures well in a short time. All senior staff and the experienced core of governors share the commitment to improvement and show a good capacity to succeed. The headteacher demonstrates strong leadership. He is energetic, caring and well respected by staff, pupils, parents and governors. He has a clear vision of how the school will develop and of how standards can be raised. He has successfully led the school through a difficult period of amalgamation, about which many of the participants were initially less than enthusiastic. Staff from the former schools, together with new appointees, are rapidly forming an effective team. Their agreed aims and values underpin the school's policies and actions and are having a positive impact on raising standards. Together they have established a realistic timescale for the production of written documentation to guide the school in its work.
62. The headteacher is supported well by an able deputy and, increasingly, by the senior management team. This team includes the experienced senior special needs co-ordinator and the heads of each main age group. Several members of this team are new to their senior management role. They are being given appropriate training and support in developing both their areas of responsibility and their knowledge of the school as a whole. Subject leaders have been appointed for all areas. In the past, few of these had received training in leading a subject for the whole primary age range or training in monitoring the effectiveness of teaching. The school has suitable plans to develop their role further with the explicit aim of improving provision and raising standards. They are currently not as effective as they might be.
63. In the first days of the new school, the headteacher's main priority was to improve teaching and learning. A growing and comprehensive teaching and learning policy is a testament to how far this has been established and is evidence of how improvements have been secured. Senior managers and, increasingly, governors carry out systematic monitoring of lessons and examine pupils' work and their results in tests and other assessments. The information is used to establish targets and initiatives for improvement. These are focused well on the areas of greatest need. Targets so far have included the development of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, provision for the very large number on the register of special needs and initiatives to improve pupils' behaviour.
64. The governing body plays a satisfactory role in the school's management. It has retained several able and experienced members from the former schools. Several of these lead the committees and are knowledgeable about their role and about the school. The chair

of governors is well informed and active. She works closely and effectively with the headteacher and her colleagues on the governing body. The governors spoken to during the inspection had a good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and of how improvements can be secured. They question sensibly what the school does and offer constructive criticism. Governors meet regularly in small groups and as a full board as appropriate. There is a useful programme established for them to visit during the school day to see pupils and staff in action. There are several new governors who are less experienced. For this group, the school and the chair of the governing body have established a good programme of training to enable them to take a more effective part in managing the school. Governors generally comply well with statutory requirements, although there are omissions of important information from the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents, including details of the school's results in national tests and its attendance figures.

65. Staff and governors are all appropriately involved in how the school plans for its continuing development. The school also considers the views of parents and pupils in deciding its priorities. The written development plans are detailed and reflect both current initiatives and the longer-term strategy. They clearly specify the action to be taken and outline how success will be judged, but they too rarely include indications of costings. The overall aim of raising pupils' standards is implicit in many of the sections of the plan, but not always clearly stated as a main reason for action.
66. The quality of leadership and management provided for the many pupils with special educational needs is very good. Co-ordination has been increasingly good in recent months and has had a positive impact on the experiences planned for these pupils. The funding for special educational needs is used to very good effect and nothing is wasted. The policy for special educational needs is well written and effective. Teachers plan for early intervention and support. The governors with responsibility to oversee provision for special educational needs are well qualified and suitably experienced to fulfil their roles.
67. The governing body, mainly through its finance committee working closely with the headteacher and the bursar, has established very good procedures for financial planning and management. Finances are linked effectively to the school improvement plan. Financial control is good. Governors monitor the budget carefully through regular and detailed information provided by the headteacher and the bursar. The expected outcomes for each priority for improvement are identified and procedures to evaluate the cost effectiveness of spending decisions are increasingly well established. The governing body and the headteacher apply the principles of best value to all their expenditure, to questioning what the school does and to assessing how well it performs. The school's work is supported well by its efficient team of administrative staff.
68. The school's budget has benefited from additional funds to cover some of the costs associated with the amalgamation. Some of these have been used to make significant improvements to the resources for information and communication technology. The governors have been strategic in their financial planning to ensure that these extra funds are used effectively as the school moves to the normal level of primary school funding. Specific funds, for example, those for special educational needs, literacy and numeracy, have been used effectively to improve resources and target support for particular groups of pupils. The school has implemented a range of initiatives to improve its links with parents. It has also improved the quality of its resources and made improvements in security. Several of these are as a result of effective partnerships brought about by the Education Action Zone or New Deals for the Community initiatives. The school has been successful in receiving additional grants from several local and national schemes and has made worthwhile use of these. It makes very good use of new technology for

administration as well as in the classroom. The pupils benefit from considerable subsidies for the costs of their annual residential visits to North Wales.

69. The school has a good blend of experienced and comparatively new teachers. However, some of the Key Stage 2 teachers and subject co-ordinators are fairly new to their posts and they have limited experience of teaching this age group and of leading their subject at this level. While most teachers have the expertise and knowledge to teach the full range of the National Curriculum, there are some who feel less secure in some subjects. The school is training them to support pupils' learning more effectively. There are sufficient numbers of ancillary staff. They provide good support for pupils with additional learning needs, such as those who speak English as a second language and those who need extra help with literacy and numeracy skills. The senior management team is well placed to provide effective training opportunities for new teachers. There are sufficient lunchtime staff. Catering and cleaning staff are sufficient in numbers and make a positive contribution to pupils' welfare. The school is cleaned and maintained well and the site manager leads an efficient and friendly team. The school has responded rapidly and effectively to the national initiatives in performance management for teachers. Effective support procedures for newly qualified and supply staff are in place.
70. Accommodation is plentiful and is used well to support learning. The new school inherited spacious buildings and these provide the space for a wide range of activities. The headteacher and governors have already committed substantial funds to ensure that the building is safe, well maintained and attractive. The present provision will improve even further when the new library is fully functioning. The newly-acquired computer suite is a positive addition to the existing accommodation. Recent building work has provided a good quality learning area particularly for the reception classes, which has enhanced the learning environment for children and supports their progress. There is a good-sized hard surface area for safe play and a large field for games and athletics.
71. Attractive wall displays and a welcoming atmosphere enhance the school. All subjects are at least satisfactorily resourced, while history, information and communication technology and mathematics have good quality resources, which are appropriately stored and easily accessible to staff and pupils. The school does not have any resources specifically for pupils who have English as an additional language, but the visiting support staff bring these with them as necessary. The school, however, needs to build resources that reflect and respect the diversity of all its pupils' language, culture and faith so that their self-esteem is maintained and enhanced.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. To build on the school's strengths, improve the overall quality of provision and raise standards further, the headteacher, staff and the governing body should:

- raise standards in English, mathematics and science by:
 - continuing to evaluate current practice and tailor the programmes of work more closely to pupils' needs;
 - building on existing good practice in the assessment of pupils' progress to plan more efficiently and to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils;
 - developing ways in which pupils' skills in literacy support their achievement in geography and religious education more effectively;
 - enabling senior staff and subject leaders to monitor teaching, the planned curriculum and pupils' work more closely;

(paragraphs 1-11, 34 and 87-120)

- improve pupils' standards of behaviour by:
 - ensuring that all staff implement the agreed positive approach to behaviour management;
 - supporting and training the minority of teachers who find it difficult to control pupils' challenging behaviour;
 - establishing agreed routines for when pupils move between classes and around the school;
 - continuing to work with pupils and their parents to improve pupils' behaviour and to communicate the school's high expectations of behaviour more effectively;

(paragraphs 17-19, 32 and 50)

- improve the effectiveness of the subject co-ordinators, and thereby raise pupils' attainment, by:
 - ensuring that the planned programme of monitoring subjects takes place;
 - training and supporting co-ordinators to make this monitoring effective in raising standards;

(paragraphs 53, 62, 113, 120, 125, 139 and 164)

- raise levels of attendance by:
 - agreeing ways to motivate pupils and, if appropriate, to reward good attendance further;
 - building on the current level of communication with parents about the importance of regular attendance for their children;
 - using analyses of attendance and absence patterns more effectively to assess the success of attendance initiatives;

(paragraphs 23 and 49)

- encourage parents to take a fuller part in their children's learning by:
 - continuing to build on the successful initiatives to welcome parents into the school;
 - making homework a more effective support for pupils' work in school;
 - communicating to parents the importance of their participation in their children's education;

(paragraphs 34 and 56-60)

- make all possible efforts to ensure that pupils at the higher stages on the register of special needs receive the support to which they are entitled by continuing to work closely with the local education authority and the appropriate outside agencies.

