

INSPECTION REPORT

THE DOWNLEY SCHOOL

Downley, High Wycombe

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 131908

Headteacher: Mrs Rosemary Saunders

Reporting inspector: Mr David Whatson
23494

Dates of inspection: 9 – 12 June 2003

Inspection number: 248869

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S Thomason

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9146	Mr Mark Brennand	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How the school cares for its pupils How the school works in partnership with parents
22841	Miss Pat Jackson	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Religious education	English as an additional language
25771	Mr Peter Sandall	Team inspector	English Geography History	
20010	Mr John Sangster	Team inspector	Science Music	Educational inclusion
20950	Mr Roger Burgess	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	The quality of the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils
16038	Mrs Jill Bavin	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	Special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Downley School is a Beacon school; as a centre of excellence it disseminates good practice. It is also a new school, having been created three years ago from two schools. It is housed in a new purpose-built building into which it moved in June 2002. It is a popular school and is often over subscribed. It is much bigger than most other primary schools. There are 463 pupils on roll, aged from four to 11. In the whole school there are more boys than girls; in two year groups, the difference is significant. There is a much higher ratio of pupils to teachers in two year groups. Most pupils come from the affluent local area; most pupils stay at the school for the whole of their primary education. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, at two per cent, is below the national average. The school is ethnically diverse. Eighteen per cent of pupils come from ethnic minority groups. The three largest groups are Pakistani, those of a mixed Caribbean race and Black British-Caribbean. Six per cent of the pupils use English as an additional language, which is higher than average, although a very few are at the early stages of learning to speak English. The most commonly spoken languages at the school, other than English, are Panjabi and Urdu. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs, at 15 per cent, is below the national average, however, there is a wide range of needs at the school including specific learning and physical needs. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs, at one per cent, is below the national average. Although the attainment on entry of children currently in reception is above that normally expected, it has been lower in the past. The school is fully staffed, although in the last two years there has been a reasonably high turnover of staff that included, in the last year, the departure of two senior members of staff, including the headteacher.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school that has many strengths and gives very good value for money. Standards in subjects such as English, mathematics and science are high in comparison with the national average and pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in many subjects. The quality of teaching throughout the school is frequently very good and occasionally excellent. There is a caring and supportive ethos in the school. All pupils are encouraged to do their best both academically and socially. The leadership and management of the school are very good; the necessary steps to maintain high standards and seek further improvement are being taken.

What the school does well

- Throughout the school there are significant amounts of very good teaching, and pupils, including those whose first language is not English, achieve high standards in many subjects by the time they leave.
- The school provides very well for pupils' personal development; the provision for their moral and social development is very good. This encourages the development of confident, sensible and considerate individuals.
- The well planned and enriched curriculum interests and engages all pupils in their learning.
- Very effective systems are used to assess pupils and this information is used well to improve pupils' learning experiences and their achievement.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good. The new headteacher provides a strong and perceptive leadership that is forging the school's future direction.
- Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and all their needs are met successfully.
- The relationships and support the school offers to partner institutions is excellent.

What could be improved

- There are no significant weaknesses at the school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is a new school and, therefore, no judgement can be made about improvement.

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 ¹
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A*	A*	A*	A
Mathematics	A*	A*	A*	A
Science	A*	A*	A*	A*

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

In 2002, the English, mathematics and science test results for pupils at the end of Year 6 were in the top five per cent nationally. They were very high when compared with the national average and have been so for the last few years. In relation to their prior attainment, these pupils made very rapid progress. When compared with similar schools, pupils' performance in English and mathematics was well above average and it was very high in science.

Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the end of Year 6. Standards are slightly lower than those attained in the national tests in 2002, because there is a higher level of special educational needs in this year group than in previous ones. Based on their prior attainment, pupils have achieved very well in these subjects. The school has set challenging targets for the tests in 2003; the inspection findings indicate that they are likely to be met.

The results of pupils who sat the national tests in Year 2 in 2002 were average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, standards in mathematics were average, but those for reading and writing were below average and indicate that pupils underachieved in these two subjects. Based on teachers' assessments, pupils' attainment in science was above average when compared with all schools and average when compared to those in similar contexts. Pupils made reasonable progress in mathematics and science. Standards seen in Year 2 during the inspection are higher than those achieved in reading and writing in 2002 and are now above those normally expected; standards in mathematics and science are similar to those achieved in 2002. Based on their prior attainment all pupils are making better than expected progress.

The difference in attainment between boys and girls at the end of Years 2 and 6 is far less than that normally found; boys often achieve better than boys in most other schools. Literacy and numeracy skills are much higher than those normally found for pupils in Year 6, and above those expected for pupils in Year 2.

By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve well and attain above the expected level in history, information and communication technology, and music. Pupils also achieve well by the end of Year 2 in design and technology, and art and design, and achieve above expectations for their age, as do pupils in Year 6 in physical education. By the end of Year 6 pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology, and art and design, and attain the expected level for their age. The progress made by pupils across the school is satisfactory in geography and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils attain the expected level for their age. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attain the expected level in physical education and make satisfactory progress. In religious education, pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Years 2 and 6, achieve the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus.

The children currently in reception make good progress and most are likely to exceed the expected level in all the areas of learning by the time they start Year 1.

Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and often achieve very well across the whole of the curriculum and frequently equal the attainment of their classmates. Those pupils whose mother tongue is not English make good progress in most subjects and, by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, they achieve very well. Pupils from different ethnic minority groups achieve the same as other pupils in the school.

