

INSPECTION REPORT

COOPER AND JORDAN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

Aldridge, West Midlands

LEA area: Walsall

Unique reference number: 132073

Headteacher: Mr Raymond Hosking

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham Haynes
18064

Dates of inspection: 29th April – 2nd May 2002

Inspection number: 244675

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: The Green
Aldridge
West Midlands

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Christopher Blunt

Date of previous inspection: Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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18064	Graham Haynes	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? School results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9079	Ann Moss	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3586	Elizabeth Camplin	Team inspector	Foundation stage Music Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
20142	Malcolm Childs	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Design technology Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
14732	Enid Korn	Team inspector	Mathematics	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
30677	Margaret Waterston	Team inspector	Geography History	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This new, voluntary aided Church of England primary school formed by the amalgamation of the Infant and Junior schools is situated in Aldridge, West Midlands. It has been subject to significant changes over the last 20 months, as a result of the amalgamation process. The school is involved in the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Excellence in Clusters Initiative. It caters for pupils aged from 3 to 11 years of age, drawn from the surrounding locality. The vast majority of pupils are white and of UK heritage. They come from a range of backgrounds and their attainment on entry is varied, but broadly above average. There are 481 pupils making the school much bigger than other primary schools. No pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (1.5 per cent) is below the national average. The 10.8 per cent of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is a lower than average percentage, and 1.7 per cent of pupils have statements of special education needs, which is also below the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Cooper and Jordan CE Primary is a very good school. Pupils' standards of work in English, mathematics, science and physical education (PE) are high in Year 6. Pupils' scores in the 2001 national tests in Year 2 and Year 6 were at least well above the national average. Pupils of all abilities make good progress through the school in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), music and PE. The quality of teaching is good with some very good features. The headteacher, governing body and senior staff provide very good leadership and management. The school offers very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils achieve high standards in English, mathematics, science and PE
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress in English, mathematics, science, ICT, music and PE
- The overall good quality of teaching is a major factor in pupils' attainment and progress
- Pupils' excellent personal development and relationships are fostered by the very strong Christian ethos
- There is an excellent partnership with parents
- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher, senior staff and the governing body is very good

What could be improved

There are no key issues. Self-evaluation is a strong feature and has enabled the school to recognise its strengths and areas for further development. Governors and staff are very committed to maintaining high standards and making further improvements. Priorities and actions to bring this about are drawn up in an appropriate agenda that is the school improvement plan (SIP). Within the identified actions, in order to bring greater precision to its work and to raise standards further, the school should give priority to:

- extending the subject leader's co-ordination role across the whole school, particularly in foundation subjects;
- fine-tuning the time allocation for each subject in the curriculum;
- monitoring the range of activities that the pupils receive in all subjects, to ensure they receive the fullest range possible

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school as it is now constituted has not been inspected before. However, the inspection team judges that since amalgamation very good progress has been made in ensuring that high standards are achieved in many aspects of its work. Standards of pupils' work have been maintained, as has the excellent partnership with parents. The quality of teaching continues to improve. Teamwork is of a high standard, which is remarkable considering the relatively short time that the staff have been working together. Staff and governors are very committed to bringing about further improvements. They have a very good capacity to succeed. The leadership and management of the school are of high quality. The contributions of all members of the school community are valued.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	n/a	n/a	A	A
Mathematics	n/a	n/a	A*	A*
Science	n/a	n/a	A	A

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

Last year, the pupils' national test results in Year 6 were very high in mathematics, in the highest 5 per cent of schools nationally. Pupils' scores were high in English and science. Pupils are very high achievers in mathematics, and high achievers in English and science when compared with pupils in similar schools. The performance of both girls and boys is well above the national average, with the boys doing particularly well. This was the first time that pupils of this newly amalgamated school recorded scores in the national tests, therefore, there is no previous data to provide information about pupils' performance over time. The school is making good progress in reaching targets set for English and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that good overall progress is being made by pupils of all abilities in relation to earlier attainment, including those who are gifted and talented and those who have special educational needs. High standards of work were seen in English, mathematics, science and PE.

The majority of children in the reception classes are likely to exceed all the national standards set by the early learning goals for five-year-olds. They have made good progress since entering the school in personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Sound progress has been made in creative development and physical development. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests pupils' results in Year 2 were very high in reading, and high in writing and mathematics. In comparison with schools with a similar intake, results were high in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. This was the first time that pupils of this newly amalgamated school recorded scores in the national tests. There is no data to provide information about pupils' performance over time. The performance of both girls and boys is well above the national average, with the boys doing particularly well. Inspection evidence shows that good overall progress is being made by pupils of all abilities in relation to earlier attainment, including those who are gifted and talented and those who have special educational needs. Above average standards of work were seen in English,

mathematics, music and PE, despite the current Year 2 cohort of pupils containing a wider spread of abilities, and a lower overall level of attainment, than any other year group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show high levels of enjoyment and interest in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils show much consideration for others.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The relationships among pupils, and between adults and pupils are proof of the school's very strong Christian ethos.
Attendance	Very good.

These strengths show the school's continuing success, since amalgamation, in implementing a caring ethos in which all pupils are valued.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of teaching is good with some very good features, particularly in Key Stage 2 lessons. All the teaching was satisfactory or better; almost two out of every three lessons contained good or better quality teaching. In a quarter of lessons the teaching was very good or excellent. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills reflects this overall quality and is enabling pupils of all abilities to make good progress and to achieve well. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good, and often very good, and is a major factor in promoting pupils' learning. Very good features of teaching include the teachers' knowledge and understanding of what they teach, particularly in English, mathematics and science; the teaching of basic skills; the high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour; and the caring and positive management of all pupils.

The overall quality of pupils' learning across the school is good. Their acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding is very good. Particularly impressive is the range of knowledge that pupils possess in a range of subjects. Pupils have a very good understanding of their learning, fostered by their personal development and the excellent relationships that exist between themselves and school staff. They are very interested in their work. Pupils concentrate very well and show independence and confidence.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The strong emphasis on English and mathematics is increasingly widening to include a wider range of activities in other subjects for all pupils. The school is committed to providing equality of opportunity for all pupils and to including them in all the activities on offer.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The needs of the pupils are well met through well-planned classroom activities, the individual support offered in lessons, and in withdrawal groups
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Moral and social development is provided for to an excellent standard and by the everyday life, routines and expectations of the school that are an integral part of its Christian ethos. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Pupils' cultural development is well provided for.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are very well cared for. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' development and behaviour are particularly effective.

The school has an excellent partnership with parents. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are very effective. The curriculum is enriched by extra-curricular activities and by educational and residential visits. Teachers work hard to provide a good breadth of activities for the pupils. They get to know their pupils very well, showing genuine care and providing well for individual needs.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management and is ably supported by an enthusiastic staff team. The governing body, headteacher and staff make an effective team whose relationships are based on mutual respect, support and a desire for further improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well. Governors work very hard. The chair sets an excellent role model for his team. The governing body shows high levels of commitment and support for the school. These features are well balanced with the ability to ask challenging questions in the mutual quest for making the best possible provision for the pupils.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. A growing amount of data is increasingly used to focus on pupils' achievement. The school improvement plan contains an appropriate agenda for further development, following comprehensive consultation with all members of the school community. Information about comparable schools is used well to assist in the measuring of the school's performance.
The strategic use of resources	Excellent. Finances are managed to a very high standard. Resources are very well used to support educational priorities. The school always seeks to get the best value when purchasing goods and services.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are very good. The headteacher, staff and governors share a common vision for the school and work to a common agenda for

improvement. The school has a very good capacity to succeed with its aims. Despite only recently being amalgamated in one building, teamwork is of a high order and strengthening as time passes. The school has a clear educational direction and ensures that all of the pupils have the opportunity to be included in all its activities.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 204 parents' questionnaire returns showed that over 90 per cent of parents agreed or strongly agreed with just about everything that the school does. This is unusually strong support. ▪ 100 per cent of returns noted that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 per cent of respondents would like to see an improvement in the provision of activities outside of lessons.

The inspection team confirms the positive views expressed by the vast majority of parents. The school is very committed to consulting with parents and the partnership is outstandingly successful. Parents play a significant part in the standards that their children achieve. The inspection team judge the provision for extra-curricular activities to be very good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Childrens' attainment on entry to the nursery is usually above average and by the age of five is generally above the national expectations of the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development; communications, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development. Sound progress is evident in their physical and creative development, and good progress is made in the other four areas of learning.
2. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, pupils' results were very high in reading, and well above the national average in writing and mathematics. In comparison with the standards of pupils in schools with a similar intake, results were well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. The overall performance of girls and boys reflects the national picture, but at a higher level. In reading, girls are doing better than boys by a slightly bigger margin than the national one. In mathematics, boys do better than girls by a slightly bigger margin than the national one. In this recently amalgamated school, there is no historical data available about the pupils' performance by which the results in national tests over time can be analysed.
3. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' results were very high in mathematics, and well above the national average in English and science, and in comparison to schools with a similar intake. Boys and girls are both doing much better than the national scores, especially the boys, and particularly in English and mathematics.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that the overall standard of pupils' work in English and mathematics is above average at the end of Year 2. In science, standards are in line with national standards. The Year 2 cohort of pupils shows the broadest range of ability of any year group in the school. Although they have made good overall progress since entering the school, their general level of attainment is less than the previous cohort. In Year 6, overall standards of pupils' work are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils make good progress through the key stage in these subjects. Targets for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics are sufficiently challenging and are based on some good information about past performance. Good progress is being made in reaching the targets set.
5. Pupils across the school have good, often very good, speaking skills and their listening skills are well above average. In reading, seven-year-olds read different kinds of text fluently and expressively and use of their knowledge of sound clusters well to work out unknown vocabulary. In writing, pupils have attained a good understanding of how to construct sentences fluently and use punctuation correctly. By Year 6 both boys and girls are well on the way to becoming serious readers. Their ability to convey their thoughts within an imaginative and a varied range of text is very high. The pupils' ability to communicate in different styles, using well-chosen vocabulary for formal and informal occasions, is very well developed. By the age of seven, pupils have a good grasp of mental arithmetic skills. They use their number skills and a very clear understanding of the relative value of units and tens to answer questions about money and shopping. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the properties of flat and solid shapes and of the axis of symmetry in regular shapes. They are able to construct a block graph

manually and by using a computer. Their knowledge of mathematical words is good. By the age of eleven, average attaining pupils have a good knowledge of a range of strategies for mental maths and a very secure understanding of methods of computation for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division when working with numbers to one thousand. They are familiar with fractions. Those capable of high attainment know the properties of various quadrilaterals, the degrees on a straight line and of a circle, the angles of various triangles and the formula for the area of a circle. All pupils can plot line graphs and they have a good knowledge of mathematical vocabulary, which they use accurately.

6. By Year 2, pupils reach standards above national expectations in music and PE and in line with expectations in art and design, design and technology, geography, history and ICT. By Year 6, standards are well above national expectations in PE, above expectations in ICT and music, and in line with expectations in art and design, design and technology, geography and history.
7. Pupils of all abilities achieve well in relation to their previous attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and in ICT, music and PE at both key stages. Pupils of all abilities achieve satisfactorily in art and design, design and technology, geography and history at both key stages.
8. The school works very hard to provide activities that appeal to, and include, all pupils, whatever their ability. Pupils who are talented and gifted are recognised by the school and receive suitably challenging work that enables them to continue to make good progress as they move through the school. Their overall achievement is recognised in a wide range of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to the targets on their individual education plans, and to their previous learning. They are well supported by teachers and support staff. The pupils' good progress in literacy is aided by very specific learning targets. Evidence from a few lessons indicates that better overall progress could be achieved in mathematics if targets were equally specific.
9. Since amalgamation, the school has made very good progress in ensuring that high standards are achieved in many aspects of its work.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. All pupils show very positive attitudes to their work, play and extra-curricular activities and this is a significant strength of the school. Pupils come to school eager to learn and they approach their lessons and activities with great enthusiasm. This has a positive effect upon their learning and produces a very good learning environment. Pupils respond very well to stimulating questions and offer confident and well-considered replies. They listen very well to their teachers and to each other and instructions are followed quickly and quietly. This is a reflection of the quality of most teaching.
11. The pupils are extremely interested and involved in their activities. On occasions - for example, in mathematics lessons - when the teaching is very good their involvement is excellent. Pupils are hard working and concentrate well throughout the day. Those with special educational needs show a similar willingness to learn. Numerous examples were seen of pupils of all abilities working hard. They work well together, in pairs and groups, for example, in a Year 5 science lesson when investigating the relationship between pulse rate and exercise. As pupils progress through the school they develop good independent learning skills which they use in homework tasks, such as recording research for a geography project. In some lessons the opportunity for pupils to develop

their own independence and confidence is restricted because teachers sometimes offer too much advice and information through their desire for the pupils to be successful.