(paragraph 13)

Other issues which should be considered by the school:

- using the curriculum to develop a more positive understanding in pupils of the differences between people and to encourage their appreciation of diversity in culture, race, religion, gender and ability;

(paragraphs 20, 29, 45, 50 and 71)

- extending the current plans to improve the attainment of the older pupils in physical education.

(paragraphs 11 and 153–157)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1	9	40	44	6	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	395
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	n/a	221

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	34	319

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	18

This figure includes children who attend part-time in the nursery.

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	40

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.0
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	40	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	21	25
	Girls	24	27	30
	Total	42	48	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	56 (n/a)	64 (n/a)	73 (n/a)
	National	84 (82)	85(83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	21	21
	Girls	24	32	17
	Total	44	53	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	59 (n/a)	71 (n/a)	51 (n/a)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	25	26	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	7	15
	Girls	15	11	21
	Total	21	18	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	41 (n/a)	35 (n/a)	71 (n/a)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	15
	Girls	15	13	21
	Total	22	20	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43 (n/a)	39 (n/a)	71 (n/a)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	4
Black – other	0
Indian	5
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	385
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	17	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)	21
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	24
Total aggregate hours worked per week	407.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000*
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	£
Total income	695,576
Total expenditure	683,576
Expenditure per pupil	1,470
Balance brought forward from previous year	108,881
Balance carried forward to next year	120,881

**These figures refer to the period from September 1999 when the new school was opened to March 2000. They include some 'set up' costs and do not reflect subsequent spending patterns.*

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 8.6%

Number of questionnaires sent out	453
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	21	5	3	0
My child is making good progress in school.	72	18	3	5	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	38	8	10	13
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	31	13	13	10
The teaching is good.	74	21	3	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	49	33	13	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	15	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	26	8	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	44	44	3	10	0
The school is well led and managed.	46	46	3	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	67	15	5	8	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	54	26	10	3	5

Figures may not total 100% owing to rounding or where not all parents expressed an opinion.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

73. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage (children in the nursery and reception classes) is good overall and children achieve well. In spite of this good provision, compared with children nationally, the standards they achieve at the end of the Foundation Stage are well below expectations. When children enter the nursery at the age of three or four, most are leaving their parents or carers and working in groups with other children for the first time. Their levels of attainment on admission are often very low. Parents of about three-quarters of these children take part in a community project that offers them ideas for playing with their young child before they join the nursery. Most children have had little experience of expressing themselves either through language or through play. Understandably, this lack of experience affects many aspects of other areas of their development and most children join the nursery with poor speech, language and understanding. Their co-ordination skills are below expectations for their age when they join the nursery. Almost three-quarters of children in the nursery and reception classes have special educational needs. These needs are largely related to difficulties in speech and language that contribute to delays in their gaining knowledge, skills and understanding. When children are ready to join Year 1, they have reached the expected levels of attainment in physical development. In all other areas of learning the attainment of most children is well below expected levels.
74. Nursery staff work hard to ensure that the children settle smoothly into the nursery routines. They visit children in their homes before they join the nursery and admit only a few children at any one time. Once in the nursery, children experience consistent expectations from friendly and encouraging adults. When children move on to join the reception classes, similar care is taken to welcome them and ease the transition for them. A small number of children come from bilingual homes and are sometimes at the very early stages of developing English. They receive support from a bilingual assistant and the teachers work closely with parents to share key vocabulary to help the children. Activities and experiences are planned carefully and based on the national Early Learning Goals recommended for children of this age. Staff have a good understanding of how young children learn best and they have clear learning intentions for each activity. They know the children very well and use their considerable teaching skills to adapt activities in the light of children's apparent understanding and response.

Personal, social and emotional development

75. Staff recognise that this area of development provides the basis for children's learning. The teaching of personal, social and emotional education is good. Most children enter the nursery with poorly developed personal and social skills. They have difficulty in selecting activities, they demonstrate very limited powers of concentration and when they play they do so in isolation. However, as a result of consistent expectations of behaviour and concentration, all children make very good progress in playing purposefully and sharing. All staff consistently demonstrate examples of positive behaviour and attitudes for children to emulate. They take care to teach social courtesies and are very successful in developing children's skills in taking turns and in sharing space, resources or adult attention. They make considerable effort to support children's moral development. For example, in reception classes, children identify who is a friend and sing about a friendly 'neighbourhood'. Staff also successfully develop the children's sense of security within the nursery and reception classes. As a result of this successful teaching and learning, children concentrate and persevere well when they are working alone, alongside a friend, or without any direct adult intervention. However, in spite of this good teaching, the

considerable difficulties that children have in expressing their needs and feelings limit their relationships with each other. Staff know the children very well. They constantly assess what children understand and adapt their questions and directions accordingly. However, in both nursery and reception classes, they do not plan fully to develop initiative and social interaction for individual children or groups of children. In spite of the strengths within the teaching, children attain standards that are well below expectations for their age in several elements of this area of learning. For example, they have a very restricted understanding of themselves as a member of several communities and that people have differing needs, views and perspectives. They have very limited skills in initiating or sustaining a social exchange.

Communication, language and literacy

76. In both the nursery and reception classes, teaching and learning are good overall in this area of learning. However, attainment at five is well below the levels expected nationally. As part of an Education Action Zone project, staff work closely with a speech and language therapist to provide children with the vocabulary they need. Children make good gains in understanding what is said to them and in wishing to communicate. However, because of children's very low starting points, the full impact of this good work on their speaking is unlikely to be apparent for some time yet. Many children have enormous difficulty in organising their thoughts in order to share information in a way that the listener can understand. Children enjoy listening to stories and most enjoy sharing a book with an adult, especially when the humour appeals to them. They know how to hold a book and quickly learn to treat books with care. About three-quarters of children in the reception classes distinguish between print and illustrations. These children are beginning to understand that print carries meaning. Most children in the reception classes are beginning to associate letters and sounds. For example, their imagination is captured by a picture of an octopus and so they remember that its label starts with an 'o' sound. However, children's marks on paper are very immature. Most use a combination of straight and circular marks to represent writing. About a third occasionally include a recognisable letter shape in their play writing. About a quarter of children write their first name to the standard expected for their age by the time they join Year 1.
77. A real strength of teaching is the consistently clear speech that all staff use in the nursery and reception classes. They provide careful explanations and directions that include the small details that children need. All staff appreciate the urgent need to extend children's understanding and use of vocabulary. Where teaching is good, elements of the National Literacy Strategy are used sensibly to foster an interest in books, sounds and letters. Staff work hard to teach children that writing has many purposes. For example, in a newly established 'hospital' role-play area, the teacher points out the 'appointment book'. This results in children having a positive attitude to writing. They enjoy making marks on paper and willingly used the 'appointment book' in their focused play. In most lessons teachers observe children and assess any new learning or areas of difficulty. They use this information when they plan the next activity. This close assessment and its use to adapt teaching is not fully reflected on paper. However, the format for recording planning is currently under review.

Mathematical development

78. The teaching of mathematical development is good overall and enables children to make satisfactory progress in their learning. As a result, children develop an interest in number and shape. Children seen in the nursery enjoyed identifying the shape of a biscuit and then looking for other circles in the classroom. They also enjoyed counting out two chocolate buttons to decorate the biscuit they were about to eat. Children in the reception classes are interested in identifying numerals, recording them and counting.

Staff provide several suitable activities to help promote children's understanding of quantity and shape, such as recording eye colour in the class. However, while most children are beginning to understand the ideas of 'more', 'less' and 'altogether', very few use this language to express their ideas. The most able minority of children reaches expected levels in beginning to calculate 'one more' or 'one less'. They achieve this in practical sessions with skilful direct teaching and questioning from the class teacher.