¹ 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils speak highly of their school and their teachers. In class all pupils demonstrate very good enthusiasm and sustain high levels of concentration for long periods of time.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good and at times excellent. Pupils behave very well because they know it is the right thing to do. They are extremely welcoming to visitors, and play and work harmoniously together.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work very effectively in groups and with partners irrespective of their gender, ethnicity or linguistic background. They undertake a wide range of responsibilities with great maturity.
Attendance	Very good. The level of attendance is above the national average and the great majority of pupils arrive on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Very good	Very 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 quality of teaching is sometimes good, usually very good and occasionally excellent, and makes a corresponding impact on pupils' learning. In most subjects, other than religious education, teachers have a very good knowledge of all the subjects and how to teach them. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good, due to the pace, vigour and appropriateness of the planned learning experiences. This is greatly assisted by teaching pupils in ability groups. Throughout the school, all pupils benefit significantly from a committed team of adults. Teachers have consistent and very high expectations of both behaviour and standards. Work is well planned, and provides a very good range of challenging and interesting activities to capture pupils' interest. Pupils respond positively to teachers' expectations and they try their best. Clear explanations, well-focused activities, and probing questions, make learning both enjoyable and relevant. Homework is regularly set. It is very well organised, highly relevant and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is very good.

This consistently very good teaching benefits those pupils who use English as an additional language, enabling them to make good progress. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good, due to well-targeted activities that closely match their particular needs. This enables those pupils to make good progress and to join in all aspects of a lesson.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a good range of work that is relevant and planned well. There are good links between many subjects. Very good links with the community, and excellent ones with partner institutions, greatly enrich pupils' learning experiences. Pupils with diverse needs are given equal opportunities to be involved in all aspects of the school. There is a good range of activities outside of lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There are particular strengths in the quality of support given by learning support assistants in lessons.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils who use English as an additional language benefit enormously from the very good teaching they receive in most lessons.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The provision for pupils' social and moral development is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and that for their cultural development is satisfactory. There are many very strong aspects in the provision for pupils' cultural development, but the cultural and linguistic diversity of the school community is not strongly celebrated.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The provision for the care and welfare of pupils is good. Procedures for supporting and monitoring behaviour, including any form of oppressive behaviour, such as racism, are very good. There is a comprehensive range of very good assessment procedures, recording pupils' attainment and progress in most subjects. These are used well to guide planning and set targets. The school has good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils' achievements are celebrated well.

The school has good links with parents.

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 strong and perceptive leadership. Very effective support from the deputy headteacher and senior management team has greatly assisted the induction of the new headteacher and recent school improvements. All staff work very well as a team to ensure that all pupils achieve their best and have equality of opportunity.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors have a strong sense of purpose, a high level of commitment, and a sophisticated and responsive structure to meet the changing needs of the school. Governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are actively involved in both addressing and monitoring these issues.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school closely monitors teaching and learning to identify areas of strength and weakness and uses a very well structured programme to develop staff expertise. National test and assessment results are analysed very well to identify the most appropriate priorities. In a short period of time excellent progress has been made in addressing these.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Spending on resources of all kinds is carefully considered in the light of their contributions to pupils' learning. Excellent use is made of new technology. The principles of best value are well used to make the most effective use of the school's resources. The school is well staffed and specialist teachers make significant contributions to pupils learning, although the size of a few classes does inhibit pupils' learning. The provision for the induction of new staff, and the support provided for established teachers is very good. Recent staff changes have disrupted the co-ordination of a few subjects. The range and quality of resources for learning are good. The new building is spacious and is used well, although it is slightly restricted in the reception classes. Several specialist rooms benefit pupils in Years 1 to 6.

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 children enjoy school. The teaching is good and their children make good progress. The school expects their children to work hard and helps them to become mature and responsible. They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision for homework. The range of activities outside lessons. The information on children's progress and the links between the school and parents.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour is good.• The leadership of the school. | |
|--|--|

Inspectors' judgements endorse the parents' positive views. However, the inspectors found that: the school sets the right amount of homework, it provides good opportunities for parents to find out about their children's progress, the school makes a good effort to work closely with parents, and that there is a good range of out-of-class activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In 2002, the English, mathematics and science results of the tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 placed the school in the top five per cent nationally. These were very high when compared to the national average and have been so for the last few years. In relation to their prior attainment, these pupils made very rapid progress. When compared with similar schools pupils' performance in English and mathematics was well above average and it was very high in science. This constantly high level of achievement is the result of very effective teaching during the whole of Key Stage 2², capped off by some excellent teaching provided by teachers in Year 6 who have taught in that year group for a number of years. English, mathematics and science are also very well co-ordinated. The school leadership, and the co-ordinators, place a great emphasis on maintaining high standards, and assessment is used very well to support them. When compared with other pupils in the school, those from ethnic minority groups achieved equally well.
2. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average by the end of Year 6. The targets set by the governing body for 2003, although still challenging, reflect these findings, and are likely to be achieved. The standards seen during the inspection are slightly lower than those achieved in the national tests of 2002, because there is a higher level of special educational need in this year group than in previous ones. Based on their prior attainment, the pupils in Year 6 have achieved very well in these subjects.
3. The results the national tests in 2002, taken by pupils at the end of Year 2, were average in reading and writing, and above average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, standards in mathematics were average, but those for reading and writing were below average and indicate that pupils underachieved in these two subjects. Based on teachers' assessments in science, standards were above average when compared with all schools and average when compared to those in similar contexts. Pupils made reasonable progress in mathematics and science. In the last three years, pupils' performance has improved in reading, writing and mathematics; it has been strongest in mathematics.
4. In the last year there has been a total change of teaching staff in Years 1 and 2. The new teaching team provides very good teaching, especially in the basic skills. Standards seen in Year 2 during the inspection are higher in reading and writing than those achieved in 2002 and are now above those normally expected. The headteacher has used the school's performance management systems and worked closely both with the teachers and with the English co-ordinator to focus on raising standards in these subjects. They have been very successful. Standards in mathematics and science are similar to those achieved in 2002. Based on their prior attainment, all pupils are making better than expected progress.
5. Progress in Key Stage 1 is not as great as it is at Key Stage 2, because the overall quality of teaching is not quite as strong, and the pupils currently in Key Stage 1 have had a disrupted education. This was initially caused by a protracted move into a new building and then a total change of teachers.
6. The difference in attainment between boys and girls at the end of Years 2 and 6 is far less than that normally found; the boys often achieve better than boys in most other schools. Both the school's senior management team, as well as the teachers, are very conscious of the potential of underachievement by boys. To ensure boys' achievement, many resources that appeal specifically

² **Key Stages**

Key Stage 2, sometimes referred to as the juniors, caters for pupils aged between 7 and 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6.