12. Pupils with special educational needs have positive attitudes towards the school because they are considered as valuable members of the community. They enjoy their learning experiences and work hard to improve their skills. They concentrate well and persevere in the face of challenge. They have very good relationships with learning support assistants and teachers and relate to their peers with confidence.
13. The behaviour of all groups of pupils is very good, which has a beneficial effect upon their learning and the school community as a whole. Pupils are all polite and friendly. They behave consistently well in lessons, assemblies, break and lunch times and as they move around the school. Firm behaviour management, well-established classroom routines and very high expectations of achievement and behaviour help pupils to progress. No instances were seen where behaviour had any significant adverse impact on learning. No instances of racism or bullying were observed or recorded and there is an excellent open atmosphere throughout the school that is free of oppressive behaviour. All of these features result in very high rates of attendance in comparison with other schools. The rate of unauthorised absence is below the national average. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in these figures. The school keeps a careful watch on the attendance of pupils and a rising number of parents taking their children out of school for holidays has been noted. There have been no exclusions since amalgamation.
14. Overall, relationships throughout the school are excellent and reflect the good role models presented to pupils by the adults in school. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very good and there is an apparent mutual respect. In addition, the very strong moral and social aspects of the school's Christian ethos mean that pupils have a confident and responsible approach to tasks set, respect each other's ideas and make decisions together with ease. Pupils exhibit very high levels of respect for the feelings, views and opinions of their fellow pupils. This creates a co-operative and purposeful atmosphere where pupils are polite and helpful to each other and also towards adults.
15. Pupils' personal development is excellent. Throughout the school children act in a mature and sensible manner. Pupils of all ages respond well to the system of rewards and certificates for achievement in academic, sporting, behavioural and social areas, showing enthusiasm, commitment and a willingness to carry out their duties. Pupils in Year 6 respond well to the wide range of additional responsibilities that prepare them well for mature citizenship. They take these duties very seriously, such as when selling goods and selecting an appropriate charity to receive the profits. They propose school improvements, as part of the newly formed school council, and send protest messages showing their concern for child labour across the world.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school, with some very good features, particularly in Years 3 to 6. It reflects the high quality of relationships between adults and pupils. Teachers throughout the school create a secure yet challenging climate for learning that earns pupils' interest and respect. A strong feature of many lessons is the approach to catering effectively for all pupils, irrespective of age, background and ability. This leads to pupils acquiring a very good understanding of how they learn and what they need to do to improve. Almost two out of every three lessons seen contained good or better quality teaching. In a quarter of lessons the teaching was very good or excellent due to the rigour and skill with which teachers made intellectual,

creative and physical demands on pupils of all abilities and backgrounds. The very best lessons included some excellent teaching in Year 1 music, Year 6 swimming and Year Reception dance. Very good teaching took place in a wide range of age groups and subjects which included English, mathematics, science, design and technology and ICT. A small number of lessons in the teaching of physical development in the Foundation Stage, music in Year 1 and mathematics in Year 2 contained less effective teaching. This was because teachers failed to deal fully with excitable behaviour, or to devise tasks with just the right balance of challenge and interest for each ability group.

17. Lesson planning is effective and usually makes very good provision for all pupils, including those who have learning difficulties and one who is disabled. Teachers make very effective use of classroom support assistants to help these children learn as well as their more able peers. For example, patient support in a science lesson for two pupils in Year 4 with statements of special educational need enabled them to set up their own experiment. A child in reception with a skin ailment was given surgical gloves so that she could join her friends in work with sand and water.
18. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Support teachers and learning support staff have a good understanding of their needs and are well briefed by class teachers. Staff have a clear awareness of the need for pupils to either retain or further develop their self-esteem, and their interventions are sensitive yet rigorous. Some effective strategies to encourage confidence and promote discussion are used by teachers during withdrawal sessions. For example, the use of a puppet with some of the younger pupils, who showed considerable interest in what the pupils were doing, and asked questions and made comments and funny remarks, had a significant effect on the pupils' level of participation and achievement. The majority of class teachers use questioning effectively to include pupils with special educational needs so that they fully participate as class members. Where teachers' planning is particularly good, pupils of all abilities learn well because the work matches their needs. The teaching of literacy in withdrawal groups is mostly good. It is sound in mathematics, where lesson objectives are not always as sharply defined and teaching is not always as well informed. This leads to a less stimulating atmosphere in which to achieve.
19. Stimulating and imaginative teaching of basic skills begins in the Foundation Stage for children in nursery and reception classes. Teachers are very good at engaging children in discussions about a whole variety of activities and experiences. They encourage all children to develop confidence in thinking and learning for themselves. Teachers expect a high percentage of reception children to record their findings using mathematical symbols and language. Additionally, outstanding teaching in dance results in children making considerable physical effort and consequently achieving high standards of creative movement. Teachers do not plan as effectively for some aspects of physical and creative development in the foundation stage or for the use of lesson time. Though they make a very good variety of resources available to children, adults direct some activities too much, especially those that take place outside the nursery. This means that children's natural curiosity is somewhat stifled and children are less independent than they are in imaginative play or dance activities in the hall. Nursery children also spend too much time as a whole class sitting on the carpet having their snacks and listening to teachers rather than working in small groups or undertaking individual practical activities.
20. In Years 1 to 6, teachers have good subject knowledge overall, with the greatest variation of knowledge and skills occurring in ICT. They use subject vocabulary precisely. Teachers usually explain lesson objectives well. They use challenging questions to check, reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of concepts related to lesson objectives. These qualities result in pupils of all abilities

responding very well, including the most able. Teachers demonstrate a perceptive awareness of how to make links between subjects and with education for citizenship and personal development. They ensure that pupils make good use of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote short, precise paragraphs to communicate conclusions in science work about mixing materials. They wrote empathetically to justify their views, for example on the significance of religious celebrations. Key Stage 1 pupils wrote labels for many of their pictures and models and used their knowledge of number and pattern creatively in music and dance lessons. There is less evidence of pupils doing extended writing in history and geography as teachers find it difficult to allocate sufficient time for this in lessons. Teachers make good use of homework to consolidate and extend the pupils' skills in reading, spelling and mathematics and to practise music and ICT. Some Year 6 pupils considered that they could find out more about people and places from past and present times if given more time for research.

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

21. The school provides a well-planned curriculum which is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils. Statutory requirements are met. The curriculum promotes high levels of attainment in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. There are further strengths in music and physical education. The curriculum is enriched by very good provision for extra-curricular activities. ICT is used effectively to support the curriculum across the school and effective use is made of homework to support English, mathematics and science and other subjects when appropriate. This is a considerable achievement given the recent amalgamation of the former infant and junior schools and the fact that necessary building work to create a unified school building was only completed for September 2001. However, the time given to art, design and technology, geography and history is too limited to allow the good teaching to achieve standards equivalent to those reached in other subjects.
22. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well and there is plenty of evidence of the maintenance of high standards in English. This is having a significant impact on writing skills in other subjects. The school works very hard to implement the National Numeracy Strategy successfully, and this is having a very positive effect on standards in mathematics. Inspection findings show that better basic skills are improving standards in other subjects: for example, the quality of speaking and listening across the school and the use of numeracy and literacy skills in, for example, geography, ICT and science.
23. The curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The whole staff shares a commitment to include all pupils in the daily life of the school as fully as possible and pupils are very well known by staff. Because teaching is mostly well targeted and pupils make good progress in their basic skills, they gain sufficient confidence to work alongside their peers. Withdrawal groups follow the pattern of work being undertaken in classes and support teachers take care to provide a work programme that matches the required curriculum. The support given to pupils with statements of special educational need, including physical disability, is very good. Clear procedures that meet statutory requirements are in place and managed well. Pupils' needs are identified early and a good level of support is provided in all classes. Pupils have individual education plans which contain well written targets that help them to make good progress with their work.
24. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities, and the number of after-school clubs and activities offered is good. There are frequent competitive sporting

events within the school and against other schools. Opportunities to appreciate music are regularly provided. Pupils, parents and staff eagerly look forward to the annual Year 6 musical production, which is a highlight of the school year. High standards in music are further reinforced through the work of the school choir and orchestra. Art events are well supported. Out-of-school visits are frequent and a considerable number of visitors to the school enhance the curriculum. Learning is supported very well outside the school day, with provision being made for extra English, mathematics and science tuition. The curriculum is further extended by French, Spanish and art clubs. There are opportunities to learn more about the Bible by joining the 'Bible Bunch' and 'Snapshots'.

25. The school works hard to ensure that the curriculum is fully inclusive. The age and gender of pupils are taken into account in developing the curriculum, and planning to take account of attainment is effective. The way in which teaching groups are organised results in equal access to the curriculum.
26. Overall provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good. It is an indication of the high quality of self-evaluation present in this school that staff and governors had identified PSHE as an area for further development. Lessons are planned well. Preparation of pupils for citizenship and adult life is very high on the school's list of priorities. A new policy is about to be implemented, circle time is being introduced and the recently formed school council has already established effective procedures and the quality of debate is high. Provision of health education is good, and pupils are made well aware of the dangers of drugs misuse. The governing body has approved the inclusion of sex education in the curriculum. Parents have been fully consulted about this provision and of their right to withdraw their children from lessons.
27. The community has a considerable impact on pupils' learning and intellectual development. For example, an assembly led by the Methodist Four Oaks Team both stimulated pupils and challenged them, as the leaders acted out the story of 'Daniel in the Lions' Den' and related the story to the meaning of faith in their world today. Pupils' social skills are improved by the school's strong involvement in the local community. The impact of the community on pupils' personal development and citizenship is good. The school makes effective use of resources within the locality to enhance pupils' appreciation of the wider world. Visits from representatives of other cultures and religions are encouraged and older pupils have visited a mosque and a Hindu temple. Good use is made of links with commerce, and the school gives very good support to events organised by the local community. For example, carol singing in the local shopping centre led in turn to sponsorship from local traders. Very many pupils have access to the Internet and make good use of this resource to broaden their knowledge of the world.

28. Relationships between the school and partner institutions are satisfactory. The school works well with early years' providers. Contact with other local schools significantly enhances the quality of sporting provision. The school is involved with other local primary schools as part of the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) Excellence in Clusters Initiative. Satisfactory relationships are maintained with local secondary schools.
29. The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is very good. They are given many opportunities to consider the beliefs of others. Time for them to reflect on their experiences is very well established, and this thinking significantly enhances their spiritual development. Meaning, purpose and values are central themes in acts of worship, and prayers at assemblies are based on the Christian faith.
30. The overall provision for pupils' moral development is excellent. Pupils can determine right from wrong. The school promotes honesty, fairness and justice very well, and truth is valued and respected by the vast majority. Equal opportunities and personal rights are well promoted. Moral development is very well planned. Time is set aside for reflection and discussion in classes. Pupils are given many opportunities to reflect and express their views in subjects such as history and geography. For example, they discuss the lives of working children in Pakistan and compare them with their own lives now and as they would have been in Victorian times.
31. Arrangements for developing pupils' social awareness are excellent. Staff and other adults at the school are very significant role models. Pupils are accustomed to taking responsibility for their own actions, and the school council is a very good example of where pupils take delight in demonstrating responsibility. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to exhibit a sense of self-discipline. Most pupils appreciate the principle of fair competition. Very good relationships make a significant contribution to the school's atmosphere. School and classroom rules are invariably developed with the co-operation of pupils. Older pupils are expected and encouraged to care for the younger ones, and they have expressed the wish through the school council to see the introduction of a "buddy system" more formally to involve them in the support of younger pupils. Teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to show initiative in their own learning. The pupils' social development is enhanced by school outings and residential visits.
32. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Many pupils have a considerable understanding of their own cultural heritage, and almost all pupils show a clear appreciation of the cultural diversity of British society. The school's provision for cultural experiences for pupils is very good in relation to western culture, and is satisfactory in relation to other cultures. The school works very hard to provide pupils with opportunities to appreciate art, literature and music from around the world. Visits from artists, poets and theatre groups are regular features of school life.
33. Teachers place a strong emphasis on the rights of all individuals and as a result pupils with special educational needs are helped to develop a strong sense of right and wrong within a caring atmosphere. Staff hold high expectations for pupils to respect each other and they provide an impressive role model for all pupils to follow. Socially, pupils with special educational needs, like all the pupils, are expected to contribute in class and group sessions and are expected to share, take turns and be active members of small groups.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school has very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, and its standards of pastoral care are very high. Parents are very pleased with the support given to their children and feel that teachers do all they can to help them to make good progress.
35. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good, and those for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are excellent. Staff have very high expectations of good behaviour and effective methods are in place to ensure that they are met. There is a shared understanding by all members of staff of the need to implement the guidance given in school policies. Good behaviour is encouraged in ways that make sense to the children. Teaching and support staff make a significant contribution to the provision of a caring atmosphere and a safe and calm environment for all pupils, both in and out of lessons. All children are valued. The learning mentor is becoming very involved in the school and is used well to support children who benefit from her help. Playtimes and lunchtimes are well supervised.
36. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. Every member of staff has received training in this aspect of care. Staff are also receiving appropriate training to enable them to keep up to date with administering first aid. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and regular risk assessments are carried out.
37. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. All staff know pupils well and respond sympathetically to each child. There is a strong emphasis on raising pupils' self-esteem. Pupils are becoming very confident in their dealings with each other and with all members of staff. Teachers give praise and encouragement during lessons, and achievements, both large and small, are celebrated. This has a positive effect on pupils' confidence and encourages them to achieve more. Circle time and personal, social and health education lessons are used with increasing effect to help the pupils learn to understand about themselves and others. There are opportunities for them to take responsibility with daily routines around the school.
38. Members of staff provide good support for pupils with special educational needs because they assess their needs on a day-to-day basis and share information with each other. There are some shortcomings in the sharing process, mainly at Key Stage 2, where teachers of some withdrawal groups do not share information with class teachers often enough. Regular reviews are held to discuss pupils' progress in relation to targets on individual education plans. A few targets in mathematics are still too broad to be properly measurable. The school works well with professionals outside the school. The school meets the requirements of pupils who have statements of special educational need well.
39. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. The school follows up any unexplained absence or lateness. Attendance figures are entered and checked regularly and the school works closely with the education welfare officer in monitoring and evaluating the situation. Although the school has very high attendance rates the number of parents taking their children out of school for holidays in term time is increasing. A greater emphasis on discouraging extended holidays could well help pupils and parents to become even more aware of the importance of maintaining these high levels of attendance. Registration provides a calm and efficient start to the day.