79. When teaching is particularly good, staff modify their questions to meet individual needs as the session proceeds. This means that each child learns at her or his own level. Very skilful teaching also uses children's imaginations, for example, by turning the calculation of 'how many eggs' into a 'story'. When teaching is satisfactory, it successfully addresses the main learning intention, but does not necessarily exploit all learning opportunities as they arise. In nursery and reception classes, staff do not plan to promote mathematical understanding outdoors and so miss opportunities to further enhance children's understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. The teaching of this area of learning is sound overall and promotes satisfactory progress in all children's learning. There are strengths in the access that children have to technology. In this aspect of the area of learning all children, including those with special needs, make good progress. For example, children in the reception classes confidently and independently control a computer mouse to 'dress a teddy'. They concentrate very well on such activities. Staff plan a range of suitable activities, usually linked to a topic or theme, such as 'ourselves' or 'my family'. Children have regular opportunities to notice the passing of time by celebrating birthdays. They observe the weather, the change in seasons and the date and make satisfactory progress in taking notice of the world immediately around them. Children in both nursery and reception classes have regular opportunities to explore sand, water and other materials. They also have satisfactory opportunities to use scissors, glue and sticky tape and assemble construction equipment. These satisfactory opportunities successfully interest children and they become increasingly willing to try new experiences.
81. Teaching is good when teachers respond spontaneously and exploit the learning potential of the unexpected. For example, children are brought to the outside door to observe men laying tarmac just outside the classroom. The teacher then asks questions with sensitive timing to try to encourage children to express their interest verbally. They have good opportunities to observe the growth of plants; for example, they plant bulbs outside and watch an acorn grow in a pot in the classroom. However, staff in both the nursery and reception classes do not plan for powerful and extraordinary activities to compensate for the children's very limited experience and lack of curiosity. Staff miss opportunities for children to learn about and value difference. For example, there are limited opportunities planned for children to experience the breadth of language, dress, music, foods and customs enjoyed by different people.

Creative development

82. Teaching of creative development is good overall because staff place an appropriately high emphasis upon encouraging children to use their imaginations, especially through role-play. This is planned for carefully. During the inspection, very skilful teaching was seen in a reception class when the teacher introduced children to a new 'hospital' area. Staff have a good understanding of the significance of this area of learning for the children as a means of encouraging and increasing their desire to communicate. Children in reception enjoy role-play, but their skills are very immature. While they begin to demonstrate some limited understanding of what a doctor does, most play out their

actions without developing a 'story'. Those few children who begin to develop a 'story' do so without actively involving their peers.

83. Staff appreciate the necessity of children learning through all of their senses. They have regular access to a standard range of paint and craft materials. However, staff do not plan fully to stimulate children with a wide range of textures and tactile experiences on a daily basis. Children in reception were seen using thin and thick paint with collage materials to represent winter skies. They did this with adult support. Children do not have frequent access to equipment allowing them to experiment with sound and music independently.

Physical development

84. Teaching of this area of learning is good overall and promotes good achievement. Children join the nursery with levels of co-ordination, balance and precision that are below expectations for their age. By the time they leave reception, most children, including those with special needs, have achieved the nationally expected levels of physical development in both large movements with their whole body and small movements controlling tools. Children from the nursery have regular planned opportunities to use a variety of equipment in a spacious outside area. They quickly acquire skills in pedalling, steering, pushing and pulling large wheeled equipment. Their progress in hand-eye co-ordination is slower, but good overall.
85. Staff gradually increase their demands of children's physical skills. They provide a suitable range of small equipment and tools that require children to exert pressure and harness their strength. This helps children to gain increasing control of pencils, crayons and paintbrushes. Before they leave the reception classes, children work in the school hall and develop their skills in using space and increasing their balance. Teachers have suitably high expectations of children in these sessions. As a result, all participate fully; they run, stop, hop, curl and stretch with the level of skill expected for their age. At this stage of the year, when they take 'giant' strides or bend over towards the floor, their balancing skills do not quite meet expected levels. However, with continued good teaching and their regular lessons in the hall, most children are likely to attain the expected levels of skill by the time they join Year 1.

Summary

86. The teaching of personal, social and emotional education, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and creative and physical development is good and promotes good levels of achievement. The teaching of knowledge and understanding of the world is sound and promotes satisfactory progress. The strength in the teaching in the nursery and reception classes is the understanding that all staff share regarding the priorities for teaching young children. They successfully promote good quality relationships of trust and security between staff and all children, as well as acceptance of the school's requirements of behaviour. This means that children leave the reception classes with positive attitudes towards school and a willingness to learn. Most children join the school with significant levels of difficulty and the full impact of work in the nursery and reception classes will not be realised until they are older.

ENGLISH

87. In speaking, listening, reading and writing, the attainment of pupils by the age of seven is very low and by the age of 11 is well below national averages. Most children enter the school with very low levels of attainment.
88. In the national tests last year, the performance of pupils by the age of seven in reading was very low when compared with national averages. In writing, the school's results were well below national averages. Boys did slightly better than girls. On average, pupils' standards are about two years behind national expectations for seven-year-olds. No pupils attained above the nationally expected Level 2. The school's results were well below those of schools in similar circumstances.
89. In national tests last year, pupils aged 11 attained standards in reading that were very low when compared with national averages. In writing, the school's results were well below national averages. The school's overall results were well below those of schools in similar circumstances. Girls did slightly better than boys. On average, pupils' standards lag about two years behind where they should be, but they make steady progress from year to year. Very few pupils attain above the nationally expected Level 4 in this key stage. The turbulence caused by the amalgamation of junior and infant schools has had a temporary slowing effect on standards. The school is well placed to raise standards higher, given more stability and the time for recent major improvements in the curriculum to make a positive impact.
90. A significant number of pupils in both key stages have poor listening skills. They have difficulty concentrating for a long time. As they grow older, most learn to listen to one another and to their teachers more carefully and respond appropriately to the questions or instructions they are given. In Year 1, pupils' skills in listening are very low, but improving. The listening skills of pupils in Year 2 are below average, but improving. A significant minority of Year 3 pupils has poor listening skills. The ability of most pupils in Year 6 to listen carefully is better for their age. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' skills in speaking are very low. They are, though, happy and confident with their teachers and many make gains in learning as well as in social relationships and behaviour. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards in speaking are well below average. Few pupils are able to adapt their speech to suit formal and informal occasions. Few speak clearly and expressively or show awareness of the needs of the text and their audience. One of the key factors affecting this is the low priority given to drama in the timetable and the few opportunities pupils have for role-play or performance.
91. In many classes, at least a third of pupils reads below the standard expected for their age. In some classes, a half of pupils or more have reading difficulties. Standards in reading are very low in Key Stage 1 and many pupils have difficulty in reading at an appropriate level for their age. Teachers keep meticulous records of the progress pupils make in understanding phonics. These show that most pupils in Year 1 have a limited knowledge of most of the letters of the alphabet. Many do not have good access to books outside school, but enjoy reading books in school more and more as they grow older. Very few read well by the age of seven or with good expression, but they make sound progress over time in relation to their very low starting point. Pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress in learning to read. Pupils show little understanding of the difference between fiction and non-fiction books. Virtually none are independent readers.
92. Standards in reading are well below average in Key Stage 2, but pupils satisfactorily improve their skill in reading over time. Few pupils in Key Stage 2 can discuss or compare texts and authors or describe characters at the expected level. Those with

special educational needs are learning to use appropriate strategies such as picture clues. A few above average pupils in Year 6 enjoy reading, can read fluently and can talk about plot and character. They predict outcomes and recognise errors quickly and are eager to learn the meaning of new words. About a third of pupils know about the works of a small range of different authors.

93. Most pupils have standards that are well below average in their reference skills. They are not able to use an index quickly to locate and use information for their topic work. A few pupils in Key Stage 2 use skimming and scanning techniques when searching for information in non-fiction books. Most have too little understanding of the features of reference books such as glossaries and contents pages. Pupils have a limited understanding of the classification of books in libraries or of how to search for particular books. A small number of pupils understand how to use a dictionary to seek out the meaning of words and help with their spelling and, by the age of 11 a large minority of pupils use dictionaries effectively to correct their written work. Many pupils can use spellchecking software well to remove spelling errors in their word-processed work. Pupils do not complete homework often enough to consolidate classroom learning in reading. Teachers boost the home-school partnership to some extent by the links they make with parents to help children read. A good example of this is the Family Literacy initiative where parents help their children in school regularly. Although few parents participated at first, the numbers are now increasing. Parents do not use homework diaries consistently and they sometimes miss good opportunities to help their children learn to read.
94. Throughout the school, pupils improve upon their standards in handwriting little by little to achieve a joined, regular style of cursive writing by the age of 11. By the age of seven few pupils have learned to join their letters, but by 11 about a half of pupils write in a neat script. Few pupils write using a pen. Some left-handed pupils develop an awkward style because they are not guided well in their writing position.
95. Standards in writing are very low by the age of seven. Few pupils write stories and poems that show individuality or that handle the conventions of writing effectively. In Year 1, the most able pupils write simple sentences of up to 10 words which start with a capital letter and end with a full stop. Very few write complex sentences. In Year 2, a few pupils write extended stories up to four pages long. The quality, however, is low and pupils have difficulty with spellings, syntax, plot and pace.
96. By the age of 11, standards are slightly better, but still well below average. A few pupils are able to draft and redraft their writing. They know the importance of using adjectives and adverbs to give their writing interest and colour. About a third of pupils has a sound vocabulary. They show a satisfactory understanding of the formal conventions of grammar, but are not confident enough to discard them when it is appropriate so to do. In Year 3, a few more able pupils can write alliteratively using phrases such as 'small shoes', 'hard horns' and 'tiny toes'. Pupils do not often write well for a range of purposes. Their work includes examples of persuasive and informational writing and they write independently, but rarely at length. Most pupils in Year 6 are able to write about the differences between a video film and a fictional account of 'Theseus and the Minotaur', but do so haltingly with a limited vocabulary. On the other hand, more able pupils have written hauntingly their own lyrics for Dickens' Oliver Twist:

'Where is love? Where is she?
This magical face that I can't see
So if you can, if you can,
Give me love and set me free!'