Key Stage 1, sometimes referred to as the infants, caters for pupils aged between 5 and 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2.

to them have been purchased, topics have been chosen with more 'boy appeal', and latest research has been analysed to develop a more appealing curriculum for them.

7. Literacy and numeracy skills are much higher than those normally found for pupils in Year 6, and above those expected for pupils in Year 2. This is not only because of the very good teaching of the basic skills and the very effective introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, but also because pupils are provided with many opportunities to use and extend their skills in a wide range of subjects. This emphasis on the teaching of literacy and the many opportunities for pupils to take part in speaking and listening activities ensures that pupils who use English as an additional language also make very good progress. These pupils in the past have usually attained above the expected level for their age and, this year, some of the highest-achievement in English is by pupils who do not have English as their mother tongue.
8. By the end of Years 2 and 6, because of the good and very good teaching in most subjects, pupils achieve well and attain above the expected level in history, information and communication technology, and music. Pupils also achieve well by the end of Year 2 in design and technology, and art and design and achieve above the expectations for their age, as do pupils in Year 6 in physical education. By the end of Year 2, pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve the expected level for their age.
9. The rate of learning in design and technology and art and design remains good in Years 3 and 4, but slows in Years 5 and 6, not because of a drop in the quality of teaching, which remains good, but because of insufficient time to enable good progress to continue and to undertake in-depth coverage of the curriculum. This lack of time is the result, not only of inconsistencies in the timetable, which are now being remedied, but due to the move into the new school building. In the previous school, and in the early days on the new site, much of the necessary equipment was in storage, and the specialist teaching areas were not in use. By the end of Year 6, therefore, pupils make satisfactory progress in these two subjects in relation to their prior attainment and attain the level expected for their age.
10. In geography, by the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attain the expected level for their age. Due to the newness of the whole-school timetable, there is an inconsistent allocation of time to the teaching of geography between different year groups, and, at times, a lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Overall, progress across the school is, therefore, satisfactory.
11. In religious education, there is also an inconsistent allocation to time between different year groups. When this is coupled with the variable of quality of teaching across the school, pupils fail to make continuous good progress in the subject. The recent appointment of the co-ordinator to the subject has yet had little impact on improving this situation or developing whole-school assessment procedures for the subject. Overall, therefore, pupils make satisfactory progress and by the end of Year 2 and 6, achieve the standards expected by the locally agreed syllabus.
12. In many subjects, pupils achieve well and sometimes very well. However, the rate at which they learn is not always consistent. This is particularly noticeable in mathematics, art and design, physical education, religious education and design and technology. In these subjects, although the quality of teaching was broadly good or better, the large class sizes in Years 4 and 5, where there is one class of 37 pupils, hinders the ability of the teacher to support individuals or groups to a very high standard. Learning, therefore, often remains good, rather than very good.
13. In the reception classes, a new team of teachers this year, adeptly supported by the headteacher, consistently provides an interesting range of activities. Assessment is used well to provide a good level of challenge and to meet the individual needs of each child. Because of this good teaching, those children, currently in the reception classes, make good progress and most are likely to exceed the expected level in all areas of their learning by the time they start Year 1.
14. Because pupils are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics, pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. In previous years all pupils with special educational needs achieved the national average in English and science at the end of Year 6, and only a very small percentage achieved the lower Level 3 in mathematics. Currently, most pupils with special

educational needs continue to achieve very well in these subjects, as they do across the curriculum where they frequently equal the attainment of their classmates. This is because of the very good support they receive from the learning support assistants, and also how, in many subjects, teachers carefully prepare work for pupils of different abilities.

15. The school has carefully identified those gifted and talented pupils at the school. Their needs are met regularly in many lessons and this identification ensures that pupils who are gifted and talented progress at similar rate to their classmates. For instance, they are often provided with extension work and routinely challenged by probing questions. Their needs are also catered for more widely. One pupil who is particularly talented in English has been introduced to Shakespeare, through a visit to the theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon, and pupils who are talented in information and communication technology have the opportunity to use the facilities of a local high school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils' attitudes to their work and school life are very good and this is one of many strong aspects of the school. Behaviour is also very good and there is a strong sense that through its ethos the school promotes the values of respect and honesty. These very positive attitudes and values, add considerably to pupils' rapid learning as they are predisposed to concentrate, be independent, and rise to a challenge.
17. Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in the parents' views, where some 93 per cent agree that their children like the school. The vast majority of pupils arrive on time and, once in the school, they settle quickly into the daily routines. In lessons there were many occasions when pupils demonstrated high levels of enthusiasm, particularly when responding to questions. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English were seen to be fully involved in such work and enjoying the opportunity to extend their learning. All pupils are extremely self-assured. This gives them a great deal of confidence when involved in classroom discussions or in conversations with adults. All pupils, including those from different ethnic minorities, are equally self-assured, and this contributes positively to their academic and social development. The great majority of pupils were also observed maintaining interest and concentration for prolonged periods of time. However, for pupils in Years 4 and 5, where there are many more pupils in some classes than is normally found, they find this more difficult and they are not always successful. Pupils with special educational needs feel equally valued in the school and share the same positive attitudes to learning as their classmates. The high take up of extra-curricular activities, such as football, netball, choir and orchestra, is further vindication of the high level of interest that pupils take in the life of the school. It is also to the school's credit that so many pupils in Year 6 volunteered to help train grandparents to use the Internet during the after-school 'Silver Surfers Club'.
18. Behaviour is very good, being well managed through very high teacher expectations, the consistent application of policies for behaviour and anti-bullying. In the vast majority of lessons, behaviour was very good and at times excellent. This means that teachers can concentrate on teaching and inevitably this has a positive effect on the progress pupils make. In the communal areas pupils move around the corridors in an orderly fashion and play well together in the playground at break and lunchtime. Conversations with pupils indicate that they are aware of the sanctions and rewards, which the school applies. Incidents of bullying are very rare; pupils stated that their school is free from bullying. In the past 12 months there have been no exclusions. In spite of the school's ethnic mix, it is racially very harmonious because of the very good relationships and personal development, with no reported incidents of racism.
19. Relationships are very good. Starting in the reception classes, planned group activities encourage children to share resources. This emphasis on working in groups and pairs means that, by the time children start Year 1; this is an accepted way of learning. Whilst in the reception classes, children are also given the opportunity to develop their initiative and a sense of independence, through making choices about which activities they would like to do. Pupils work harmoniously together, irrespective of ability, gender, ethnicity or linguistic background. By the time they reach Key Stage 2, pupils have acquired the confidence to take on the roles of playground friends, prefects, and librarians. They also demonstrate a growing initiative, by raising money for charities, through a cake sale, a 'swimathon', and a competition to design a bag that takes up less space in