40. At both key stages, the procedures for assessing pupils' progress and the use of assessment to inform planning are sound overall. The best procedures are in the core subjects, particularly English. In this case pupils' attainment is measured against teachers' on-going assessments together with the data from both national assessments and standardised tests in order to set appropriate class targets on the basis of these projections. Class teachers make good use of pupils' individual targets, which both they and each pupil agree beforehand.
41. Assessment procedures for mathematics and science are sound. In mathematics, the school does not use the information from tests sharply enough to diagnose where pupils can perform better; it is used mainly to place pupils in specific groups. Class targets are not yet set in either mathematics or science. Planning in science is more closely related to individual pupils' needs. Teachers' on-going assessments of pupils' progress are very good in literacy and mathematics, where they are more precise at Key Stage 2 than in a few instances at Key Stage 1. For example, in a small number of mathematics lessons there is insufficient identification within the teacher's planning for the needs of individual pupils and, as a consequence, a mismatch results between the work provided and the needs of some pupils.
42. Assessment procedures, and the use of the outcomes of assessment to plan for the next stage of work, are broadly sound for all other subjects. Good practice is evolving in the assessment of pupils' work in ICT for example, in Year 1 and 2 classes. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and this practice is beginning to have a positive effect on their progress and the ability of teachers to match work to the pupils' needs more accurately. In geography and history lesson objectives are sometimes not as precise as they might be and so teachers cannot easily assess at the end of a lesson whether pupils have learned what was intended.
43. The assessment co-ordinator has worked hard to put whole-school procedures in place. She has a clear vision of what needs to be done to improve assessment further, particularly the use of information to inform the planning of future lessons. An appropriate agenda for action is contained in the school improvement plan (SIP).

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents have extremely positive views of the school. Strong relationships exist between the school and parents, and parental support is very strong across a wide range of aspects of school life. Almost every parent responding to the questionnaire was very happy with the school. Those spoken to at the parents' meeting and during the inspection week were very warm in their praise of the school's work. They all like the school a lot, particularly for its caring attitudes, and believe that their children are making good progress. All parents who returned questionnaires agree that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.
45. A very small minority of parents felt that the school did not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons, but the inspection team judged the provision of extra-curricular activities to be very good. Another very small minority of parents hinted at some inconsistencies in the amount of homework given across the school, but the inspection team found the use of homework to be good.
46. The school's links with parents are highly effective. Parents speak very positively of the informal links with the headteacher and staff. They feel very welcome in the school. They see links as a two-way process, ensuring that pupils' interests are to the fore, and appreciate the use of home/school books to pass information between school and home. The contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home is

excellent. Parents are really encouraged to help and are made to feel useful and worthwhile. No children spoken to said that they did not have someone at home to help with homework, and the children are bringing from home a breadth of knowledge and understanding about the world. Many parents come into school to help with swimming, reading, cooking and extra-curricular activities. This participation makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. There is always full attendance at parents' evenings and more than 50 parents attended the 'Forum Assembly' which was held during the week of the inspection. The school's existing practice of including parents at review meetings for pupils with special educational needs from an early stage is in line with the requirements of the new Code of Practice. The opinions of parents of children with special educational needs, canvassed at an early stage of the inspection, strongly indicate their satisfaction with the quality of communication and partnership with the school and with the progress of their children.

47. The Parents' Association is a small, but dedicated band of people who are working very hard at organising fundraising and social events. They have raised a large amount of money and have bought recently, for example, an interactive white board. They are trying to involve more parents in their activities, and a class teacher attends their meetings. This has had a very positive effect on further improving the liaison between parents and the school.
48. The quality of information provided for parents is good overall. Newsletters are sent out frequently, and parents are given information regarding the curriculum and topics that the pupils will be studying during the year. The annual reports are satisfactory. The school prospectus does not contain the required information for example, regarding attendance rates, and no guidance is given regarding the right of parents to withdraw their children from religious education lessons and collective worship. The governors' annual report to parents does not contain information regarding rates of authorised and unauthorised absence.
49. Induction procedures for children entering the school are good. Parents are pleased at how their children settle in and enjoy school. They like the way pupils are expected to work hard and they also appreciate the care taken when the oldest pupils transfer to secondary school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and key staff are very good. Their leadership and management qualities were put to the test with the amalgamation in September 2000 of the previously separate infant and junior schools. The re-organisation of the schools into one single entity with a new structure, an increase in size and the building work associated with physically joining the two schools has been managed very well. The result is that the school is fully staffed, functions very efficiently and provides a caring and happy environment for the pupils. The headteacher's skilled and patient leadership has been ably supported by the senior postholders and the often excellent work of the governing body. All have worked to a common aim of establishing the best possible provision for the pupils and maximising the potential that a larger school could bring to such matters as a whole-school consistency of procedures, policies and practice.
51. The result of this combined effort has been a school that has a very clear educational direction. The input of the deputy headteacher, who was appointed at the same time that amalgamation took place, members of the senior management team and subject co-ordinators to this process is already strong, and continues to grow in its effectiveness. This is being brought about by the vision and leadership of the

headteacher in delegating appropriate responsibilities to staff and in pursuing the re-organisation of the roles of subject co-ordinators from being key-stage-specific to having whole-school responsibility. Where two co-ordinators are in charge of a subject at present, there is much good liaison and co-operation. The headteacher's excellent management skills have been applied to this situation and in pursuit of the whole-school approach to subject management. Sensitive consultation with staff has maintained a purposeful working atmosphere and very good relationships in the school, as well as achieving whole-school subject co-ordination as the norm for September 2002. As part of the school's self-evaluation process, this feature of development had been recognised and action taken, particularly in relation to the development of the role of co-ordinators for foundation subjects, such as geography and history. The inspection team endorses this and the other actions that are detailed in the school improvement plan (SIP), as an appropriate agenda for moving the school forward and bringing about further improvement to the standard of pupils' work. This judgement is reflected in there being no key issues arising from the inspection; rather the inspectors have pointed out to the school the matters that should be given the greatest priority.

52. The management of provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator provides good leadership and she is supported by an enthusiastic governor responsible for this area, who also has considerable knowledge and understanding in this aspect. The school has made a good start in implementing the requirements of the new Code of Practice and has included appropriate targets for its further implementation within the SIP.
53. Throughout the recent changes, the governing body has been able to offer excellent support to the work of the school and its managers. The governors carry out their statutory duties very well. Their role in shaping the direction of the school has been exemplary. They keep a well-informed oversight of the school's performance through the work of the governing body sub-committees and their own personal commitment in visiting the school regularly, meeting with staff and seeing them at work. Governors are set an excellent role model by the chair, who is in school most days and always ready to enter into a constructive dialogue with staff, parents and pupils. Governors maintain a very supportive attitude to the school that is sensitively balanced with the need to ask challenging questions from time to time in order to carry out their work to full effect. This delicate balance of support and challenge is carried out both formally and informally, through meetings and by personal contact. The overall work of the governors has been instrumental in the successful management of the amalgamation process. They also reinforce the determination of the headteacher and his team of staff to avoid becoming complacent about the school's performance. The governing body uses a good range of data about pupils' performance, finances, and information about comparable schools to inform its work. Such actions have been an integral part of the governors establishing a clear view of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the school. They obtain ownership of the SIP through their own involvement in the consultation process before the plan is finalised and by monitoring the agreed actions, for example, by inviting staff with management responsibilities to make presentations at their meetings. The work that has started since amalgamation in taking the SIP, and the finances to support it, beyond one academic year should be continued, in order to provide guidance for school improvement into the medium term.

54. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching and learning are good overall and improving as whole-school subject co-ordination develops. The best practice is in the core subjects of English and mathematics, although the teaching and learning in a range of subjects have been monitored through such means as lesson observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning. The best examples of constructive feedback provide clear points for the staff to develop. The precision of these activities, particularly in foundation subjects such as geography and history, has been identified by the school as in need of improvement, in order to bring about further increases in pupils' achievements. The inspection team endorses this view and highlights this matter as being a high priority in the school's agenda for action in the SIP. Targets for pupils' attainment in English and mathematics are sufficiently challenging and increasingly based on good information about past performance. Good progress is being made in reaching the targets set.
55. Financial planning is excellent and directly linked to identified educational priorities in the SIP. Grants are spent appropriately and for their designated purpose. The current carry forward monies result in the main from the financial settlement of building contract costs that have yet to be finalised and agreed. The school has drawn up a list of projects to be funded, once this debt is quantified and paid. Governors are very well aware of the principles of best value and these are applied conscientiously where prices are being sought, and costs are analysed before spending takes place. The budget is managed very well. Regular statements of account are available that facilitate the efficient monitoring of spending against agreed allocations. A recent audit highlighted a number of matters, many of which have already been actioned by the headteacher and governors. The school offers very good value for money taking into account its context, quality, income and efficiency.
56. The teaching staff have a very good range of experience and expertise that meet the demands of the curriculum well. Support staff provide very good back-up for the teachers and their work. Classroom support staff are well briefed and well trained. They make a significant contribution to pupils' achievement and the quality of support offered to the pupils. Administrative staff do a very good job that results in the effective and efficient day-to-day organisation of the school. The school's strategy for performance management and appraisal is developing very well. Some strong links are being made between performance management and the identified priorities in the SIP, including those for improving pupils' achievements. There are good induction procedures in place for new staff. Staff development is given a high priority and the needs of the staff team are increasingly well recognised and linked to whole-school developments, such as ICT. New technology is used very well, for example, in creating a school web site, in the monitoring of finances, with the presentation of newsletters and information for parents, and by staff in their lesson planning.
57. The overall quality of the accommodation is very good. The two separate buildings of the infant and junior schools have been physically joined following amalgamation. As a result, a new administrative area, staffroom and a multi-purpose room have been provided. The offices, halls, work spaces and classrooms are very well maintained and very well cared for by staff and pupils. Classrooms and halls are reasonably large with areas of pinboard on which pupils' work is displayed to good effect. Several classrooms are beautifully decorated with very high quality displays. The site is spacious, containing car parks, playgrounds, a play area, an indoor swimming pool and two large fields.