97. On the whole there are too few examples of extended, creative writing.
98. Pupils with special educational needs achieve soundly in relation to their abilities. Although their writing has many spelling errors, their handwriting is legible. They make progress because they are taught well, in groups withdrawn from mainstream activities, as well as in mainstream lessons. Most pupils, including those few with English as an additional language, make sound achievements in relation to their prior learning. They make sound progress in reading, writing and handwriting by the end of both key stages.
99. The overall quality of teaching is good. Teaching is sound with good features in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Literacy lessons are taught well throughout the school. Almost 95 per cent of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. However, there is not enough teaching of drama to improve standards in speaking and listening. Where teaching is effective, it is energetic and well-paced. Teachers often make their learning objectives clear, both verbally and in writing on the whiteboard. They check learning and develop pupils' thinking with a series of probing questions. Many teachers encourage pupils to evaluate their written and spoken work and that of their peers through useful plenary sessions. They also use this good strategy in a range of other subjects and it is helping improve the quality of assessment. Because teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach English, pupils feel secure, are unafraid to ask questions and are able to learn from their mistakes. When teaching is very occasionally very good, the teacher's confident and knowledgeable approach, coupled with high expectations, makes the pupils more observant. As a result, they listen carefully from the start of the lesson, respond accurately and become more literate. When, rarely, teaching is unsatisfactory, it is mainly because the teacher does not make the aims and objectives of the lesson clear to pupils, resources are uninspiring and the level of uncontrolled noise is a distraction to those who want to learn.
100. Most teachers place a good emphasis on the use of subject-specific words. Pupils, however, do not have good strategies with which to decode words and the focus on terminology is not as sharp as it could be in a few classes. In Additional Literacy Support groups, pupils identified as needing extra help concentrate on improving their use of language in a way that helps them to understand other subjects better. Teachers help pupils to view learning as an enjoyable task. Speech and language therapists provide good individual tuition as appropriate for those pupils who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Learning support assistants provide effective support in many classes. Teachers teach literacy skills effectively throughout the school in well timed, well managed lessons.
101. In most Key Stage 1 classes, pupils learn more swiftly because the teacher matches tasks carefully to the needs of each pupil. Over four fifths of the pupils at Moulsecoomb have special educational needs and each has an individual education plan. This helps pupils to identify what they need to learn next. Although many struggle to meet their targets, they try hard and they make satisfactory progress. Pupils with average abilities re-arrange the order of words in a sentence so that they make sense. They learn to identify and count the sounds in simple, short words. Teachers throughout the school help pupils learn to spell correctly through regular tests and comments in marked work. Teachers focus upon the improvement of pupils' spelling and extend their vocabulary with well-chosen words. Most pupils are keen and eager to learn, but a significant minority is not and has poor attitudes to learning. Most behave well in lessons, but about a third are poorly behaved at times and this slows down progress for many. Most pupils co-operate well with each other and their teachers and tolerate the eccentric behaviour of a minority with a maturity beyond their years. When pupils behave less well, they do not listen carefully enough to their teacher, they have difficulty in concentrating for long and they learn slowly and forget quickly. The school tracks the attitudes of its pupils in surveys to

check their understanding of why learning is important. It has discovered through this that about a half of pupils see little point in learning to read or write and has organised a range of initiatives to encourage more positive attitudes.

102. The curriculum is broad and balanced and matched carefully to pupils' needs. Teachers have made valuable recent amendments to the National Literacy Strategy to ensure that the work pupils are asked to do is not too difficult or too easy. This has been achieved through the additional use of an Australian published scheme. Teachers keep a portfolio of samples of work for every pupil and this is increasingly helpful in recording their gains in literacy. No work in the portfolios is graded using National Curriculum Levels and this is a missed opportunity to guide teachers and pupils. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly in many classes and have a good knowledge of how well they are doing. In Year 2, for example, targets are set for every pupil to learn phonemes (the 'building blocks' of longer words) and this provides good information to help decide what to teach and learn next.
103. The subject is led well by an able, well qualified and experienced co-ordinator, who plans, monitors, evaluates and guides the work of the school effectively. The school has benefited from the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, with significant new resources in many classrooms. The quality of books in the recently refurbished library is good. Many books are new and relevant to the National Curriculum, but there are not enough to help celebrate Britain's multi-cultural heritage. Classroom collections of books are good and pupils regularly take these home to read. The school's membership of the Education Action Zone has brought about a substantial increase in the number of laptop computers in classrooms and an improvement in extra-curricular resources. Teachers and pupils use computers well to support and extend learning. Arrangements to improve pupils' research skills or to enhance independent learning through regular, guided use of the Internet are also increasingly effective.

MATHEMATICS

104. Pupils in Year 2 attain standards that are below average in all aspects of mathematics and pupils in Year 6 attain standards that are well below average. This includes their work in all the major aspects of the National Curriculum - number, space, shape and measures and handling data. These inspection findings are better than the school's results in the 2000 national tests which show performance that was well below the national average in Key Stage 1 and very low in Key Stage 2 (within the lowest 5 per cent of schools). Pupils in both key stages were well below the average for schools with similar intakes. Recent improvements to teaching and the curriculum have resulted in higher standards this year. Last year, girls performed better than boys in the tests and more girls than boys are in the upper attainment groups for mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2. The teachers in Years 5 and 6 are beginning to set targets to raise standards, but do not provide a sufficiently wide range of practical activities and applications to affirm pupils' understanding or extend the more able pupils in each year group. Many pupils throughout the school have special educational needs and are provided for well. For example, in Key Stage 2, they are taught in smaller classes and the work is well matched to their needs.
105. By the time they are seven, most pupils count confidently in fives forward and back to 50, but only a minority are confident in continuing number patterns independently and in recognising odd and even numbers. Most understand the place value of numbers to 100, but few pupils understand numbers to 1,000. One third of the pupils find difficulty in sequencing numbers and need support to add and subtract to 10. When solving shopping problems, most pupils choose correctly whether to add or subtract and succeed in calculating change accurately. They understand multiplication as repeated addition

and use doubling and halving to find answers to problems. The more able pupils set shopping problems for their partner to solve, but the majority need support to read questions. Several pupils correctly identify a half or a quarter of a whole shape. Most pupils use standard measures to measure lines accurately and recognise simple two-dimensional shapes. They explore how to make these shapes using pin boards and apply their understanding of reflective symmetry to create symmetrical patterns. They identify half and quarter turning movements, but do not record right angles in turns in their work.