the cloakrooms. All these activities have been suggested, and organised, by pupils, often through the school council. Pupils show considerable respect for one another and their teachers. One notable example was the way a pupil in Year 6 said 'thank you' to his teacher, as he went home following the evening's football training.

20. Attendance is very good. There is virtually no unauthorised absence, a factor for which the parents must take great credit. They are quick to inform the school, either by telephone, or in writing, of any absence. Punctuality is also very good with registers taken promptly and allowing for an efficient start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching across the school is very good overall; it is occasionally excellent. Teaching was at least very good or better in 38 per cent of all the lessons seen during the inspection; six per cent of lessons were excellent. Forty-seven per cent of lessons were good and 14 per cent satisfactory. One per cent was unsatisfactory. In the responses to the parents' questionnaire, parents commented on the level of good teaching in the school. The most significant factors are the very good teaching of the basic skills, coupled with the teachers' high expectations of the pupils, and very good planning.
22. However, the quality of teaching is not consistently very good across the school. In recent years there has been a considerable change of teaching staff, especially in the reception classes and Years 1 and 2. Many of the new staff are good practitioners who have been well inducted to the school and supported by many rigorous procedures. Teaching is usually good in the reception classes and sometimes very good. In Years 1 and 2, the overall quality of teaching is good; it is, however, often very good. In Years 3 to 6, there is a significant amount of very good teaching. Excellent teaching was only observed in Years 3 and 6 and this boosts pupils' learning in these year groups. The quality of teaching in Years 4 and 5 is often good, and sometimes very good, but the large class sizes make it more difficult to achieve a very good rate of learning for all of the pupils all the time. The one unsatisfactory lesson observed was in the teaching of religious education and was the result of the teacher's insecure knowledge of the subject and a lack of focus.
23. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage³ is good. All adults develop very good relationships with the children and manage them well. The teachers and support staff form a cohesive team that works very well together. They all have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and, jointly, plan an interesting and varied curriculum to address the Early Learning Goals⁴, as well as providing a good challenge to all children. Routines are well established, enabling the children to behave confidently and responsibly, and to develop independence. Support staff and voluntary helpers are well briefed and know exactly what their role is in the classroom. Adults interact well within groups, and use every opportunity to develop all areas of the curriculum. The children enjoy their lessons and show a keen interest in what they do. The wide range of practical activities and discussions keep the children motivated, but in a few less effective lessons the pace of learning slows. Most adults use questioning well to reinforce previous learning, before moving on, and this ensures that children learn continuously. Despite knowing the children well, at times staff do not direct their questions sufficiently to individuals to assess their learning and challenge further thinking. Comprehensive records are kept of what children can do and these are then used to plan subsequent activities. Teachers are well aware of the need to help children who use English as an additional language, and seek ways to improve their knowledge and understanding to do this. Children with special educational needs are quickly identified and are supported well.
24. The most significant strength overall, in the teaching at The Downley School, is the depth of the teachers' subject knowledge and their understanding of how different subjects should be taught. This underpins many of the very good aspects of teaching, namely:

³ The Foundation Stage caters for children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

⁴ The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

- Teachers' technical competence in the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is very good. All pupils, therefore, make significant gains in their acquisition of skills and knowledge. In many lessons, teachers frequently reinforce the basic skills. This is particularly true of English and reflects the priority that language development has at the school. Teachers were observed reinforcing basic punctuation in a range of subjects, including information and communication technology and religious education. Because of this, most pupils whose mother tongue is not English make rapid gains in their learning.
 - Most teachers are very confident. This enables them to answer pupils' questions accurately and to teach with an enthusiasm that is often contagious. This extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work that they complete, and often provides them with a thirst for learning. Humour and relevance are added to many lessons, as in the game 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire', in lessons taken by the co-ordinator for information and communication technology. This makes learning fun.
 - Teachers' planning is very good. It is very comprehensive and builds firmly on pupils' previous learning. There is also an agreed format for planning that is consistently followed across the school. The format ensures that most lessons have a clear focus, that activities are prepared for pupils of different abilities, and that the learning in each lesson is assessed. It also meets the needs of pupils of different abilities. Extension activities are regularly provided for gifted or talented pupils. All pupils are, therefore, fully included, and challenged in nearly everything that they do.
 - Teachers use a very wide range of methods to encourage pupils' learning. Both the daily mathematics lesson and the literacy hours are very well structured. Each part of the lesson is used to assess and extend pupils very well. In these and in other lessons, individual, paired, and group work provide a wide range of learning opportunities that meet the demands of pupils who learn in different ways. There is also a very good balance of research and whole-class teaching. These provide opportunities, especially for boys, to learn well.
25. All these very good skills are capped off by teachers' very high expectations of both the work and behaviour of all pupils, including those who use English as an additional language. Pupils are continually encouraged, through the use of praise and targets, to achieve their best in terms of both quantity and quality. Pupils often respond very positively to this type of challenge and produce work of very high quality and sustain levels of concentration and independence of a very high level. It is for this reason that some pupils who use English as an additional language are some of this year's highest achievers. Teachers also have very high expectations of behaviour. When necessary they apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. This ensures that lessons are calm and orderly affairs. However, its use is rarely required, because most pupils know how to behave, and they are so engrossed in their work that there is no time or inclination to misbehave. However, during the inspection, teachers in Years 4 and 5, did exhibit good classroom control, because the large class sizes in these year groups required a firmer hand and greater organisational skills. As a result a good pace of learning was maintained.
26. These skills and expectations produce an orderly environment and a very good climate for learning, in which all pupils, whatever their backgrounds, are fully included in lessons and feel valued. This greatly enhances the quality of pupils' learning, as pupils want to learn and feel comfortable about asking for help, as well as developing their confidence and self-esteem.
27. Time is used very well in most lessons. Lessons start promptly because of well-practised routines. Teachers are very aware that many of their pupils are very able, and proceed at a fast pace. Questions are used very effectively, not only to challenge pupils of different abilities and attitudes, but also to move the lesson along. When possible, teachers draw sensitively upon the experiences of pupils from different ethnic groups; thus ensuring their involvement and providing a recognition of their heritage. The wide range of teaching strategies and resources are used to similar effect. For example, interactive white boards are used very well in the computer suite, as well as the classrooms to focus pupils' thinking and demonstrate the concepts that they are learning. It is because of this that many pupils have a deep understanding of the skills involved in subjects such as history. Teachers use support staff well to ensure that all pupils are involved in most aspects of