58. Resources to support teaching and learning are very good in English, science, ICT, music and PE. Good provision is made in mathematics and art and design. There is sound overall provision in design and technology, geography and history, but with these latter subjects there are some deficiencies in what is available for classes in Years 1 and 2.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. There are no key issues. Self-evaluation is a strong feature and has enabled the school to recognise its strengths and relative weaknesses. Governors and staff are very committed to maintaining high standards and making further improvements. Priorities and actions to bring this about are drawn up in an appropriate agenda that is the school improvement plan.
60. Within the identified actions, in order to bring greater precision to its work and to raise standards further, the school should give priority to:
- extending the subject leader's co-ordination role across the whole school, particularly in foundation subjects
(paragraphs 51, 54, 97, 98, 113, 119, 124, 128, 142, 148)
 - fine-tuning the time allocation for each subject in the curriculum
(paragraphs 20, 21, 110, 113, 114, 119, 121, 122, 126, 127)
 - monitoring the range of activities that the pupils receive in all subjects, to ensure they receive the fullest range possible
(paragraphs 19, 54, 95, 113, 119, 125, 148)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	85
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	19	31	32	0	0	0
Percentage	4	22	36	38	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

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)	26	455
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	52

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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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 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	30	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	28	29
	Girls	33	33	33
	Total	60	61	62
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (n/a)	95 (n/a)	97 (n/a)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	27	29	30
	Girls	33	33	33
	Total	60	62	63
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (n/a)	97 (n/a)	98 (n/a)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	35	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	34	35
	Girls	34	33	35
	Total	67	67	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	96 (n/a)	96 (n/a)	100 (n/a)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	35	33	35
	Girls	35	33	35
	Total	70	66	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (n/a)	94 (n/a)	100 (n/a)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	8
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	379
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.8
Average class size	32.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	228

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	86
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	956293
Total expenditure	932072
Expenditure per pupil	1846
Balance brought forward from previous year	91435
Balance carried forward to next year	115656

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	481
Number of questionnaires returned	204

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	32	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	65	34	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	38	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	46	7	2	0
The teaching is good.	70	29	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	46	4	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	30	2	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	83	16	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	45	51	3	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	57	40	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	37	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	41	10	0	7

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

61. Children are admitted to the nursery when they are three years old and transfer to reception classes in the September before their fifth birthday. Many nursery children have experience of learning in a playgroup and this helps them to make a confident start to school. In comparison with children of similar age in other settings, their emotional, social and personal development and their ability to make their needs and views known are broadly above average. They have many stimulating learning opportunities at home, too, and therefore the children's knowledge of the world around them is good.
62. When children are assessed formally a few weeks after entering the reception year, scores in baseline tests are above expectations and compare favourably with similar schools in the borough. Teachers and their assistants also use their own tried and tested systems for liaising with parents and carers and for diagnosing strengths and weaknesses in children's performance in all areas of learning. They build up a good picture of what children are already able to do well, and of how to stimulate and extend them further. The overall quality of teaching is sound and sometimes good in nursery classes. In reception classes teaching is good and sometimes better. Some effective planning and good teaching in both nursery and reception ensure that children generally attain good standards in all six areas of learning by the age of five. High, middle and lower achieving children all make good progress in emotional, social and personal development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They make sound progress in physical and creative development.
63. The school benefits from a skilled team who work very hard to develop a broad range of opportunities for learning. Nursery nurses and classroom assistants do well to manage provision in the nursery. The headteacher, co-ordinator and team colleagues have gone out of their way to attend courses and visit other settings to identify good practice. They constantly strive to improve their teaching and are not afraid to try out new ideas. They are not reluctant to admit when their plans do not work as well as intended. They have made prudent decisions on how to invest energy and resources for future improvement. Their vision reflects the school's aims to foster the partnership with parents and provide children with the best possible start to learning. Accommodation and learning resources are of high quality and the new outdoor play facilities are potentially a very valuable acquisition. Already the action plan for developing the effectiveness of teaching out of doors is having a positive impact on learning, especially in the foundations of science and design and technology. The plan still needs fine-tuning for physical development and its success needs to be more precisely measured in terms of children's progress. Adults in the foundation stage team are strongly self-evaluative and therefore the capacity to address the relative weaknesses is high. Overall, good management and very effective strategic planning are serving the foundation stage very well.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. Achievement is good because provision in this area lies at the heart of the school's aims and intentions for learning. Children are likely to exceed expectations by the time they are five and make good progress. Children in the nursery and reception are happy and eager to learn. They are inquisitive, self-sufficient, very willing to share and listen to each other, and co-operate with adults. They have high self-esteem and a mature

sense of community by the time they are five. They behave very well in all four classes. Pupils persevere with a variety of learning experiences for long periods, for example, during literacy and numeracy lessons in reception classes.

65. All adults in the nursery and reception welcome children and cater sensitively for individual needs. Their approach to managing behaviour is good and exemplified in many ways every day. One successful strategy is to build on the care and support provided by parents. Adults establish excellent relationships with children's families and go to considerable lengths to share expectations and reward systems. This area is taught well in both settings. The close partnership with parents and carers begins before children are admitted to school through visits to the home. It is then sustained throughout their time in this key stage. For example, in the nursery, a little boy is at an early stage of language development and often makes impromptu observations. Nursery nurses encourage him and are sensitive when intervening to help him improve his vocabulary, understand instructions or requests, and his ability to listen. Nursery and reception staff know children's special health needs and cater for these by providing special snacks that meet diet requirements or by wearing surgical gloves to protect sensitive skin. They use stories to reinforce care and safety awareness. It is impressive to see how children respond to such experiences. A story about a lost baby tiger, for example, reinforced nursery children's already good understanding of the importance of staying close to a relative or carer, to avoid the distress of separation.

Communication, language and literacy

66. Children are making good progress and are likely to exceed expectations by the time they are five. This area is taught very well in both settings. The quality of dialogue between adults and children is often the best feature of lessons. Adults always respond positively to questions and observations. This means that children make rapid progress in learning to express ideas and organise their thinking. In a reception class dance lesson a little girl was encouraged to explain her response to the music. She imaginatively described the way she moved as 'I am sprinkling magic dust.' The simple act of encouraging nursery children to bring something from home beginning with 'm' led to a brief but worthwhile discussion of the purpose of maps. One little boy told his peers how his family had used one when on holiday in Florida.
67. The foundations for reading and writing are also given appropriate emphasis. Adults select stories and information books that capture children's interest and imagination. For example, a big book about the fire service led to valuable discussion in both reception classes about its content and how the book was organised. Children joined in with the teacher as often as they could, looking carefully at the words and phrases to which the teacher pointed. 'The fire engines are ready to set off' was concluded by a few with 'ready to go' but the most able in the group soon realised their mistake and corrected it. These able children coped well to recognise words with complex spelling patterns, such as 'high' and 'fight'. The less able used picture clues and their knowledge of initial sounds to successfully work out 'mask' and 'hose'. Later that morning, children used these new words to write labels and captions for models and drawings about equipment used by the fire fighters. Two children with special educational needs were very skilfully supported in their imaginative play as they pretended to be firemen or a mother whose house was on fire. This led to 'writing' emergency messages and trying to give a name and address to the emergency services. All the elements of good literacy teaching were covered in these lessons. Staff have decided to concentrate on improving the fluency with which children write letters and words. This is an appropriate goal as so many children know the letter sounds and are ready to write more.

Mathematical development

68. Children are making good progress and are likely to exceed expectations by the time they are five. Teaching in this area is consistently good, and sometimes very good. Every day children consolidate prior learning and work on new learning objectives. Nursery children regularly count the number present during registration and when sharing milk and fruit. They sort things in a variety of ways. A new and interesting experience was the chance to sort recycled materials into different shapes, colours and materials to make wind chimes. Reception children are also provided with lots of resources to practise using number knowledge to solve simple problems, such as ordering a random group of numbers from 10 to 20. The use of numbers on templates of socks that were then pegged onto a washing line made this activity much more fun than just ordering numbers on pieces of paper. Children are frequently encouraged to compare things and to make predictions. During an environmental walk, for example, they searched for things outside that were 'longer than their thumb' and were keen to show the teacher that they were successful. Children enjoy working with sand and water and teachers harness this enthusiasm to teach them about capacity. In one lesson, adults gave children from the lower ability sets time to fill containers of different sizes. The learning objective was to find out which of two containers held more. One little girl coped very well. She even managed to organise four containers in descending order of volume. Others in the group found counting and pouring too difficult and staff were quick to recognise this. At the end of the session the staff sat down to decide how to modify the activity next time to retrace steps and provide just the right amount of challenge.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Children make at least satisfactory progress and are likely to exceed expectations by the time they are five. Children end the reception year having achieved the early learning goals in the foundations of science and technology, geography, history and religious education. Many are now working within the lower National Curriculum levels in these subjects. Overall, standards are good due to the variety of opportunities children have to explore, investigate, design, use ICT, develop a sense of time and place, and find out about culture, beliefs and lifestyles.
70. Nursery nurses and the classroom assistant, for example, are currently planning a visit to a safari park. They are providing a good deal of information about animals, birds, their habitat and special characteristics, building effectively on what children already know. After the story of the baby tiger, children were encouraged to think about the cat family and what animals to look out for on their day out. The teacher made the most of one boy's contribution that 'cheetahs are the fastest runners' by encouraging children to identify other distinguishing characteristics, such as the colour and pattern of their coats and where they lived. Learning in the nursery about weather led to children discussing the effects of wind. Adults discussed the soothing and noisy effect of wind as children made windchimes from scrap materials. Four children hung them outside and talked about what would happen when the birds saw the chimes. One boy cleverly used his prior knowledge of magpies to predict that they might come and peck the shiny bottle-tops. The nursery nurse praised his thinking and took advantage of the opportunity to add to children's knowledge of magpies' behaviour.
71. Similarly, in reception, work on topics such as 'People who help us' integrates learning about the world very well. A visit from a mother and baby and a nurse helped children to explore and record, in simple drawings and phrases, how babies grow and eventually become adults. Visits from the police and fire service lead to children learning much about the range of jobs they do to help others, the equipment they use, and how they

work. A parent was skilfully deployed to support a group building models of fire engines. This helped sustain children's interest and promoted much discussion about how to make a folding ladder and make enough room for the fire crew.

Physical development

72. Children make sound progress and many are likely to exceed expectations by the time they are five. Teaching in this area is predominantly good. It includes some outstanding practice but some strategies fail to achieve the intended results and are inhibiting children's development. In one excellent lesson in reception, two adults worked together very effectively to encourage children to move with confidence and imagination and be aware of timing and space. The choice of music was good and the way teachers allowed children to develop ideas and improve their body control was very sensitively organised and managed. Over the course of the lesson every child's effort was recognised and everyone ended the session having made significant progress. Each one, at his or her level, had achieved their very best in designing a sequence of different movements and extending their ability to evaluate their performance. A significant strength of nursery provision is the emphasis on health and safety and understanding how to take care when working in a large space such as the hall, and in the more restricted classroom environment. Children learn to clamber, roll and tunnel over and under large, soft three-dimensional shapes which they use sensibly and well. Teachers provide regular opportunities for children to work outdoors. They are so focussed, however, on teaching skills that develop fine motor skills, such as chalking on the playground or threading fabric through the metal fence posts, that they sacrifice opportunities for pupils to explore and move freely. Children show in their unenthusiastic response that they long for the chance to be creative and practise control of their movement in more enjoyable ways.

Creative development

73. Children make sound progress and many are likely to exceed expectations by the age of five. Teaching in this area is predominantly good. Some aspects are taught very well and lead to rapid progress whilst other features of teaching are not as successful. The best examples in both the nursery and reception are activities that promote children's knowledge and enjoyment of music, singing, dance and imaginative play.
74. In the nursery, children learn many action songs and nursery rhymes. They love imitating adults, such as clapping hands to interpret the movement of the 'snapping crocodile washing his clothes'. They are independent and resourceful when playing in the home corner. The good variety of play equipment and frequent participation from adults develops creativity and communication with others. One little boy who has special educational needs organised his play to include a pretend telephone conversation with his mother. He told her he 'looked forward to seeing her at quarter past three.' His playmate alongside took up the idea of time and spontaneously offered to cook dinner for a visitor, but cautioned, 'It will take about 70 minutes to cook'. Access to a computer enables children to learn to paint and draw colourful patterns on screen and then print them. Children acquire good control of scissors and media such as paint, crayon, pastels and pieces of fabric and paper. They produce some lovely paintings of themselves and attractive mobiles to hang from the ceiling. Nursery teaching is not as effective, however, when adults direct the approach to making pictures. For example, children sometimes cut out and colour identical pictures, such as hats and gloves for a planned frieze of clothes on a line. They would gain much more from doing their own drawings or finding pictures independently to cut out and add to the line.