106. By the time they are in Year 4, half of the pupils use their knowledge of the three times table to recall multiplication and division facts rapidly in the six times table. These pupils add three digit numbers correctly and explain their strategies orally and in writing. Many pupils recognise equivalent fractions and add similar and mixed fractions accurately. They use correct mathematical language for three-dimensional shapes and use two-dimensional shapes to design nets for solid shapes. They make sensible estimates of measures and convert actual measures into fractions. Many of the pupils in the lower set do not achieve as well as they could because they have poor attention and listening skills.
107. Pupils at the end of the key stage find difficulty in recalling the four times table. Many continue to need support in finding for themselves two three-digit numbers to make 1,000. All pupils in Years 5 and 6 have a weak understanding of percentages, fractions and decimals, are uncertain of perimeter and have a poor idea of what area is. They find difficulty in remembering the correct mathematical language for solid shapes and have an insecure understanding of angle as a measurement of turn. Pupils in Year 6 represent information in appropriate graphical forms, but their ability to group data, interpret or evaluate it is unsatisfactory. Good opportunities for reading and interpreting information are provided in Year 5, for example, in science and history.
108. A high proportion of pupils in the school has special educational needs and, because teachers manage these pupils well and plan suitable work for them, their progress in mathematics is at least satisfactory. Teachers explain activities clearly, but, in many classes, pupils' levels of retention are low. Improving their poor social skills in a Year 3 and a Year 4 class takes up too much teaching time. Pupils in most classes collaborate well during group activities and make a satisfactory effort to explain their thinking. However, their low levels of skill in literacy do not support the reading and writing necessary for efficient work in mathematics.
109. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2 with very good teaching in one Year 4 class. In this class, pupils were seen learning tables by chanting and homework was provided for further practice. As a result, pupils have quick recall of number facts at the beginning of lessons with improvement in learning by the end. During the lesson, the teacher's original plans were adjusted in response to pupils' understanding. This improved their learning. The successful implementation of the structure of the National Numeracy Strategy based upon pupils' prior attainment has had a greater effect on pupils' standards in Key Stage 1 and in the first two years of Key Stage 2. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have, however, made satisfactory progress from their very low standard at the beginning of the current school year.
110. New mathematical vocabulary is introduced in lessons, but there is inconsistency in the use of previously introduced vocabulary in a few classes. Teachers' plans are broadly matched to pupils' prior attainment, but could be more closely related to the day-to-day assessment of pupils' understanding. In Key Stage 1, teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to use a wide range of equipment that develops their mathematical knowledge of place value. For example, pupils in Year 1 used 'Base 5'

apparatus and took turns to play a game with enjoyment. In Year 2 and in Year 6, teachers' expectations do not challenge the small number of the most able pupils sufficiently. In Key Stage 2, insufficient time and opportunities are planned for pupils to apply mathematical ideas in different contexts, for example, in using decimals or measuring area and perimeter.

111. In all areas of the school, pupils' ability to use information and communication technology to improve their knowledge and skills in mathematics is good. Pupils in Key Stage 1 concentrate well and use a computer program independently to find multiples of five. In Key Stage 2, they expand many-sided two-dimensional shapes into three-dimensional shapes or draw angles to be measured. Pupils with special educational needs achieve a better understanding of shape and number through their use of the computer.
112. Teachers use yearly objectives and tests to group pupils in each class, which is effective in matching the teaching to the needs of most pupils. In Key Stage 1, there is insufficient use of the assessment records to plan extension work for high attaining pupils who reach the yearly targets. School tests are beginning to be used well to set targets for individual pupils and to evaluate their progress at the end of the Key Stage 2. Insufficient use is made of evaluating pupils' responses when marking work to identify where individuals need specific help or to define areas for improvement to inform future planning. Pupils are not involved in setting their own targets for improvement in mathematics. The practice of whole-school planning to aid continuity in pupils' learning is commendable. However, this is not yet taking sufficient account of what needs to be done when particular year groups are reaching higher standards than older pupils – as in the current Years 5 and 6.
113. The subject co-ordinator is very committed and knowledgeable and has a clear vision about how the subject could be developed over a three-year period. She currently finds it difficult to provide feedback to the whole staff on courses and on the outcomes of meetings with subject leaders from other schools because of staffing and time constraints. Teaching and standards have been monitored in two of the year groups and further monitoring is planned. The practice of collecting samples of books from year groups for monitoring standards is an area for further development. The co-ordinators for mathematics and information and communication technology work closely together to make available to all classes recent programs that match all aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is a valuable family numeracy scheme in operation to support parents in helping their children make progress.

SCIENCE

114. The 2000 teacher assessments of seven-year-olds show that they attained standards that were well below the national average. Their attainment was also well below the average for similar schools. In the same year, the national tests of 11-year-olds show that they attained standards that were well below the national average. Their attainment is below the average for similar schools. Inspection findings confirm that pupils' attainment by the age of seven is well below the national average. This rises to below average by the time pupils reach the age of 11 years.
115. A significant reason for the seven-year-olds' well below average attainment is their poor literacy skills. Most pupils are unable to produce a written record of new learning. Their low speaking and listening skills also hinder their participation in, often well planned and conducted, classroom discussions. For example, about two thirds of pupils in a lesson seen found it difficult to sort foods such as carrots, potatoes, tinned fish, eggs and kiwi fruit into their correct food categories such as fruits and vegetables, meat, fish or dairy products. They use drawings to record learning rather than recording names of foods in

tables. The remaining pupils, who are more literate than the others in the class, produced a written record of their work. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled with the help of learning support assistants to record their learning through drawings.

116. While most of the pupils in Key Stage 1 are interested in science, a significant minority do not have effective learning skills, including their knowledge and acceptance of class routines. A small minority takes up a disproportionate amount of teachers' time in frequent reminders to display good behaviour. These factors create a barrier to their efficient learning. An analysis of pupils' work shows weaknesses in their scientific enquiry skills and knowledge and understanding of physical processes. Overall, a significant minority is still working towards National Curriculum Level 2. This marks a satisfactory achievement overall, as they start from a low level of literacy and knowledge of science. The achievement of boys and girls is similar and the progress made by pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is satisfactory. Good management of pupils, provision of resources that pupils can handle physically and the range of methods that teachers employ make an effective contribution towards satisfactory achievement.
117. The overall quality of learning and achievement is satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 2. A significant minority of 11-year-olds know the importance of fair testing. However, they cannot explain the reasons for this. The pupils have few opportunities to select equipment and make a series of observations and measurements. As a consequence, most pupils have weak independent investigational skills. Only a small minority have started to relate their conclusions to scientific knowledge and understanding, for example, of materials and their properties. These pupils explain that a saturated sugar solution cannot dissolve more sugar because there are not enough water molecules to dissolve it. However, adding more water or heating the saturated solution can dissolve more sugar. Satisfactory opportunities to use information and communication technology develop sound skills in producing tally and bar charts. More able pupils produce pie charts and line graphs. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of aspects of life processes and living things is weak. For example, most of the pupils can define a predator. However, a significant majority cannot define a producer or a consumer in a food chain. While most pupils know that wind disperses seeds, their knowledge about growing plants is limited. They state that a seed planted upside down will 'grow a bit and then die'.
118. While most pupils in Key Stage 2 show good interest and enthusiasm in science and particularly enjoy practical activities, a minority lack learning skills and self-discipline to observe class routines. Consequently their own learning and, to some extent the learning of other pupils in the class, suffer adverse effects. Good planning, provision of resources, methods and teachers' expectations of pupils have a positive impact, leading to overall satisfactory achievement. A majority are at, or close to, the nationally expected Level 4. However, too few reach Level 5. Achievement of boys and girls is similar. Progress made by pupils learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs is satisfactory. The school's record of results from 1997 to 2000, including those from the former junior school, shows that it has produced a steep rise in the attainment of 11-year-olds. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above rose from 9 per cent in 1997 to 42 per cent in 1998, to 56 per cent in 1999 and 71 per cent in 2000.
119. While the quality of teaching and learning in the school are satisfactory overall, aspects of it could be better in both key stages. Although the management of pupils is satisfactory in both key stages, greater emphasis is needed to develop pupils' behaviour, learning of class routines and literacy skills. Planning of lessons and the selection of resources that can be handled physically, for example a good range of foods, provide good learning experiences for pupils. Ancillary staff are deployed effectively to support the learning of a

significant number of pupils with special educational needs in each class. Teachers conduct demonstrations that reflect secure subject knowledge. They make effective use of questioning to share and extend learning. However, these are not used with the same effectiveness when teaching is based on the unstructured use of videos. While the introduction of the nationally recommended scheme of work is a positive development, some teachers feel less confident as this was not preceded by adequate staff training. Assessing pupils' learning is informal. The use of this information, however, is effective in adapting subsequent teaching; for example, the lessons often begin and end with effective revision sessions.

120. The leadership and management of the subject are good. Challenges associated with amalgamation have been overcome successfully. The newly-appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic and well-organised. The national scheme of work has been introduced to provide consistent challenge throughout the school. However, work remains to be done to adapt the scheme so that it more fully meets the nature of pupils' needs in the school and to train staff to make the scheme a more effective tool. The resources are already well organised and readily available to match the scheme's units of work. Monitoring of teaching is planned to begin during the summer term. The proposed introduction of optional tests in Year 5 should provide diagnostic information for the teachers to target teaching more effectively in Year 6 to raise standards, including those who are likely to attain Level 5.