a lesson. They were often seen working with individuals, or groups of pupils, at the beginning and end of a lesson. Because they are thoroughly briefed, and well deployed, they provide those pupils with the greatest need with the most appropriate support.

28. In lessons, teachers assess pupils well. This often involves pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, in evaluating their own learning. The teacher usually shares the objectives of the lesson with the pupils at the beginning and end of a lesson, and, in the very best lessons, they are returned to during the course of the lesson. This strategy enables pupils to be fully aware of what they are expected to learn, for them to be focused on their learning and for teachers to assess their progress. Pupils have their own targets in English and mathematics. Teachers use these well, regularly referring to them in discussion and when marking their pupils work. Pupils are keenly aware, therefore, what they need to do next to improve. Marking is generally very good. It offers a balance between praise and guidance on what a pupil needs to do next.
29. However, there is a weakness in the teachers' knowledge of religious education. Although there was some excellent teaching in religious education, there was also some unsatisfactory teaching. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher's lack of confidence, superficial questioning, and an unstructured task, meant that many pupils made no significant gains in their understanding of Christian beliefs and practices and were unproductive in their written work. This inconsistent quality of teaching hinders pupils' overall progress.
30. Conversely, the excellent Year 3 lesson on Gladys Aylward, like those mathematics lessons in Year 6, was consistently enthusiastic and challenging. This stemmed from the teacher's excellent knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. The brilliant relationships in these lessons provided a superb learning environment and the opportunity for teachers to display their outstanding skills, particularly in questioning, that ensured that all pupils hung on their every word. Teaching methods are well selected and time is used very well for individual, whole class and collaborative learning. Teachers are very mindful of the capabilities of their pupils, therefore, work activities and demands are matched sensitively to pupils' needs. Well-directed support assistants support and reinforce pupils' learning very well.
31. Homework is set regularly for all pupils. It steadily increases as pupils move up the school. In the reception classes, children take home books to share, are regularly asked to find information about the week's topic and to bring things to talk about in 'Show and Tell'. Younger pupils are given activities that support the acquisition of basic skills, such as reading and number work. Older pupils are given a far wider range of activities that include independent research in a wide variety of subjects, as well as continuing the emphasis on the basic skills. The frequency, breadth and depth of spellings given to pupils to learn at home are excellent. The provision of homework builds upon pupils' learning at school and adds very positively to their learning.
32. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the very good teaching throughout the school. Teachers have very good expectations of them and indicate this by the demanding pace that ensures a very good rate of learning in lessons. The teachers know the pupils very well and, consequently, set those with special educational needs finely pitched challenges that stretch them without demoralising them. Similarly, classroom and learning support assistants support pupils in class, with sensitivity and warmth, but maintain the level of challenge set by teachers. They are an invaluable resource in minimising the effect of large classes.

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

33. There is a very good curriculum overall and it serves its pupils well. All the subjects of the National Curriculum meet statutory requirements. There is very good provision in English, mathematics, science, and information and communication technology. The provision in a few other subjects is variable and as a result it is only satisfactory in art and design, design and technology, geography and religious education, where the allocation of time is inconsistent across Years 3 to 6. The teaching of French has been introduced into the curriculum for older pupils. Religious education is taught following the locally agreed syllabus. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are used effectively to improve learning in English and mathematics, as well as across the curriculum

in other subjects. Very good use is made of the specialist teaching of individual teachers in subjects such as information and communication technology. The school has a successful programme for pupils' personal, social and health education that includes the teaching of sex education and raising awareness of older pupils to the dangers of drug abuse.