75. Reception children have the same love of music that stems from the way adults build on prior learning. They learn a wide variety of songs and ways to accompany their singing using musical instruments. They are encouraged to develop hand-eye co-ordination and drawing skills in many daily activities. For example, in the work about the fire service, children had gathered together a selection of toy vehicles and other interesting objects. They used these as inspiration for observational drawings with very pleasing results. Other children made their own plasticine models to represent fire-fighting equipment. The care and attention to detail was impressive for such young children.

ENGLISH

76. Standards achieved by the seven-year-olds in the 2001 national tests in writing were well above the national average and above average in comparison to similar schools. In reading, their performance in comparison with the national average was very high, and well above average in comparison to similar schools.
77. There is a wider range of abilities within the current group of seven-year-olds than in any other age group in the school. As a consequence, there are a smaller percentage of very high performers. Nevertheless, the results of the inspection indicate that standards are still above the national average in speaking, listening, reading and writing.
78. In the 2001 national tests, the performance of eleven-year-olds was well above the national average and in comparison to similar schools. This reflects the findings of the inspection for the current Year 6 pupils. They have made good progress since they entered the school. This is largely because they have a very good grasp of basic skills taught to them earlier in their school life. They enjoy lessons that often provide stimulating activities which allow them to use problem-solving skills effectively. Their understanding and knowledge of information and communication technology, used well in literacy lessons across the school, enables them to use these skills effectively in English lessons. As this is a newly amalgamated school, there are no statistics available to consider pupils' performance in tests over a period of time.
79. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress at both key stages because their closely identified literacy needs are matched against a carefully devised, well-taught programme of work. There are no instances of any pupil across the classes being hindered from performing as well as any other child in the school.
80. Pupils across the school have good, often very good, speaking skills and their listening skills are well above average. They listen intently to both adults and other pupils. The majority of pupils give clear, well constructed and reasoned answers to questions and feel confident enough to ask questions in their turn when they need clarification. They make thoughtful responses when asked to elaborate on an idea. The majority speak clearly and confidently within groups. A small minority, particularly in Years 1 and 2, are not always as confident when they speak in assembly, or to the class as a whole, and their voices tend to be inaudible to the bulk of the audience.
81. In reading, seven-year-olds read different kinds of text fluently and expressively and use of their knowledge of sound clusters well to work out unknown vocabulary. They have a good understanding of book conventions such as titles, authors and illustrators. They can talk knowledgeably about the contribution punctuation makes to enhancing the author's intentions. They know the difference between fiction and non-fiction and can access information quickly, some of the higher attaining pupils skimming the text and scanning for key words. Lower attaining pupils enjoy reading and are keen to show

what they can do. They make a good effort to work out words through their knowledge of initial letter sounds.

82. By Year 6 both boys and girls are well on the way to becoming serious readers. They enjoy discussing characters and their motivation and some of the higher attaining pupils can locate words and phrases from the text to illustrate their arguments. Pupils have a mature understanding of key themes and, although they are unable to define what the word 'genre' means, they know exactly the kind of literature which they find most satisfying and can say why. They can clearly explain how to use the school's cataloguing system. Some lower attaining pupils are reading short novels and, although their confidence and ability to express their views are not as high as the others, they can talk about what they have read with reasonable clarity and insight.
83. In writing, pupils make good progress in developing their writing skills in Year 1. By the time they are seven, they have attained a good understanding of how to construct sentences fluently and use punctuation correctly. The higher-attaining pupils use more complex punctuation effectively to illustrate a particular point. Most pupils write interesting and imaginative stories and accounts of their experience using well-constructed sentences in correctly sequenced passages. There is some evidence that they try to check their work and correct mistakes, but this feature is not evident across the work of most pupils and the spelling of basic words is at times careless. Their handwriting is sound.
84. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 refine their skills effectively. By the time they reach Year 6 their ability to convey their thoughts within an imaginative and a varied range of text is very high. Their ability to communicate in different styles, using well-chosen vocabulary for formal and informal occasions, is very well developed. For example, their discussion texts about whether they should have more freedom of choice at lunchtime are persuasively argued. There is a very good understanding of poetic forms in Year 5 and Year 6 classes, as exemplified by the poems written the style of Lewis Carroll's 'The Jabberwocky' in Year 6.
85. Across the key stages, pupils use their literacy skills well in other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils' accounts of The Great Fire of London are written using an expressive style and good descriptive language. The Year 6 pupils' accompanying descriptions of the processes involved in creating slippers in design and technology lessons are succinctly and clearly expressed through the use of both simple and complex sentences. Pupils make a precise choice of words and each text is well structured into paragraphs.
86. Teaching and learning across both key stages were seldom less than good and often very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. High levels of pupil management, interaction and rapport, high expectations for pupils' standards of work, smoothly organised sessions with thoughtful use of resources and well-briefed support staff all make a significant impact on pupils' levels of achievement and attainment. Teachers' considerable skills in the examination of shared reading texts and their use of guided reading books to encourage a greater understanding of what and how they read, raises most pupils' levels of achievement. Where very good teaching occurs, evaluative strategies, based on the teachers' good knowledge of the subject, are used successfully to enable pupils to reach greater levels of understanding. Teachers' careful planning to ensure a step-by-step rate of learning for all pupils deepens understanding and knowledge and accelerates progress. Where teaching is sound, there are some weaknesses in a very small minority of lessons; in these planning does not target the needs of all pupils with sufficient rigour. In such instances, there are a small group of pupils with slightly below average attainment who, while not significantly underachieving,

are not helped enough to learn as well as they can. On-going assessment in lessons is well established. In writing, teachers help pupils to set their own individual targets, which are frequently revisited until they have been achieved. In a very few lessons there were some unsatisfactory elements that were mainly concerned with organisational weaknesses resulting in a slackening of pace and subsequent loss of concentration by the pupils.

87. Most pupils enjoy English lessons because they are stimulating and well targeted to their needs. They work with concentration and much perseverance because many teachers' skills of intervention are highly tuned to provide help where it is needed. In most extended writing sessions, for example, all pupils have the opportunity to have their work examined, their problems discussed, their achievements praised and their work refined still further. Marking in these sessions is usually very good because it is precisely focussed on what needs to happen next.
88. Teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy to extend and develop pupils' English skills. The vast majority of additional opportunities that are provided for the development of pupils' writing, successfully improve their skills. There is a plentiful, well-chosen stock of fiction, including good quality literature, and non-fiction. The established Key Stage 2 library and the recently created one for Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage classes are appropriately used and provide an inviting environment for reading. Procedures for assessing pupils are well in place and used effectively to inform planning. Test results are compared to previously collated data and analysed to set class targets within each class. The leadership of English by the newly appointed co-ordinator is already making a positive impact at both key stages because of the feedback provided to teachers from some very good monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

89. Provision for mathematics is very good in Years 1, 4, 5 and 6, and sound in Years 2 and 3. Pupils receive a very good start to their mathematical learning and this is consolidated and expanded very well in the older years. The impact of this is shown by the above average standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 and the well above average standards at the end of Year 6. As the school has only recently amalgamated there is no historical data from which to identify trends over time.
90. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 2, pupils' results were well above the national average and that of pupils in similar schools. The proportion of pupils who reached the nationally expected level (Level 2), or above, was above the national average and close to the average of that found in similar schools. The proportion of pupils who reached the higher level (Level 3) was well above the national average and the average scores of similar schools.
91. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6, pupils' results were very high in comparison with the national average and with the scores of pupils in similar schools. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard (Level 4), or above, was well above the national average and the average score in similar schools. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels (Level 5 and above) was very high when compared with the national average and the average scores of similar schools.
92. Inspection findings show that standards are slightly above national expectations by the end of Year 2 and are well above national expectations by the end of Year 6. The school recognises that standards in the current Year 6 are slightly below those achieved in 2001 because the previous cohort was more able. Standards in the current Year 2 are

below those achieved in 2001 national tests. School records show that the present Year 2 started the school at an overall lower level of attainment than the previous Year 2, or the current Year 1. Work in pupils' books and discussions with pupils show that their achievement and progress over time in Years 1 and 2 are good in the development of numerical skills. By the end of Year 2, achievement and progress are satisfactory in the other aspects of the subject, such as shape, space and measure. In the lessons seen in Year 2, progress was satisfactory with a strong emphasis on the consolidation of mental arithmetical skills and numerical comprehension and computation. This strength in numerical skills is developed well throughout the school and is a major contribution to the very high standards currently prevailing at the end of Year 6. The rate of progress made by pupils accelerates through Key Stage 2 classes so that by Year 6 progress by all groups is very good. Extra-curricular mathematics sessions make a major contribution to the very good progress in Year 6. These sessions provide very good support for pupils with lower attainment and extend the higher achievers very well. Numeracy skills are used increasingly well in other subjects such as science and information and communication technology. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress in lessons and over time to their peers, particularly when taught in small group situations. Their overall progress is commensurate with their abilities.

93. By the age of seven, pupils have a good grasp of mental arithmetic skills. Those capable of average and high attainment can add numbers to one hundred quickly, and know facts from the 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 times tables. Almost all pupils know the value of coins to one pound. They use their number skills and a very clear understanding of the relative value of units and tens to answer questions about money and shopping. The higher attainers use values above a pound. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the properties of flat and solid shapes and of the axis of symmetry in regular shapes. They are able to construct a block graph manually and by using a computer. Their knowledge of mathematical words is good. Average and lower-achieving pupils in Year 1 can order numbers to 100 and have a good grasp of adding or subtracting either one unit or one ten from numbers up to fifty. The attainment of the more able pupils in Year 1 is very high. They recognise odd and even numbers and have the mathematical thinking skills to identify the rule when two odd or two even numbers are added together. They have a growing understanding of symmetry and rotation and a good knowledge of the properties of solid shapes. They are able to sort flat shapes into sets on the computer.
94. By the age of eleven, average attaining pupils have a good knowledge of a range of strategies for mental maths and a very secure understanding of methods of computation for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division when working with numbers to one thousand. They are familiar with fractions, including improper fractions which they order confidently, decimals and proportion. Those capable of high attainment have mental arithmetic skills and numerical skills well above the nationally expected level. They know the properties of various quadrilaterals, the degrees on a straight line and of a circle, the angles of various triangles and the formula for the area of a circle. All pupils can plot line graphs. The less able pupils use these to convert pounds to francs or pounds (weight) to kilograms. All pupils have a good knowledge of mathematical vocabulary, which they use accurately, and have the confidence to explain to others the processes they employ to find answers to their questions. Standards throughout Key Stage 2 are good. In Years 4 and 5 pupils with above average attainment are working broadly one year in advance of the nationally expected level in number. In Year 4 pupils learn to plot co-ordinates accurately. In Year 5 pupils were undertaking long division with remainders. In Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of partitioning numbers and of place value and can add and subtract two numbers mentally. Attainment in shape and space and data handling in the Years 3, 4 and 5 is satisfactory, and sometimes good, but is not as well developed as numerical skills.

95. The quality of teaching is consistently very good in Years 1 and 6 and very good in some lessons in Year 4. It was good, or better, in just over two-thirds of all the lessons seen. In all year groups from Year 1, pupils are taught in sets based on prior attainment. In all lessons the learning objective is identified and made clear to pupils. Almost all teachers have good subject knowledge, high expectations and plan well for pupils of all abilities. Behaviour and attitudes vary with the quality of teaching. Pupils' behaviour is excellent in the better lessons. Teachers' planning is good and, with the exception of two lessons in Year 2, time is used well. A key feature of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 is the on-going dialogue between teachers and their pupils. This enables teachers to constantly check that their pupils are understanding the work, and then to move the learning forward so that the utmost can be achieved and no time is lost. Pupils respond by listening well, concentrating carefully and working with vigour and rigour. Frequently there is an air of excitement in pupils' learning. Written marking is usually brief and does not reflect the good support and clear explanations to move learning forward that are provided in the lessons. In most lessons the work sheets and tasks are the same for all the groups of pupils, and different levels of attainment are not identified. During the inspection there was a lack of match for some pupils between their ability and the work set, particularly in Year 2 where work was too demanding for some of the pupils. This reduced the rate of progress seen in these lessons. This lack of match occurs where assessment information is not sufficiently well used to plan the lessons. Extension work is provided for the more able. This often focuses on challenging computations. Some pupils would benefit from more consistent opportunities to consolidate their learning and independence through problem solving. Pupils with special educational needs generally make the same good progress as others. However, their individual learning plans do not identify when targets have been achieved and this hinders teachers' ability to evaluate the pupils' progress and the impact of their own teaching. The work of classroom assistants supports pupils' progress well due to their high levels of training, preparation and knowledge of the pupils.
96. Learning resources are well used in Year 1 to develop pupils' understanding of the number system. However, in most other lessons basic equipment such as number squares and lines were rarely seen in use. The two teachers with interactive white boards use these very well to demonstrate and model the mathematics being taught. This was particularly so in a Year 2 class where coins to the value of one pound were being taught. In Years 1 and 2, teachers use pupils' ICT skills well to reinforce and sometimes extend the mathematics being taught, for example, through the use of a programmable toy.
97. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are carried out conscientiously and inform the composition of teaching groups throughout Years 1 to 6. The school plans to further refine this work and to introduce target setting for each pupil. Currently the school undertakes many tests, but not enough use is made of these as diagnostic tools, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The school has recently introduced an effective tracking system that the co-ordinators are starting to use to monitor the pupils' progress.
98. The co-ordination of the subject is good. Two teachers have responsibility for mathematics in Years 1 and 2 and in Years 3 to 6 respectively. Collaboration between them is good. As part of the process of establishing the new school as one cohesive unit, there will be one mathematics co-ordinator in the next academic year. Both the current co-ordinators have a clear understanding of the needs of the school and appropriate priorities for development. They have tremendous enthusiasm for the subject and provide very good role models for other staff. They have introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and a new commercial scheme of work, both of which are beneficial to pupils' learning. Teachers provide a balance of work so that activities are

not just centred on the commercial scheme of work. Each co-ordinator monitors lessons and teachers' planning, but as yet there is no follow-up evaluation to ensure that recommendations are put into practice.