ART AND DESIGN

121. Standards of attainment in both key stages are in line with what is expected nationally. Pupils make good use of sketchbooks to develop new techniques in both key stages. In Year 1, they experiment with mark making and mixing pastels to create secondary colours. They select different fabrics for circular weaving and cut, fold and join paper to make lanterns. In Year 2, pupils blow dark paint across a light background to make effective representations of winter trees. In their work on texture, they make rubbings of materials around the school, make good observational drawings of buildings and experiment with methods to represent texture in a picture. The drawing of action figures is taught in a systematic way when pupils use each other as models. Pupils modify their work in response to the teachers' questioning which improves their observational skills. They use the computer to experiment with colour and generate coloured symmetrical patterns. They draw pictures of houses, changing the background colours for night and day
122. In Key Stage 2, pastel work in Year 3 is of poor quality, but their use of the computer to generate patterns is good. When looking at the work of famous artists, pupils make sensible interpretations of relationships between characters from their facial expressions and clothes. Pupils in Year 4 improve their printing techniques using print blocks and explore how to use visual material to create an atmosphere for a dream. By the time they are in Year 5 and Year 6, pupils increase their drawing skills and many make good observational drawings with good attention to delicate line, light and shade. In their drawing of portraits that reflect different expressions, they translate light and shade into various colours. They explain the position of 'shoulders up' as an expression of shyness and comment on each other's work. They know that Van Gogh painted portraits. The quality of clay work in Year 5 is unsatisfactory and pupils' techniques are underdeveloped. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in the use of the computer for pattern, but insufficient use is made for print making and opportunities to explore the work of a range of artists.
123. Pupils in Key Stage 2 who attend the Saturday Club for art reflect the use of colour and styles of painting by famous artists in their own artwork, which is of a high standard. They

assemble collections of related objects and use the colours used by Matisse to make beautifully detailed pastel drawings of shells and large colourful paintings and collage. These are attractively displayed and enhance the environment of the school. The teaching and learning of direct observational drawing is good and many pupils use their observational skills to observe how different materials and images capture light. Opportunities are occasionally missed, for example, to use the collection of Greek pots used for history in Year 4 as a stimulus for clay work related to this culture.

124. Teaching is satisfactory in both key stages, but does not provide sufficient learning opportunities for pupils to express their feelings and imagination or develop a sufficient range of brushwork in paint or in three-dimensional work. Teachers provide few opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills by working together on projects in two and three dimensions on different scales. Generally throughout the school, the breadth of study is too narrow and does not allow pupils to experiment with some of the methods of other artists, craftworkers and designers to inform their own work.
125. The co-ordinator is recently appointed and his role is an area for development. He correctly comments that the current scheme of work used in the school needs to be adapted to the needs of the pupils. The portfolio of collected work is a useful overview of current work. It would be more useful if annotated to indicate achievement in relation to the expectations and levels of the National Curriculum. This will enable teachers to assess pupils' achievements and plan subsequent work more effectively.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

126. Standards are in line with what is expected nationally in both key stages. Teachers provide pupils in Year 2 with a range of projects that develop satisfactory knowledge, understanding and skills. For example, they are asked to design colourful repeating patterns on paper, using crayons as well as the computer, as part of designing and making a coat. The paper is cut into a pattern to use as a template for cutting the fabric. Subsequently, the pupils develop satisfactory skills in joining materials. Teachers ensure they evaluate and modify their work as it progresses and this helps them improve its quality.
127. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils design and make products such as model fairground rides and slippers. The range of fairground rides indicates that teachers provide good opportunities and challenges for pupils to develop ideas into products with good attention to the finish and some with good mechanisms. Pupils develop sound skills in using wood and in designing, making and evaluating products. Good use of questioning and explanations in a well-structured lesson in Year 6 motivated the pupils to complete successfully the flow diagram which described the process of how they were going to join the slippers that they had been working on. Asking pupils with special educational needs to use drawings to complete the flow chart and providing support through the classroom assistant ensured that they made appropriate progress. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm is evident in a range of projects in Key Stage 2. These include designing and making a good range of musical instruments in Year 5, lighthouses and traffic lights in Year 4 and wheeled vehicles in Year 3.
128. The quality of teaching and learning is good in both key stages. Lesson planning and provision and the way pupils are challenged to work in a structured way generate enthusiasm and raise productive working in pupils. Good pupil management and the monitoring of their work in lessons ensure that pupils make good progress. Girls, boys and pupils of different capabilities are provided with appropriate levels of challenge and opportunities.

129. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The nationally recommended scheme of work has been implemented well and supports pupils' progress. However, assessment arrangements and the use of assessment information to modify subsequent curricular opportunities have not been developed consistently across the school and do not yet promote more rapid progress.

GEOGRAPHY

130. Standards of attainment in geography are below what is expected nationally in both key stages. This is partly due to the way the curriculum is organised. For example, no geography is taught in Year 6 until the summer term when three units from the nationally recommended scheme are taught. Because this scheme was introduced in September 2000, Year 6 pupils do not have any recorded evidence of the subject in their books as yet and have not practised, reinforced or extended their skills for several months. Limited evidence was collected through a discussion with Year 6 pupils and from their history books which contained some map work.
131. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' knowledge and understanding of places is below average. Most have limited awareness of localities beyond their own town. However, teachers' encouragement of pupils to talk about places they have visited and showing them photographs are helpful in raising their awareness. Pupils' weakness in language skills limits their descriptions of places, for example, 'I went to Spain, it nice there'. A lack of resources, such as maps at appropriate scales, limits pupils' learning of distances between Brighton and other places on the continent of Europe. Although the tasks are explained clearly, insufficient focus on developing subject vocabulary such as the geographical meaning of 'town' and 'seaside' causes confusion, for example, when a teacher said 'Brighton is a town, not seaside'.
132. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils interpret information from tables, for example, on historical census data about peoples' ages, occupations and the number of people living in a house. Pupils have below average skills in reading maps. They can, however, identify some places of geographical significance, for example Hanover Street in Brighton. They are familiar with some geographical symbols, for example, of a windmill and of a church. In some lessons, weak management of pupils leads to unsatisfactory teaching. In contrast, in a lesson in Year 4, the teacher's clarity of purpose and challenging activities were combined with good pace and effective control of the pupils to produce good learning. Pupils were asked to observe pictures to identify and record significant changes in the physical and human features of a place over the period of an average human life span. They made good progress.
133. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in both key stages. Some elements of it could be better, especially the development of geographical language, the quality of resources, teachers' knowledge of the subject in the context of the newly introduced scheme of work and the management of pupils' behaviour.
134. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. A new co-ordinator has recently been appointed. Resources such as maps, atlases, aerial photographs and software are limited and do not support the revised curriculum sufficiently.

HISTORY

135. Only two lessons could be seen during the inspection and both were in Key Stage 2. Additional evidence was obtained from pupils' previous work, from talking to them about what they have done in the past and from teachers' planning. These sources indicate that by the end of both key stages pupils achieve the standards expected for their age.

There are particular strengths in Year 6 where skilful teaching promotes a high level of enthusiasm and supports pupils in developing skills in historical enquiry and interpretation.

136. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of the past and how events are ordered. In Year 1, they study old and new buildings and comment on how they know the difference between them. They study old and new toys and write about signs of age. Those with poorer literacy skills draw and label their findings instead of having to write about them. In Year 2, pupils widen their experience of the past in their studies of the Great Fire of London and of Florence Nightingale. They know that these refer to events 'a long time ago' and recall appropriate details of each topic. They use books to research their work and take account of eye-witness accounts, such as the diaries of Samuel Pepys.
137. In Key Stage 2, pupils cover the main topics required by the National Curriculum through a well-planned programme of work. In Year 3, for example, they study Ancient Egypt and talk sensibly about the everyday life of people of that time. In Years 4 and 5, they extend their knowledge by studying Ancient Greece. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils used written reference sources sensibly to find out about gods and goddesses. Pupils' achievements in Year 6 are impressive. In spite of the low levels of literacy they often demonstrate in other subjects, they produce a wide range of well-presented work on Victorian Britain and on the life and times of John Lennon. This latter topic has involved extensive research into modern history and culture, critical consideration of a range of sources of evidence and a good level of factual knowledge. The work is culminating in high-quality multimedia presentations produced by pupils. Skilful teaching has promoted pupils' application and extension of their skills in history, English and information and communication technology through this topic. Pupils have developed, at the least, an enthusiasm for history and, in some cases, indications of a deeper interest in the subject. In the lesson seen in Year 6, the debate was of a high standard in relation to pupils' capabilities, they contributed confidently and collaborated well in research tasks.
138. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in both key stages and are good in Year 6. Teachers' planning encourages progression in pupils' learning and benefits from good collaboration between staff in their year group teams. Lessons are planned to match the wide range of attainments within the classes. Teachers explain work clearly and use questioning well to establish what pupils have learned and to extend their thinking. They have high expectations of what pupils can do and of their behaviour in lessons. They use resources such as books and artefacts well and make good use of CD-ROMs and the Internet for research. Support staff are used efficiently to enable lower attainers to take a full part in lessons. The particular strength in Year 6 is rooted in the teachers' very high expectations of what pupils can do if they are enthused and supported well.
139. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership. Although the subject is not scheduled as a major focus for development in the school for some time, she has worked with colleagues to establish an appropriate curriculum in both key stages, in line with recent national guidance. She has not formally monitored the quality of teachers' planning. She has not yet had sufficient opportunities to see her colleagues' lessons at first hand, but these are planned for next term. The practical resources for the subject are of good quality and plentiful. They are stored and catalogued meticulously. Visits in the locality and further afield supplement lessons and good use is made of visitors, such as a theatre group who recently performed a presentation about Ancient Greece. The subject makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development. There is not yet an agreed structure for assessing pupils' attainment, but there are examples of good practice in several classes that would form a useful basis for development. The co-ordinator has recently begun to

compile a collection of pupils' work from all age groups. This would benefit from being referenced to National Curriculum levels.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140. Standards in information and communication technology are above those expected nationally. They are well above these expectations in terms of the pupils' ability to develop ideas by bringing together text, images and sound to make multimedia presentations. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop confidence in using their computer skills. These encourage positive attitudes to learning and have a corresponding impact upon the standards they achieve, not only in this subject, but also in the wider curriculum.
141. Pupils in Key Stage 1 have a good level of independence in their work. They know how to enter information into a computer, save it, load and retrieve the information when needed and how to shut down a computer correctly. Almost all pupils use the computer to write simple sentences or a letter. More able pupils in Year 2 write imaginative stories of a good standard directly into the computer and edit and print them without help. Pupils use a program which combines print and sound and this improves their reading. They concentrate well when using number programs with independence. All pupils create colourful computer-generated pictures by selecting the appropriate icons to draw, fill or spray. Pupils in Year 1 use a paint program to experiment with combining text and pictures. They explain how toys at home respond to remote control signals and instructions.
142. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 make good use of the Internet to find out about the Egyptians and the Greeks as part of their history lessons. Year 3 pupils follow instructions correctly to change the style and colour of their own name. Pupils in Year 4 write for different audiences. They use the computer to insert pictures into the text to create mood and imagery in words associated with their science topic, such as 'zoom'. Pupils in Year 5 combine words and pictures effectively and use procedures for graphic designs to resize and rotate shapes on the screen to copy a picture. In their work in science, they use sensors to monitor changes such as the rate of evaporation in different places and temperature change. These activities improve their understanding of differences in pattern in graphs of change over time. They use a control program to write a procedure for drawing a specific shape or repeating patterns. Pupils in Year 6 combine information from several sources to make high quality multimedia presentations about John Lennon as part of a history study. In constructing their presentations, they recognise the importance of framing relevant questions and of correct spelling to access information from the Internet and select pictures that would be of interest to an audience. They enter information acquired from their interviews of people about the artist and preferences of music into the computer, then add music and voice to their presentations. Pupils explain how several programs are linked to make a slide show.
143. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and are enthusiastic users of computers. They support each other well in lessons in the computer suite, in class, at the beginning of the day in the breakfast club or during the lunchtime 'happy club'. Few pupils have computers at home so all the skills they acquire are from school. They treat equipment with respect and the behaviour during lessons observed in the computer suite ranged from good to excellent.
144. The teaching is good overall and in one lesson seen was excellent. In the computer suite, teachers make effective use of the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate procedures. Teachers sometimes miss the chance to combine work in this subject with learning and improving knowledge in other subjects. For example, in Year 5, pupils could

have used the skill of rotating shapes to create their own pictures in the context of art or mathematics. In lessons where teaching was excellent, more able pupils took notes while the teacher explained procedures and teaching points clearly. This group of pupils met the high level of the teachers' expectations and teaching was set in the relevant context of another subject. Pupils collaborate well in pairs and the more able assist the less able. Generally, in all lessons, pupils are highly motivated and remain on task. As a consequence they make good progress in their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. This is reinforced in class lessons when pupils make good use of computers and laptops in the course of their lessons. Good use is made of support staff who make an effort to improve their own skills in their own time and attend courses.

145. Teachers monitor pupils' progress well in Key Stage 1 and this ensures that all pupils achieve well. From Year 3 onwards, each pupil has his or her own disk that they take with them when they change classes and this assists continuity in their learning. Several pupils in Year 5 collect information for the Hodshrove Woods Database project and pupils anticipate being involved in cataloguing the new library books onto a database. Planned opportunities are identified in the subject curriculum for the use of computer databases. As yet this is not linked to work planned in other subjects, such as mathematics.
146. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about the subject, sets good examples of its applications in her class teaching and has high expectation of pupils. She has been active in setting up the computer suite and in selecting software to support all areas of the curriculum, with the exception of controlling models in design and technology. She has begun to plan for pupils to use e-mail to improve their communication skills and this is an area for improvement. All staff have assessed their professional development needs and these are to met by training provided by the New Opportunities Fund. The computer suite and interactive whiteboard have raised pupils' standards in a very short period of time. The facility is used well overall. However, there are periods where more use could be made of these high quality resources for additional teaching periods to target the raising of standards, for example, in mathematics in Year 6 and spelling in Year 3.

MUSIC

147. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment meets the standards expected nationally. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their lessons. Teachers have planned an appropriate range of activities that link well to the resources available in the school. These activities link to the requirements of the National Curriculum and make good use of recent national guidance. As a result, pupils build progressively on their skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school.
148. The development of music has not been a major priority in the new school, but staff have succeeded in keeping it as a regular strand in pupils' experience. There is an experienced co-ordinator. However, her recent absence through illness has led to large group activities such as singing practice being curtailed. The regular class music lessons are supplemented for a minority of pupils through good quality tuition in guitar, keyboard and violin. This enables these pupils to achieve well. Pupils also have opportunities to learn and perform in larger groups such as the samba band. These additional activities are supported by the Education Action Zone and provide pupils with access to valuable specialist teaching which would otherwise have been out of their reach. The initiatives also support parents financially and encourage them to help their child's progress by enabling them to practise at home.
149. By the age of seven, pupils sing enthusiastically and in tune. They use percussion instruments to perform simple patterns and accompaniments and improve their work by practising. In a successful lesson seen in Year 2, pupils achieved above average

standards in their ability to create a very wide variety of sounds from the same simple instrument such as a woodblock or triangle. They were inventive, listened carefully to everyone's efforts, reflected on how the sounds were made and politely appraised how successful they were. Their good listening evoked thoughtful comments such as 'It's like putting cement on bricks' and 'That's the noise a window cleaner makes'. They controlled tempo, texture and dynamic well. In the lessons seen in Key Stage 1, pupils enjoyed their work and behaved well. They maintained their enthusiasm and attention. They showed appreciation of the efforts made by their classmates and, in one class, spontaneously applauded a particularly inventive contribution.