34. The curriculum in the reception classes is very good; it is very wide and relevant to the needs of young children. It is carefully planned to ensure that those children who start their full-time education at different times receive a very well balanced and appropriate curriculum for their stage of development. Areas within the classroom focus on different aspects of learning, and children rotate between them, gaining a wide range of very good experiences. Because of this all children progress well towards the Early Learning Goals. Children are provided with stimulating experiences and activities that cover all areas of learning. There is a good balance of structured lessons and opportunities for children to learn through play. There is also a good emphasis placed on the development of the essential skills of literacy and numeracy. The provision for outdoor play is satisfactory and the children are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of physical activities.
35. The National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are effectively in place. Teachers follow the guidelines very well. They structure their lessons to ensure that the balance of direct teaching and pupils' activities maintains high levels of application and motivation. In both literacy and numeracy, lessons, teachers carefully plan activities that are appropriate to pupils' differing prior attainment and this is making a significant contribution to raising standards in English and mathematics.
36. Overall, very effective learning opportunities are provided for all pupils in the different subjects of the National Curriculum. Effective links are made between subjects, which provide suitable opportunities for pupils to consolidate skills. For example, pupils use their literacy skills very well in subjects such as religious education and appropriate links have even been made between science and history. However, the recent move into the new school building, in which some specialist rooms were not ready to use, and the creation of a new school timetable has resulted in some inconsistency in the allocation of time for some subjects; for example art and design, geography and religious education. All teaching areas are now fully operational, and the school is aware of the discrepancies in the time allocated to subjects between different year groups. The timetable and time allocation is being reviewed. In the short term, teachers have attempted to address these difficulties in both long-and medium-term plans. These are very good and ensure that all required aspects are covered. Teachers plan together very effectively to ensure that all pupils are offered access to the broad range of activities, and that there is good continuity and progression for the development of skills and knowledge. A few learning experiences for pupils in Years 4 and 5 are not always very good. The large class sizes in lessons, such as physical education, hinder the teachers ability of provide a highly focused and effective lesson. This has been recognised and a new member of staff has been employed to support these large classes.
37. There is very good provision for citizenship, sex and relationships education and drugs misuse awareness, through the healthy schools project and other similar initiatives. Health education is an important component of teaching and learning in science. The sex education lessons provided by the school nurse during the inspection were excellent. Good displays around the school indicate pupils' interest in healthy living. Through physical education, games and swimming activities, the school contributes well to pupils' understanding of the importance of physical fitness.
38. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities. There are many clubs that take place at lunch times and after school and these are well attended by the pupils from Year 3 to Year 6. There are fewer activities available for younger pupils. The range of clubs is wide and gives pupils time to develop their interests in areas such as sports, music and computers. There is a significant amount of instrumental music teaching by visiting teachers. Residential visits for pupils give them opportunities for personal development, as well as time to both improve in and enjoy a range of outdoor and adventurous activities. Pupils' experiences are broadened through visits to museums and art galleries and competitive events against other schools. All these activities and educational visits make a significant contribution to the provision and development of pupils' social, physical and creative skills.

39. The school is very welcoming to pupils with special educational needs. High quality teaching and classroom support, together with the school's commitment to doing its best for all pupils, means that they have equal access to the same curriculum as their classmates. Provision for pupils with a statement of special educational needs is very good because each pupil is viewed individually. The special educational needs co-ordinator is working very hard to ensure that one pupil receives his entitlement to speech and language therapy. No negative assumptions are made about pupils' capabilities. The entire school staff communicates their determination to help each pupil achieve as much as possible. Disabilities are viewed as challenges to be overcome rather than reasons for not achieving.
40. The school's provision to ensure equality of opportunity and access is good. There is a clear understanding of what it means to provide each pupil with the best opportunity for him or her to succeed both academically and socially. The teaching of pupils by ability groups in English and mathematics from Years 2 to 6 is in recognition of the need to provide more focused teaching that meets the needs of these pupils. Although there is little direct support for pupils learning English as an additional language, even those at an early stage of learning to speak English, the school is aware of their needs, most of which are met through the very good teaching. The school has identified those pupils as gifted and talented and has provided well for them in many subjects, such as English and information and communication technology. Because of the positive attitudes and skilled teaching of pupils of different ethnic heritages, they also achieve well and are fully involved in every aspect of school life. The school is aware that in many schools there is a difference between the attainment of boys and girls. To counter this they have purchased resources and created an enriched curriculum that appeals to boys; this, in part, accounts for their unusually high level of success when compared to boys at other schools. Socially the school is aware pupils need to be treated equally and have the same type of opportunities. There is a wide range of responsibilities taken on by pupils as they move through school; some are prefects and others have other meaningful roles. Teachers ensure that all pupils are given some responsibility and pupils themselves perceive no difference between themselves.
41. The school engages frequently with its local community to broaden the experiences of its pupils, enriching the curriculum very well. There are good links with three local churches whose representatives deliver assemblies on a regular basis. Pupils pay visits to the local Mosque and Gurdwara to enhance their work in religious education and their cultural development. Children in the reception classes visit the local shops and post office. Further links with the community include the invitation to old age pensioners to attend the harvest festival assembly, and by performing musically in public and providing examples of country dancing at local events. There is also a close relationship with the local fire brigade. During the inspection week, local fire fighters were in school to support a lesson in Year 2 on the different fire fighting techniques used today and those used during the Great Fire of London. The local nurse and police support the school's provision on sex and relationships education and drugs awareness. The school provides a base for several local community groups, including the Brownies and the Downley Dynamos, a football club for pupils at the school.
42. Relationships with partner institutions are excellent, being built on the school's Beacon status. Through this there are excellent links to six local primary schools that receive support and guidance on a wide range of issues. Links with secondary schools are also excellent. Joint ventures in information and communication technology, art and design, and French, have all added considerably to the quality of the curriculum provided at The Downley. Close ties with Maplewood special school that is on the same site also add to pupils' education for instance, in the past, pupils at The Downley have run cake stalls to raise money for the swimming pool at this school. Good business links have been established by the co-ordinator for information and communication technology. These are bringing interesting opportunities and experiences, both to the school and to the pupils. However, such contacts are not common in other subjects.
43. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is good. Pupils' moral and social development is firmly embedded in the life of the school and has a very positive impact on their attitudes, behaviour, and the quality of relationships. Pupils' spirituality is fostered well in many lessons, but is not a strong feature of assemblies. The provision for pupils' cultural development is

satisfactory. Some subjects add considerably well to this, but other aspects require further development.