SCIENCE

99. Pupils' attainment in science is in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and is well above the national average at the end of Year 6.
100. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests and assessments standards were above average at the end of Year 2 and well above average at the end of Year 6, both when compared with all schools nationally and with similar schools. While the standards being achieved by pupils at the end of the present Year 2 are not as high as those of last year, they do reflect good progress since these pupils entered the school. Pupils of all abilities make good progress and achieve well across the school when comparison is made with their previous attainment. There are particular strengths in problem solving and investigative work in most classes.
101. Given the wider spread of prior attainment in Year 2 than in other year groups across the school, standards are lower than among the previous cohort of pupils. Nevertheless, most pupils know that light comes from a variety of sources. They draw and label a plant correctly and they have a good understanding of what makes plants grow. Their speaking and listening skills are well developed. Pupils talk confidently about scientific topics, such as forces and the life cycle of a frog. Their observational skills are good, and they are used to thinking about scientific questions for themselves. For example, a photograph of a large quantity of frog spawn led them to suggest to their teacher that so many eggs were laid because other creatures might eat most of them. From this statement they went on to say that if too few eggs were laid then they might all be eaten and frogs would become extinct. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their work confirmed that they can sort objects and materials into groups and recognise the similarities and differences between them. Problem solving and investigative skills are good. The pupils make sensible predictions, for example, to say which surface is the one that objects will roll down most quickly. They effectively record information on simple tables, make graphs and can explain how their experiments were carried out. In discussion, pupils illustrated how their effort could move an object by talking about a bicycle and how the gradual application of a brake would slow them down, or stop them if the brake was pressed hard. Pupils discuss what they have found out from their work and offer simple explanations for their observations and results.
102. In Year 3 pupils enjoyed working with magnets and different materials to identify those that a magnet would attract and those that it would not. Discussion with pupils confirmed that they were used to thinking scientifically and that they successfully divided materials into these two categories. They also understood a range of purposes for which magnets might be used in their everyday lives. Work is completed in a systematic way and pupils draw appropriate conclusions for their age. Pupils in Year 4 use scientific language confidently and have secure understanding of the principles of a fair test. This was illustrated through the very good discussion of what requirements were necessary for a fair experiment to identify the necessary factors for plant growth. In Year 5, pupils' knowledge is further developed and they continue to be given ample opportunity for scientific enquiry based on the gathering of first hand evidence. This was evident in one lesson where pupils were measuring their pulse rate when they were at rest and after exercise, in order to identify the effect of work on their own hearts and those of their friends. A consistent development of skills and high teacher expectations produce good learning. This leads to the pupils in Year 6 having very high standards of knowledge. They are also able to pose problems, produce hypotheses and carry out

research to test their ideas. Pupils were able to discuss the effect of heat on different materials and the fact that the atoms or molecules move apart with the result that metal expands. Work observed in both Year 6 classes was of a high standard, with pupils discussing the properties of electrical circuits and of light at a level well above that expected for pupils of this age. Pupils across the school present their work carefully, using graphs, tables and charts when appropriate.

103. Across the school, pupils frequently use reference books to find and select information. Their speaking and listening skills are developing well in most lessons. New scientific vocabulary is developed consistently so that pupils' understanding of scientific terminology is good. Good mathematical skills are seen in the use of measurement and graphs. Information and communication technology skills are used well to support learning. The new ICT suite has only recently been installed and links between ICT and science are being developed, to help raise standards further. Pupils access the Internet to find out information, and they have some opportunities to use CD-ROMs to support the development of their research and enquiry skills.
104. The quality of teaching is good across the school, resulting in pupils' achieving well in comparison with their earlier levels of attainment. Examples of very good teaching were seen in Years 4, 5 and 6. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. There are significant strengths in the consistency of planning across the school. They are based on recent national guidance and the good subject knowledge of teachers, their consistently high expectations and the continuous assessment of pupils' understanding during lessons. This is a remarkable achievement given the recent amalgamation of the two schools and the more recent completion of the building works that were necessary to enable the school to function as one unit. Lesson plans clearly state what the pupils are expected to learn from the planned activities; they are well structured and cater for the individual needs and abilities of the pupils, including those with special educational needs. Where teaching is good or very good, lessons are introduced enthusiastically and led at a lively pace. This has the effect of holding these generally able pupils' attention and motivating them to learn. The teachers use their good subject knowledge effectively to question the pupils to help them both consolidate and extend their learning. Good explanations are provided to help pupils develop their understanding of scientific ideas and concepts. Teachers show awareness of pupils' common misconceptions and take care to ensure they are dealt with accordingly. Activities are carefully organised and allow the pupils to experiment and investigate and use a good selection of practical apparatus. Pupils learn to record results in a range of ways, sometimes using helpful prompt sheets, which encourage them to work in a systematic and thoughtful way. Satisfactory teaching led to the lessons that had less pace and challenge. However, in these cases, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with the pupils showed that the quality of learning was good over time and that the lessons observed were not generally typical of teaching as a whole.
105. Features of all the lesson observations were the teachers' high expectations of work and behaviour from the pupils. As a result, the efforts made by pupils and levels of self-discipline are high. Classrooms are well organised and the tasks successfully challenge the pupils, who respond well in these situations. Pupils have good attitudes to the learning and generally concentrate well in completing their tasks. They take pride in what they do and have learnt to make sensible predictions, set their work out in a logical way and offer suitable explanations for their investigations. In nearly all lessons, staff provide the pupils with very good oral feedback and work is suitably marked, although occasionally the comments could be more specific about how improvements might be achieved. Pupils' attainment and progress is regularly assessed, using suitable test materials, and the information gained is appropriately used to group pupils and plan lessons. The joint co-ordinators have identified assessment as an area for further

development, in order to ensure a better consistency of approach between the two key stages and to more fully inform teachers' planning, in order to raise standards further.

106. The joint co-ordinators have worked together as an effective team to ensure that science is taught in a consistent way across the school. They have provided the vision that has enabled staff to maintain consistently high expectations and, by the end of Year 6, levels of attainment that are well above national averages. Both co-ordinators show enthusiasm for, and commitment to, their role, have good scientific knowledge and have spent a considerable amount of time in auditing the resources to draw up a good inventory. In addition, they have observed all their colleagues teaching and are developing the feedback from the observations as an effective way of sharing good practice and a means of further raising the already good standards of teaching. Since the amalgamation, schemes of work have successfully been drawn together using national guidance to help ensure that there is continuity and progression in teaching across the school. Very good resources are in place to deliver these schemes of work and they are being further increased in the light of experience. The co-ordinators also monitor progress by examining the planned coverage of the allocated units of work and the quality of pupils' work. The school environment is used to support scientific enquiry and a good number of educational visits are made. A 'human resources register' is being organised of parents and others in the community with scientific knowledge who are willing to contribute to the enrichment of the curriculum.

ART AND DESIGN

107. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations.
108. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed appropriate skills in art. They produce still-life drawings of pieces of wood, paying careful attention to shading and line, although they are not always aware of the need to draw from one perspective at a time. They attempt to provide depth to a paper collage through overlapping tissue paper and find this difficult without a lot of supervision. Past work in Years 1 and 2 classes indicates a good range of experiences from which pupils build up their knowledge of different techniques and how to use them successfully. For example, Year 1 pupils use a variety of natural materials such as beetroot juice and boiled onion skins as dye to make effective patterns on cloth, a good link to scientific exploration. Some very good examples of weaving using a variety of different materials were on display. Pupils are given opportunities to look at the work of well-known artists and paint or draw in the same style. Some effective pictures in the style of Mondrian show a good understanding of mass and how it can be arranged. Pupils mix colours well to produce more subtle shades. Landscapes, using skills of drawing, sketching and crayon colour-mixing skills, indicate how carefully Year 2 pupils have observed line and colour and what a challenge such an activity is to do well. Good levels of concentration and perseverance in this problem-solving activity are demonstrated.
109. In Years 3 to 6, art is carefully linked to design and problem-solving. For example, Year 4 pupils produced effective sculptures of chairs based on their own designs. Modelling their work on an actual chair, small groups of pupils used a limited amount of resources such as junk cardboard, including toilet and longer rolls, masking tape and scissors. They arrived at ingenious solutions particularly where teachers evaluated their efforts. For example, one girl produced, unaided, a drawer attached to the underneath of the chair which opened and closed through the use of split cardboard rolls dove-tailed together. There is a good link with design and technology because pupils have to strengthen their structures and create joints and hinges. Year 6 pupils, as part of their topic on landscapes, sketched a scene with the use of a viewfinder and successfully transposed this onto a large sheet of paper. In the lessons observed, many had to

grapple with how to introduce perspective and create angled roofs, draw benches head on, and create shadows that indicated the position of the sun. Most pupils had a clear idea of what they wanted to do in order to create the best effects within a finished painting. For example, some of them left out bits of the original sketch, and placed a tree in front of a church, instead of behind it, in order to enhance the balance and structure of their work. In displays of past work, pupils' progress in Year 3 when using their skills of observation were well illustrated by their drawings of the human eye.

110. Pupils of all abilities and across both key stages make sound and sometimes good progress. In the best lessons, the provision of problem-solving, open-ended activities and informed, evaluative attention by teachers and adults stimulate interest and allow all to achieve well at their level of development. Pupils achieve sound results in lessons where they do not receive enough one-to-one guidance or if they do not receive enough art lessons across a period of time to develop a technique well. Unless the teaching is very good, they do not achieve with as much depth as they would otherwise do. For example, art is taught in alternate weeks and the practice of teaching both art and design, and design and technology in one lesson, leads to less concentration on raising the quality and standard of artwork.
111. Pupils enjoy art and design and have developed good levels of concentration and perseverance. They are particularly adept at collaborating with each other in pairs or groups. They have been well taught about how to work and behave as a team. Pupils decide who is to do what and how to go about their tasks successfully.
112. Teaching and learning are good in lessons where the art and design focus is strong and the understanding and expertise of teachers high. It is sound in other lessons. The use of probing questions that ask 'What will happen if?', and 'How will you...?' raises awareness and encourages pupils to look more closely at their work. Comments that help pupils to evaluate their work and consider solutions give rise to higher standards. Where teachers follow up on pupils' comments with considered and effective illustrations, all learn to consider alternatives. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, upon a pupils' dismissal of grass as being 'just flat', the teacher displayed a landscape in which grass was painted at close range. He compared this to what could be seen outside and far away. From this small example, pupils were encouraged to consider their work more closely. In most lessons, teachers allow plenty of time for pupils to experiment, and evaluate and refine their work. In some lessons, there is an imbalance between whole-class exposition and the time given to practical activity. Resources are well-planned and stimulating and support staff and other adults are usually well prepared, offering good quality guidance as a result.
113. In order to establish a whole-school dimension to the continuity and progression of pupils' skills as they move up the school, a nationally produced art scheme is used from which teachers plan their medium-term programmes. This strategy is effective in ensuring continuity across and within year groups. As previously explained, the issue of time is yet to be addressed effectively. The co-ordination of the subject is presently shared by representatives from both key stages, a strategy that will change next year. The two co-ordinators provide sound leadership. They have produced an art policy for the whole school and have identified relevant key issues for the subject's improvement plan. Teaching and learning in the subject have not yet been monitored. There is an art club run by one co-ordinator in which pupils have produced some good work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. Pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with national expectations. Pupils are generally making satisfactory progress across the school. Within some lessons

pupils make very good progress, but the quality of learning is limited by the amount of time that is currently allocated to this subject, which alternates with art on the timetable.