150. It was not possible to see lessons with the oldest pupils in the school. Instead, conversations were held with pupils about the work they have covered and teachers' planning was examined. These indicate that pupils in Year 6 cover a satisfactory range of activities. They listen to and appraise a range of music from various traditions, such as classical compositions from Eastern Europe and pop music from the 1950s and 1960s linked to the history topic on John Lennon. They sing songs in several parts and as rounds. They have composed chants and can interpret a simple written score. In the rest of Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in all the main elements of the National Curriculum. In the lessons seen in Years 3, 4 and 5, they listened, composed and performed, using voices and instruments with suitable control for their age.
151. Sound teaching produces satisfactory learning in the school, including for the large proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers plan interesting and varied activities in all age groups and work well together within their year teams to provide consistency. Their own musical abilities and knowledge vary considerably, but all strive to provide a suitable range of opportunities for their pupils. Pupils respond to the lessons with interest and enthusiasm. They try hard to learn and to improve. Effective use is made of a published scheme to support lessons. At times, the teachers' use of the tape cassettes used by the scheme does not help the flow of the lesson because of the frequent need to rewind and find the right place on the tape. They might produce better results by leading the activity themselves, rather than relying on the cassette. Pupils' behaviour is controlled well; this often takes considerable skill in those classes where there is a high level of behavioural needs. In the best lessons, seen in both key stages, teachers showed patience and infectious enthusiasm when handling behaviour. This resulted in most pupils learning at a good rate and the minority who showed inappropriate behaviour being controlled so that they did not disrupt others. In a weaker lesson, the teacher was over-critical of poorer behaviour at times and this detracted from the otherwise pleasant atmosphere in the lesson.
152. Class lessons are supplemented well by opportunities for larger-scale performances, such as in school concerts and productions. Pupils contribute to the Brighton Festival. A few attend a weekend music school held at a local secondary school. This gives them the opportunity to play with other young people and gives them access to a wider range of specialist activities.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

153. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection, one with seven year olds and two with pupils between the ages of seven and 11 years. However, judgements are based upon discussions with staff and pupils as well as the lessons seen. Pupils' skills are below expectations in Year 2. In Year 6, pupils attain well below average levels and several have significant special educational needs. Standards in swimming are poor. Approximately one third of pupils are likely to meet the national target to swim 25 metres before leaving the school. In spite of these low standards, pupils' achievements are

satisfactory given their low attainment when they started school and they make sound progress in lessons.

154. In the only Key Stage 1 lesson seen during the inspection, teaching was good. Good attention to safety issues and good use of time ensured that all pupils in Year 2 who had suitable clothing available for their lesson participated willingly in a throwing activity. They were keen to test themselves by seeing how many accurate throws of a beanbag into a hoop they could achieve. The teaching strategy of timing them and preparing them to improve on their first result successfully motivated the pupils. This ensured a satisfactory rate of learning during the session. The pupils also generously acknowledged the achievements of their peers. In this lesson the teacher made good use of time for those pupils who could not actively participate by asking them to record what their classmates did. They undertook this task with impressive conscientiousness. The policy for the subject gives appropriate consideration to how to involve pupils who are not participating directly in a lesson, for example, because of an injury or because they do not have suitable clothing.
155. In dance lessons, the oldest pupils lack the level of co-ordination and fluidity of movement expected for their age. Most of the pupils in the class seen had special educational needs, including behavioural difficulties. They began to work together to produce a sequence of movements to represent buoyant and tranquil seas. However, they co-operated mostly by watching and imitating each other, rather than developing ideas for each other. They were too dependent on the class teacher to provide ideas for the initial distinction between a rough and a quiet sea. When teachers have good control and clear learning intentions, pupils understand the behaviour that is required of them. This helps them to make good progress in participating fully in the lesson without obstructing each other in any way, such as by making fun of each other. In the dance lesson seen, pupils made satisfactory gains in producing a sequence of movement, given their limited skills initially. In games lessons, older pupils perform best when they practise skills individually. They have great difficulty in playing a game as part of a team and most play a game without considering tactics. In Year 4, pupils practised hitting a shuttlecock to each other sensibly, but their hand-eye co-ordination was immature.
156. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are very successful in promoting good behaviour for most pupils. However, a significant minority of pupils constantly test teachers and push the boundaries of what they know to be acceptable behaviour. One of the three lessons seen during the inspection was good. Teachers communicate the value that they afford the subject by keeping a register of participation in physical education. Pupils know that if they miss too many lessons their class teacher will write to their parent or carer. The school also supplies spare kit where possible for those pupils who have forgotten their own. Teachers provide suitable warm up and cool down activities and pay good attention to safety issues. They plan for an appropriately broad and balanced range of activities and aim to teach skills and understanding of games, swimming, athletics, dance and outdoor activities. The sound teaching means that most pupils make reasonable progress in developing their skills in these aspects of physical education. However, in spite of this sound teaching, the extent of pupils' special educational needs means that most do not create movement in dance, play team games or co-ordinate their movement with the control and maturity expected for their age.
157. The co-ordinator has expertise in the subject and is enthusiastic. Senior staff recognise the importance of physical co-ordination skills and exercise. They have put in place recent improvements aimed at raising standards. They are helping to encourage more regular participation in physical activities and to cater for many pupils' special needs in this subject. The school has developed a good policy. This is a major factor in ensuring that staff consistently monitor pupils' participation in lessons and clearly demonstrate to

pupils that it is an important subject. The co-ordinator has contributed to the development of after-school sports clubs enjoyed by several pupils. There are sufficient resources of reasonable quality to support these clubs as well as the full range of lessons time-tabled for pupils. The headteacher demonstrates his support of the subject very effectively with popular football sessions in the hall every lunchtime.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

158. Six lessons were observed during the inspection. Evaluation of standards is based upon those, but also includes the evidence of a scrutiny of previous work and discussions with the headteacher, the subject co-ordinator, other teachers and pupils.
159. Pupils' attainments are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the ages of seven and 11 years. Attainments are often limited by pupils' low levels of literacy, particularly in their reading and writing, but also in their limited spoken vocabulary. Pupils throughout the school often encounter difficulties in choosing the most telling words or phrases to describe their thinking. However, the achievements of many pupils, including those with special educational needs, are increasingly good compared with their prior attainments.
160. In a Year 1 lesson about the significance of holy days, pupils learned little because they could not concentrate for long enough to understand the concept of religious observance. Most pupils sat quietly watching a video about Eid, but few were then able to understand why Muslims observe this festival or see the similarities between Eid and the Christian period of Lent and Easter. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils had little understanding of the meaning and purpose of baptism.
161. By the age of 11, most pupils are developing some understanding of Christianity, but they are less knowledgeable about other world faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism. Pupils in Year 6 become increasingly aware of issues associated with human existence. They understand, for example, that, although they might not be regular churchgoers, Christians believe that God still loves them all equally and forgivingly. Pupils have a growing understanding of the value of prayer in worship.
162. The overall quality of teaching is good with very good teaching seen in Year 2 and some good teaching in Year 3 and Year 6. Where teaching is effective, lessons are well organised and teachers match the work carefully to the abilities of different groups. Teachers help pupils to reflect upon life and to develop a greater understanding of themselves. In both key stages, pupils are given time for quiet reflection in discussion groups known as 'circle time'. During such times pupils are helped to reflect on their own actions and lives, on their beliefs and their feelings about life's events. Teachers too rarely use role-play to enliven pupils' understanding. They also do not include enough opportunities for pupils to visit synagogues, mosques and churches of different denominations as part of their lessons. The school has strong links with the local church and the vicar is a regular visitor as well as being a school governor.
163. Pupils make good gains in their learning when teachers provide artefacts in lessons, such as a range of sacred texts of good quality. They are less able to study stories from the Bible individually because the school does not have a set of Bibles for them to use. Pupils in Year 5 use specific vocabulary such as 'Old Testament' and 'New Testament'. They have learned about The Last Supper and a few understand its link to Holy Communion. Pupils in Year 3 refer to the altar being 'like a table'. They comment on the crucifix and the eating of bread and drinking of consecrated wine. Pupils in Year 2 gain a better understanding of John the Baptist's meeting with Jesus by the banks of the Jordan through high quality teaching.

164. Subject leadership has been ineffective in recent times. The school has focused upon attainment in literacy and numeracy and the development of religious education has not had a high priority. There has been, for example, no monitoring or evaluation of teaching or standards, no formal or informal discussions, little in-service training and little assessment of pupils' progress. The school's planning provides good guidance in that the local agreed syllabus is linked to the national recommendations for a scheme of work. These documents have not been translated into a more specific scheme of work that reflects the many needs of Moulsecoomb pupils. The timing of lessons is detrimental to a deeper understanding in some year groups, such as in Year 2. Here, the lessons are too short for pupils to consider and reflect upon ideas fully. Assessment is at an early stage of development. The subject co-ordinator has organised the resources for this subject well and they are accessible to teachers. The artefacts used to assist religious education are quite good in terms of sacred objects and writings. The strongest element of the school's provision for religious education is in the way teachers care for pupils and show respect for the faiths of different cultures around the world.