44. The opportunities for pupils to gain insight into their own values and beliefs, as well as others, in order to develop their spiritual awareness are good overall. Assemblies provide good opportunities for pupils to develop a firm sense of community, celebrate achievement, and reinforce moral and social values, such as walking to school and sports achievements. Some assemblies are planned well and present thought-provoking moral themes, such as one led by pupils from Year 5. Both this and some beautiful guitar playing in another assembly evoked spiritual moments for all those watching and listening, but very short, perfunctory prayers did not help the pupils reflect personally on what had been experienced. Visiting local clergy frequently lead good, predominantly Christian, assemblies, but other assemblies barely meet statutory requirements and provide insufficient opportunity for quiet, meaningful reflection. The school provides regular opportunities for pupils to perform both musically and dramatically in public, thus enhancing their confidence and self-esteem. Some teachers create very good opportunities for pupils to be amazed and excited by the world around them, for example in the natural world and in art. In lessons, pupils are often required to respond to probing questions that make them think deeply. Very young pupils, in an information and communication technology lesson, thought of articles in their homes that could be controlled and were amazed that they produced a list of 24. In some religious education lessons pupils are encouraged to think deeply about beliefs and faiths, but this is not consistent throughout the school.
45. The school's approach to pupils' moral development is very good. The school stands for positive values and there are very clear expectations of high standards of behaviour to which the pupils respond very well. Even the youngest pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong and understand what is acceptable and what is not. These very high standards are seen in all aspects of school life, both in and out of lessons. Through an effective school council, pupils from all years are able to be involved in decision-making and older pupils are given opportunities to be prefects and sports team captains. The oldest pupils are very good role models for the younger pupils, showing respect and maturity in their dealings with other people, both adults and children. The provision for personal and social education is well established and the topics of sex, drugs and healthy living contribute significantly to pupils' moral development. Opportunities are also frequently taken in assemblies to reinforce moral issues, as the one led by a Year 5 class, in which the saying '*... words can never hurt me*' was effectively disproved through drama.
46. The provision for encouraging pupils' social development is very good and helps the pupils take pride in belonging to a thriving community. The school values its members and encourages pupils to integrate well both at work and at play. This results in a very harmonious and happy environment in which pupils relate extremely well to each other and with the adults around them. In the classroom, there are many opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs or in groups. Many lessons encourage pupils to be independent, and teachers' questions often require them to make their own decisions. For example, children in the reception classes take responsibility for planning their own learning. Many of the extra-curricular activities provide good opportunities for older pupils in different year groups to work together and the school's council encourages pupils of all age groups to listen to and take account of differing opinions. Pupils also have opportunities to mix socially outside school through numerous musical events, sports fixtures and a residential visit. Links are particularly strong with the special school next door.
47. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. It is enhanced by the teaching of French, and other subjects also provide pupils with good opportunities to appreciate British and Western European heritage. For example, very good work is done in history about Victorian times and pupils learn country dancing. An International Arts week briefly, but significantly, extends pupils' knowledge of arts, crafts and dance forms from around the world, but non-western music and art are not sufficiently embedded in the overall curriculum. The study of major world faiths in religious education introduces pupils to others' practices and beliefs, but opportunities to compare these with their own beliefs and values are not systematically offered. The rich cultural diversity of the school's community is not immediately evident from signs and displays and the school does not systematically plan to celebrate the many linguistic skills or the cultural heritage of members of the school community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school is very good at caring for its pupils. A particular strength is the way in which staff work hard to nurture good relationships with pupils to build trust. The school is genuine in its desire to provide a broad and balance education for all pupils. Arrangements for the care of pupils with special educational needs are good. The systems for assessing, monitoring and supporting pupils academic and personal development are very good overall. The particular strength lies in the care given to pupils' academic progress; those systems that relate to their personal development are good.
49. The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The headteacher is the nominated child protection officer. She will shortly receive her update training so that she is fully conversant with the local procedures. Systems for recording incidents of child protection are all in place and information is disseminated to all members of staff at regular meetings. The school is not complacent in its approach to child protection, and the systems are robust. Provision for ensuring the health and safety of pupils is also good. For example, an Internet safety policy is in place, fully adhered to and an agreement sent home for parents to sign. Further more, the building was designed with accessibility for all pupils in mind. The school is working on how to improve this and provide greater access for those pupils in the future who may have special educational needs.
50. The building provides a modern, safe environment, which is well maintained by a conscientious site manager and cleaning staff. The site manager is health and safety trained and, as part of his duties, he carries out a daily visual check of the site. In conjunction with the health and safety representative from the local authority, the school recently carried out an audit of the building, raising a few minor issues. These are all in the process of being dealt with. Arrangements for first-aid are good; all learning support assistants have received the relevant training.
51. Systems for monitoring attendance are good. A computerised system helps build up a good picture of attendance and is particularly useful when identifying any trends in absences. Absences are few, primarily as the school maintains a high profile on the importance of good attendance and many parents are keen for their children to attend school. Parents are encouraged to telephone to confirm absences at the earliest opportunity, and many do so. In the rare event that a long-term absence does occur, the school can contact its education welfare officer.
52. The monitoring of behaviour and bullying is very good, exemplified by the very good and, at times, excellent behaviour that was observed. The school sets high expectations for behaviour and operates a range of rewards and sanctions. In lessons, pupils are frequently praised for good answers, and work of particular note or acts of kindness are recognized at the weekly celebration assemblies. Pupils understand the sanctions that the school applies. In the first instance, these are the loss of playtime and, if the poor behaviour continues, being seen by the headteacher. Arrangements for monitoring and preventing oppressive behaviour, such as bullying, racism and sexism, are excellent with pupils and parents confirming that the school is virtually free of such behaviour. When a very rare incidence of bullying does occur, the headteacher and the staff are not complacent in following it up; a fact confirmed and applauded by parents attending the pre-inspection parents' meeting.
53. Overall, procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are very good. They are exceptionally good in English, mathematics and science, and account for the very good progress pupils make in these subjects. A plethora of tests and assessments regularly assesses pupils' attainment. These procedures are also very good in information and communication technology, where both teachers and pupils are involved in the process. In the reception classes, children are assessed carefully, when they start school on a part-time basis, so that their particular needs are well met. There are well-established procedures that meet the national guidance for the early identification and monitoring of pupils with special educational needs. In most other subjects the procedures are good. Tests or teacher assessments are conducted at the end of a topic. However, pupils' progress and the subject co-ordinators' ability to monitor, is hampered in a very few subjects, such as religious education and music, by the lack of rigorous and whole-school assessment procedures.