115. Pupils in Year 1 were observed discussing the importance of eating fruit if they wanted healthy bodies. In this case, the focus of their work was the design of a poster that would encourage children in the Reception Year to eat more fruit. They had given considerable thought to their initial designs and many of these contained evidence of revisions that they had made as they reflected on their suitability for that purpose. Pupils in Year 3 gave serious consideration to a range of healthy options when designing a variety of sandwiches. While no lessons were observed in Year 4, it was evident from a display of containers for carrying money that the pupils had satisfactory understanding of the make and design process. In Year 5, pupils discussed the purpose and design of different kinds of biscuits. In seeking to identify the initial purpose for which biscuits were made they discussed tea time in Victorian and Edwardian England and the television programmes 'The Edwardian House' and 'The Forsyte Saga'. Discussion of the voyages of Captain Cook led to the identification of the biscuit as an essential source of food, with the maggots providing a source of protein.
116. Most pupils, including those with special needs, have a secure understanding of all elements of the design process. They explain with good confidence the work they have undertaken, and the factors that they took into account when making their designs. Skills in speaking and listening are very good and make an important contribution to the development of pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 2 discussed the reasons for their selection of materials when making puppets. One pupil described the evaluation process in these terms: 'We looked at what we had made and had to decide what we could do to make it better next time.' They had particularly enjoyed learning about the properties of clay and designing tiles with their own decorative designs. Similarly, pupils in Year 6 discussed the design, making and evaluation process in relation to Ancient Greek masks. This activity enabled them to consolidate their understanding of an aspect of Greek theatre. It had involved them in measuring the proportions of the features of the human face and enabled them to experience the use of a range of materials that would be both reasonably light and yet strong when actually worn. Work on slipper design had involved measurement of the proportions of their feet, the design of a slipper that would be robust enough to be worn, the selection of suitable materials and the learning of different kinds of stitching that would be suitable for their designs. They discussed in a very mature fashion the importance of getting the decoration right for the age of child for which they had designed their slippers. In both cases, the standards achieved were generally in line with expectations but in some cases were of high quality. Above average reading, writing and numeracy skills also support the development of pupils' learning well, particularly when the relatively limited time available for this subject is taken into consideration.
117. Pupils' attitudes to this subject are good; they demonstrate a very good sense of responsibility and value the contributions of others when participating in class or group discussions, in which they show considerable enthusiasm. Behaviour in lessons is good. The quality of co-operation between pupils when working on a project makes a significant contribution to their moral and social development.
118. The quality of teaching in lessons seen was good overall. It was never less than satisfactory, and examples of very good teaching were observed in Years 1 and 5. In these lessons, the teachers maintained a very high pace and were very skilful in the consolidation of pupils' prior knowledge and in the introduction of new information through discussion. The pupils were highly motivated, the relationships between teachers and pupils were very good and there was a sense of fun. Teachers make effective use of the subject policy and the national guidance adopted by the school as

the basis for their planning. They have high expectations for the quality of what pupils make, and pupils achieve sound standards of precision and finish in their products, with noticeable individuality of design. A strength of the completed work is the attention given to its evaluation by pupils. The quality of assessments made while lessons are progressing ranges from good to very good. At the end of each unit of work, teachers undertake assessments which clearly identify the skills that have been acquired. However, the results of these formal assessments are not yet consistently applied and the school has identified this as an area for further development.

119. The co-ordinators, one for the infants and one for the juniors, are providing effective leadership and a clear sense of direction for this subject. They have correctly identified that insufficient time is currently available to permit the generally good teaching to promote sufficient learning to raise standards to the high levels that are being achieved in English, mathematics and science. The further development of formal assessment has been identified as a priority in the school improvement plan. Although there has been a small amount of direct observation and monitoring of teaching in the juniors, lack of time has not yet made this a regular part of the processes used to ensure that best practice is shared across the school. However, planning and the quality of work that results are carefully monitored. Pupils are introduced to the full process of design, from the identification of the purpose, to the choice of materials and the initial design, through to the evaluation of the final product. The area of control is inconsistently provided for and forms a key priority for development as identified by the school. The co-ordinators have identified the associated resource and professional development needs. Resources for work in design and technology are generally satisfactory. ICT is used appropriately to help to develop pupils' skills.

GEOGRAPHY

120. Standards achieved at the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils are beginning to compare differing localities, such as their home village and the island in the 'Katy Morag' stories. They describe what an island is. They make comparisons, such as between hot and cold climates, and quiet and busy roads. They have compared their home environment to living by the sea and have plotted their route to the church.
121. Attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. Standards are good where themes have been studied in detail, for example in the Year 6 work on rivers. The time available for geography is limited and so parts of the National Curriculum programmes of study, particularly in the juniors, have yet to be taught. As a result, there is insufficient coverage to enable pupils to achieve well in the subject as a whole by the time they reach the end of the key stage. Mapping skills are developed progressively in Year 3. Year 4 pupils have made good use of a field trip to the village of Stonnall, in order to further develop their understanding of different settlements. Pupils in Year 6 talk knowledgeably about the physical features of rivers. They have carried out independent research on a river of their choice, using books and the Internet for sources of information. Links with ICT are well developed.
122. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching seen was satisfactory or better. The good teaching was characterised by a brisk pace and by the teachers' use of questions which challenged pupils' thinking. Teaching in Year 3 to 6 lessons was satisfactory. Individual lessons were well planned and resourced. Teachers' understanding of the subject was sound. They provided good learning opportunities which enabled pupils to make good progress in the aspects and themes they study. Lesson objectives are sometimes not as precise as they might be and so teachers cannot easily assess at the end of a lesson whether pupils have learned what was intended. Teachers use

field trips well, to such places as Stonnall and Llangollen, to develop geographical skills and an understanding of localities different from their own. The school grounds and the local area provide useful experiences for younger children as they look at routes and the functions of buildings. Pupils are made aware of life in other countries through the world news and climate display boards. The time available for the subject means that significant areas of the programmes of study, such as knowledge and understanding of places, of environmental change, and of sustainable development, are approached superficially and sometimes not at all.

123. The geography curriculum is planned from a national scheme of work. A long-term plan prescribes the study units to be used, but it is not possible to cover complete units in the time available, so teachers have to make choices about which aspects to focus upon. This means that some of the geographical skills pupils ought to acquire are not necessarily developed as progressively as they might be. The school recognises this shortfall and that resources are inadequate to meet all the demands of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2. Plans are set to address these matters. Resources for Juniors are satisfactory.
124. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and committed. She has had some opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning and to assess pupils' current levels of attainment. As yet, she has not made recommendations for improvement based on a secure understanding of the present position. A full curriculum audit is required. The school is aware of this need and it is included in the priorities of the SIP.

HISTORY

125. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly in line with national expectations in the topics they have studied. However, the curriculum is limited to a few aspects and events. Pupils have visited Shugborough Hall and gained insights into life in Victorian times. They know something of Florence Nightingale and the work that she did, but do not connect her with Victorians. Pupils in Year 2 know about Remembrance Day and the Great Fire of London. They are beginning to understand why things happen, such as the reasons for the fire spreading as quickly as it did.
126. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is also broadly in line with national expectations. Standards are good when aspects of history are studied in some depth, such as some of the Year 4 work about the Tudor period. The time available for history is limited and so parts of the National Curriculum programmes of study have not been addressed in depth. As a result, pupils are unable to achieve well in the subject as a whole. Pupils in Key Stage 2 demonstrate good recall of events. They remember what happened to Henry VIII's wives and why there was a break from Rome. They have some awareness of the differences between the lives of the rich and the poor in various periods of history. Their knowledge of events is stronger than their understanding of how we know about what happened in the past. However, Year 6 pupils have developed their skills of historical enquiry by interviewing elderly people about their recollections of World War II. They are able to search for information in books and on the Internet. They made good use of their ICT skills in a study of the Ancient Greeks, producing a multi-media presentation of their findings. Younger pupils have made use of an inventory as a resource and used a memorial tablet as a source of information about the deaths of men in a colliery accident.
127. Teaching was satisfactory and sometimes good at both key stages. In a Year 2 lesson about the Great Fire, the teacher used good questioning skills to challenge pupils to think about cause and effect as well as about the facts. The Year 6 visit to a nearby old

people's home was well prepared by teachers and pupils. The pupils had identified what they wanted to know in advance and the residents enjoyed helping them to understand the effects of war on their generation. Very good use is made of visits to places of historic interest; pupils visit a Tudor mansion, Oak House, and The Black Country Museum to further develop their understanding of life in their area in Victorian times. Pupils are capable of thoughtful written work but a significant proportion of their writing was copied. Lessons were well planned, resources are used well and engage pupils' interest. Planning over time is less satisfactory. In addition to the good use of educational visits, the school plans its curriculum from the study units of a nationally recognised scheme of work. A difficulty arises because the limited time available for history precludes coverage of complete units; the progressive development of the key elements of historical study within the units is not always planned for in a coherent way. Some of the coverage of the programmes of study is superficial, or incomplete, for example, the study of invaders and settlers in Year 3, and voyages of exploration in the unit about Tudor times. The school recognises the need for improvement and that the resources in Years 1 and 2 are inadequate to meet the needs of the curriculum. There are plans to address these areas within the SIP priorities. Resources for use in the juniors are satisfactory.

128. The subject co-ordinator is new to the role, is enthusiastic and committed, but has yet to make an impact on the quality of teaching and learning in the subject. She has not had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning, nor to assess pupils' levels of attainment. A full curriculum audit is required so that recommendations for improvements in provision are based on a clear understanding of the present position. The school has planned to address this matter.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

129. This is an improving and developing subject throughout the school. Standards of pupils' work are above average overall. Pupils are provided with increasing opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects, particularly English.
130. At the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. Their attainment is above expectations in exchanging and sharing information through text handling exercises and the retrieval of information from reference sources. Year 2 pupils access information from the Internet, by searching using a key word, in order to answer a specific question, for example, as part of their history work on the Great Fire of London. They use different fonts, change the size and style of word-processed text. In science, pupils are able to sort information on woodlands into simple categories and present the life cycle of the frog in computer-generated words and pictures. For the school, there is a wider than usual spread of ability in the Year 2 cohort of pupils. The Year 1 cohort of pupils show good levels of competency and progress. They are building a better range of skills at an earlier age, for example, they used key skills well in making pictograms to represent data collected in mathematics lessons. They use art programmes to draw shapes and objects, and then use 'colour fill' techniques to complete their pictures. This better skills development is partly due to the increase in the number of computers that are available for their use in classrooms and in the suite. Also, teachers are working well to provide more 'hands on' time for pupils than had been possible in past years. This time includes activities that are very well focused on developing key skills and assessing pupils' work on a regular basis. The subject knowledge of the teachers and support staff is also improving, thanks to some good in-school training and through their own interest and determination to learn more about the subject. The combined effect of better provision, more skilled staff and consistently sound teaching is helping the pupils to make good progress.

131. At the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above that expected for their age. Year 6 pupils search a large database, interpret information found, and present the information in a suitable form, for example, in carrying out work connected to the Second World War. They word process their own poetry using an interesting and appropriate font size and style. Data is handled well following mathematics and science lessons. Experiments are recorded accurately and in an appropriate format. In other year groups, pupils show a good range of skills and abilities, particularly in exchanging and sharing information activities. The scope of their work is growing as facilities within the school have improved and as the curriculum has become better organised to offer greater support and guidance to teachers. For example, Year 4 pupils know that a screen turtle can be given commands to produce a specified shape on a screen. They show a good ability to input a range of commands and to predict what the outcomes will be. With staff skills and confidence also increasing, pupils of all abilities are making good progress overall.
132. Throughout the school, pupils have very positive attitudes to and high levels of interest in this subject. Lessons are characterised by their intense concentration and great enjoyment. This was particularly so in those lessons that contained good or very good teaching, for example, in Years 4 and 6. These lessons contained planning that builds on what pupils already know and can do. Explicit learning objectives were set. The planned activities engaged the pupils' interest very well. Teachers had good subject knowledge and confidence. Pupils were appropriately challenged and supported so that work was productive, increasing skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils' work is assessed informally as the lesson develops and this information is used to help plan future learning. The overall quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 was sound, with some good features. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching was good.
133. Teaching and learning are increasingly well supported by the medium-term subject plans and scheme of work. These are based on the National Curriculum programmes of study and the national subject guidance. A particular strength is the setting out of learning objectives. These set the expectations for what should be achieved, for example, in a series of lessons. These expectations help teachers to have sufficient guidance on which to base their lessons. The assessment of pupils' work is developing well in Years 1 and 2 and the Foundation Stage classes. A very positive feature of current practice is involving the pupils in the evaluation of their own work. For example, pupils do this by placing symbols against the key skills chart, to indicate how far their learning has gone. The subsequent dialogue between teacher and pupil is very useful for them both in working out what should be taught and learned next. The assessment of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 is largely informal and on-going during lessons. The school has recognised that this is an area for development and has included appropriate actions in the SIP.
134. The subject is managed very well by the assistant headteacher, ably supported by the good work of a Year 2 teacher. These two staff collaborate well and have been instrumental in the positive way that the subject is developing and improving. They offer colleagues support and advice, when needed, and set good role models for other staff to follow, for example, they are both using newly introduced interactive whiteboards to illustrate the usefulness of such equipment. A comprehensive, medium term development plan is in place and represents an appropriate agenda to improve standards and provision further. The use of ICT in other subjects is coming along very well. Lessons in English, mathematics, science, art, geography and history were seen to include pupils using their ICT skills to write, edit work, collect and interpret data, use spreadsheets, draw pictures and objects, and to access the Internet for information.

135. Computer facilities have been improved significantly in recent years to include the provision of a suite and more machines in classrooms. This investment has been an integral part of the actions that are leading to rising standards. Success can be measured by the fact that the suite is fully utilised, mainly by Year 3 to 6 classes, and classroom computers are frequently in use. Overall resources are very good in supporting teaching and learning.

MUSIC

136. Pupils' attainment at seven years of age is above national expectations. In Year 2, standards build on the start the pupils receive at home and the well-planned teaching they receive at school. They sing confidently in front of an audience. Pupils' diction is clear and they blend their voices tunefully. They listen carefully and critically to music. Pupils appreciate its different moods and styles and they are good at evaluating the sounds they hear and at describing their response to them. They have a good knowledge of the names of instruments and good understanding of terms that describe musical elements, such as 'ostinati' and 'dynamics'.
137. Pupils' attainment at eleven years of age is also above national expectations. The school aims for high standards in music and, by the time they reach Year 6 pupils, achieve the school's expectations. Pupils' knowledge of musical instruments and theory is very good. They are skilled at describing their experience of learning and at justifying personal preferences for different kinds of music. A group of pupils spoke eloquently about the various wind, string and brass sections of an orchestra and the stages they had individually reached in mastering the skills necessary to play their chosen instrument competently. They shared perceptions of the essential characteristics of a high performing choir, such as singing demanding parts from memory, often blending two different patterns of sound. They knew the significance of an erect but relaxed stance. They demonstrated special breathing techniques and how to control volume and achieve a particular effect. Talented pupils reach very high standards as they refine and improve their work in orchestra practice, for example, and through regular homework tasks. The interest and commitment of average and lower achievers, combined with skilled teaching, contribute to the good progress all pupils make.
138. Pupils are very aware of what they do very well. Some spoke with pride of the contribution of pupils from Years 5 and 6 when they participated in a carol festival at the National Indoor Arena in Birmingham. Over 5,000 pupils from many schools in the Midlands performed carols from around the world for a large audience and in front of television cameras. Pupils acknowledged the role of the conductor, Geoff Skidmore, and the inspiration provided by the popular music artist, Roy Wood. Pupils also understand how they can improve their knowledge of music and their ability to write scores and create musical effects using ICT. They acknowledge that it is some time since they have done any composing. They also know that later in the term they will collaborate and write lyrics and scores for a special leaving concert, and combine music with poetry to make up a modern dance. They aim to record their first drafts using a computer and tape recorders. They have a good knowledge of famous composers as diverse as Beethoven and Andrew Lloyd Webber. They readily acknowledge, however, a need to know more about music from different times and places and its significance in people's cultural heritage. In this respect, the very good contribution made by music to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development could be enhanced even further.
139. Pupils thoroughly enjoy music. They have very positive attitudes and work in mixed gender and ability groups with a high degree of enthusiasm. In the very best lessons they combine these qualities with a determination to make the fullest use of time and

energy, with some outstanding results. Behaviour is good. In most lessons pupils respond to instructions and requests sensibly and listen well. Pupils' conduct in one Year 1 lesson was excellent but younger infants sometimes find it difficult to control their excitement at playing instruments. They become too noisy and this slows their learning down. Pupils in Year 3 would appreciate more variety in the choice of music to study and this would be a good idea to pursue. They would like to choose some for themselves, such as the Sorcerer's Apprentice and to experience more live productions, such as 'James and the Giant Peach' that they saw at the Old Repertory Theatre.

140. Teaching and learning were good overall. The quality of teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent in Key Stage 1 classes and was very good in one lesson observed in Year 3. Some teachers have significant expertise that enhances lessons. They know exactly how to teach the skills that enable pupils to meet their learning objectives and spur them on to make maximum effort. In an excellent lesson in Year 1, pupils achieved high standards in singing and playing, and in evaluating the outcomes. They achieved the teacher's objectives to improve their understanding of pulse and to maintain a steady beat as they sang traditional folk songs from Britain, South America and New Zealand. Teachers challenge pupils to think and focus efforts on perfecting a technique or explaining feelings and ideas. This occurred in Year 2 when one pupil commented 'this sounds like gentle raindrops' and another recalled learning from the previous week when the impression had been of fierce and stormy weather. In this lesson, pupils experimented with percussion instruments to decide how they needed to play them to achieve a calm, soothing effect. As they worked, they evaluated their performance to find out how they could make it better with each practice. Teachers always encouraged the participation of pupils with special educational needs by praising their efforts or showing them how to hold and strike an instrument effectively. They expect more talented pupils to use vocabulary with confidence and precision, and encouraged them to sing solos or duets in front of the class.
141. Planning is thorough in all year groups. Traditionally, there have been music specialists on the staff who provide a high level of support and expertise in all aspects of the subject. Access to a broad range of opportunities including learning outside normal lessons, enables pupils to achieve as much as possible. Talented pupils' achievement is encouraged in partnership with parents so that pupils benefit from good class teaching, very good extra tuition from peripatetic teachers and extra support and encouragement through membership of the school choir, orchestra and music ensemble. When practising in the orchestra, for example, pupils observed how to tune violins and cellos. They consolidated their knowledge of techniques such as how to control the height of the violin bow and to position their fingers when bowing. They learnt to increase the tempo when playing a piece demanding a rapid 2:2 time. They knew about Beethoven's Ninth Symphony and explained it was a choral piece, which the composer never heard because he was deaf. The brief dialogue was an excellent example of the way in which the school uses creative subjects to extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Giving out awards at assembly, such as for reaching a new piano grade, also enhances pupils' self-esteem and promotes other pupils' pride in their peers' achievements.
142. Excellent accommodation and an extensive range of resources are used very effectively. The subject is currently soundly managed by a teacher whilst the school awaits the arrival in September of a new co-ordinator. The school has recruited someone with the expertise they need to sustain high standards in the school. This teacher is already helping to add to the development plan. It contains appropriate objectives to develop links with modern and creative dance and it is recognised that music could be used more as a stimulus for imaginative writing and for art, and that the

choir could be open to younger pupils. There is also scope to promote pupils' interest and celebrate their achievement in music further through displays. There is a strong capacity to continue to improve music in the terms ahead.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. Pupils' attainment is above national expectations at seven years of age. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is high. In particular, pupils achieve to the best of their abilities in swimming and team games. Pupils of all ages and aptitudes make good progress and a junior pupil with physical disabilities is sensitively included. He joins in as many exercises as possible and referees team games. In swimming, the more talented group of 14 pupils in Year 6 has acquired a very good front crawl technique. These pupils cover distances far in excess of national expectations. They have good body control and are supple and fluent in the water. They are very aware of how to fine-tune skills such as keeping their heads down, breathing rhythmically and using their hands and feet to pull, push and glide through the water. The middle-achieving group is as confident in the pool as are their peers, and well able to swim several lengths. Their skills are not as highly developed but they compare and comment on their performance as competently as the other group. Lower attainers have all reached the expected standard and are working hard to develop a comfortable style and avoid letting their feet go down as they practise their front crawl technique.
144. Pupils have a good understanding of the rules and conventions of team games and sports, and of why physical activity is good for health and well-being. In Year 5, their skill in rounders is well developed and a more able group of boys is accurate as well as energetic at over-arm bowling. In Year 6, pupils ably describe how to exercise their muscles and how to avoid muscle and heart strain. Pupils evaluate the extent to which they achieve good body control in gymnastics and dance and know the best features of their own performance in field sports, such as long and high jumping and throwing balls long distances. They also know how to improve techniques such as the take-off for long jumping and the follow-through required for over-arm bowling. Many older pupils represent the school in sports competitions with other schools in Walsall. For example, the girls' netball team won the Aldridge schools league in 2001. The girls' and boys' football teams do well and some pupils' skills are widely acknowledged as exceptional. Professional football clubs have signed up six boys from Year 5 and three girls play in a team drawn from all over Walsall.
145. Pupils in Year 2 were only observed once. They achieved the level expected in dance, competently changing speed and direction to perform a sequence of rhythmic movements. Their creative ideas in the lesson were above expectation and their agility was average. Most pupils need more practise to perfect the actions though some pupils were very light and quick on their feet and kept time to the music well. A group of pupils from Year 3 were able to name all aspects of physical education. They could explain and justify their preferred activities and the benefits of exercise. They realise, for example, that to improve throwing, batting and ball skills they must think about hand and eye co-ordination, and consider where to aim the ball and how to grip different kinds of bat. Pupils are very aware of the need for safety rules. They graphically recalled learning this lesson the hard way when a boy who did not look where he was going caused an accident. Year 2 pupils have swimming lessons, and a representative group from across the ability range in Year 3 could all swim before leaving the infants. One pupil now has a certificate for swimming 10 lengths.
146. Teaching is predominantly good throughout the school. There are times, however, when teachers need to emphasise the importance of listening to instructions and keeping firm control of feelings of excitement when pupils are participating in team games. In a Year

5 lesson, the teacher was very good at noting whether pupils were positioning their hands correctly when practising backstop and at running towards the ball. She made good use of pupils who demonstrated these skills to their peers and was clear and precise in her instructions for perfecting all the techniques necessary to play rounders well. Some girls had difficulties with bowling and batting and though they made good progress all pupils would have benefited from playing in mixed gender and ability groups. The teacher realised this and went on to re-arrange the groups later in the lesson and this made a positive difference to the performance of pupils of all abilities. In swimming, teaching is excellent. Lesson objectives are precise and matched to the particular needs of each ability group. Expectations of pupils are rigorous and communicated very successfully. There is a close rapport between the pupils and the teacher that spurs pupils to try their utmost to follow instructions and perfect techniques. The teacher critically appraises pupils' performance and teaches them to be equally demanding of each other. Not a second is wasted in the water and there are very effective procedures for supervising pupils in the pool and changing rooms to ensure their safety at all times. Parents work with teachers to guarantee a good adult: pupil ratio during their time at the swimming pool.

147. Pupils are highly motivated and have very good attitudes to learning. Their behaviour is good and they work at a lively pace and co-operate effectively. Pupils are healthily competitive but also friendly to and supportive of each other. They enjoy celebrating success at assemblies and praise each other as much for physical effort as for high standards of achievement. In all these respects the subject contributes significantly to pupils' personal development.
148. Excellent facilities and access to a residential outdoor adventure course in Year 6 also contribute significantly to the high quality of provision in PE. Parents also contribute much to pupils' learning. They regularly help the sports teams and with swimming galas. One parent organises cross-country running one day each week after school. Teachers are also strong advocates of the subject's importance in the curriculum. Despite a lack of release time from class teaching, the new co-ordinator has made a good start in steering change and development. Supported by her colleagues, she has devised an action plan for improvement that concentrates on raising achievement in creative dance. This is the area the school has rightly decided it organises less effectively than other areas. The co-ordinator is attending a course that is sharpening her approach to monitoring and evaluating provision. She is now ready to establish precise improvement objectives and seek to obtain reliable evidence of how new initiatives are helping to raise standards.