54. The information gathered during these many assessments is used well to inform curriculum planning, and particularly well to monitor and support academic progress in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The strategies and practices used by the school allow teachers to develop a clear understanding of pupils' abilities. This information is used well to set pupils in ability groups for specific subjects and provide them with individual or group targets. As both parents and pupils are made fully aware of the importance of these targets they are instrumental in many pupils making such good progress. Much of this information is contained in whole class tracking sheets and year group files. These files contain information on each member of the class and are passed on to the next teacher. The school has accepted that some of this information is duplicated and burdensome to complete. The school is part way through a review of the current system.
55. The analysis of this assessment information, that includes the relative performance of boys and girls, and those from different ethnic backgrounds has, in the past, resulted in identifying specific, and appropriate areas for improvement; for example, achievement in Key Stage 1. However, the wealth of assessment information held on each year group is not then very well used, in the school improvement plan, to set succinct success criteria by which the target could be measured.
56. During their time in reception, children are continuously assessed and the staff record children's achievement on a daily basis. The needs of the children are, therefore, well known and all adults take great care to address them. These very good assessments are regularly transferred to individual profiles, which are used to give a clear picture of the progress children make towards the Early Learning Goals and highlight any weaknesses. Appropriate records of progress towards Level 1 of the National Curriculum, particularly in literacy and numeracy for the higher attainers, have not yet been developed.
57. Class teachers accept their responsibilities for writing targets on individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs, but do so with varying degrees of skill. Consequently, the usefulness of these plans varies considerably, although the quality of provision is consistently good. The school carefully tracks pupils from ethnic minority heritage, including those with English as an additional language, in order to identify any who may be struggling to make satisfactory progress. The great majority of these pupils benefit enormously from the consistently good teaching they receive and the emphasis placed on literacy at the school, as well as speaking and listening skills; when appropriate, additional support is given. However, due to a lack of an in-depth knowledge and understanding about the needs of pupils at an early stage of learning to speak English, by a very few teachers and support staff, especially those in the reception classes, the support given is similar to that received by pupils with special educational needs. This is not always appropriate.
58. The school make very good use of most of the external agencies. For example, they have very helpful assessments for the usefulness of information and communication technology for individual pupils. While the school ensures that selected pupils' benefit from the expertise of the specialist teacher for learning difficulties, links between her and class teachers are inconsistent. There are missed opportunities for her to work with class teachers preparing individual education plans.
59. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. The provision of a regular period called 'Circle Time', in which pupils discuss issues that face them in everyday life, as well as many other lessons to do with pupils' personal, social, citizenship and health education are used to monitor pupils' attitudes to school and learning. This process is aided by the good relationship that staff have with pupils. Certificates formally recognise good behaviour and acts of kindness and these are recorded in the Golden Book and awarded at the weekly award assemblies. Annual reports to parents also contain a detailed description of each pupil's personal development, but there are limited ongoing individual records noting pupils' personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

60. Parents have positive views about the school. Most parents of pupils with special educational needs are very appreciative of the work of the school. Interviews with parents during the week of the inspection indicate that they are very happy with the way the school is run. For the most part this view was echoed at the parents' meeting and in the responses to the parents' questionnaire.

Parents were particularly pleased with the quality of teaching, the standard of behaviour, the high expectations that were set and that the school was helping their children become mature and responsible. There were, however, a few areas of concern including how closely the school works with parents, the quality of information it provided on their children's progress, the provision for homework, and the lack of extra-curricular activities. The inspection findings agree with all the positive points made by the parents, but disagree with all their concerns. It found that the school does work closely with parents, that reports on pupils' progress are good, that homework is structured and well organised, and that extra-curricular provision is also good.

61. Overall, the school has good links with its parents; they are very good in the Foundation Stage. An open-door policy operates, in which parents are encouraged to meet with staff to discuss any concerns. The welcoming ethos at the start and end of the day, especially evident in classes with younger pupils and children, is greatly valued by parents as an opportunity to chat with staff. Newsletters are sent home monthly with contributions from pupils. Parents are also encouraged to contribute by advertising local events. Home-school diaries go home daily and the comments from parents are much valued and in most cases replied to regularly. When children start school, parents are invited to attend a meeting at which all aspects of school life are explained. They are also given a comprehensive induction pack providing a range of advice, from helping their children with reading at home, to ideas for healthy packed lunches. The school encourages parents to attend numerous events ranging from class assemblies and annual performances, to courses on learning about the Internet, and an annual forum for them to air their views. Members of staff have forged close ties with the parents and families of pupils whose mother tongue is not English. This has helped the induction of these pupils to the school and their very good progress, both academically and socially. Although there is no current need for the school's written communications to be translated, the school is aware of local services that would provide this if needed.
62. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. Many parents help in school during the week on a regular basis, although there is no planned rota for this. They provide support for reading, in art lessons, and in the library. Parents also help to run the chess club. There is a vibrant parents and teachers association that organises a range of social and fund raising events. Significant sums have been raised, the bulk of the recent money being used to purchase computers for the information and communication technology suite.
63. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The school prospectus is of a very high quality; it is professionally produced and meets statutory requirements. Most annual reports to parents on pupils' progress are thorough; those for parents whose children are in Year 5 are the most useful, as they provide an indication of the level at which each child is working, and whether this is appropriate to their age. However, although pupils have their termly targets written into their homework diaries, so parents are fully aware of the areas on which their child has to concentrate, the practice of including targets for development in the annual school report is not universal across the school. Parents also receive a great deal of information when they speak to teachers informally during the course of the year. To formalise this, there are three parents' evenings a year at which the turn out is nearly always a 100 per cent.
64. The contribution of parents to their child's learning at home is good, with parents providing good support for homework. Frequent comments in homework and reading diaries are testimony to this. To help them enhance their child's learning, relative to what is being studied, parents also have access to the school's website. This includes information on the topics that are covered during the year. In the past there have been curriculum evenings for parents to attend. They have provided insights into recent curriculum developments and how parents can support their child's learning at home. However, these have been disrupted due to the move into new premises. There are plans in the forthcoming year to resume these evenings. Parents of children in the reception classes are actively encouraged to listen to their children read, which has a positive impact on children's progress, and to bring items into the daily 'show and tell' sessions. Parents of pupils with a statement of special educational needs are invited to contribute to annual reviews and they welcome an opportunity to contribute to their child's learning. However, the extent to which parents are invited to participate in pupils' individual education plans varies. The headteacher and special educational needs co-ordinator are aware of the requirements of the new special educational needs

Code of Practice, and the need to involve parents and pupils further in negotiating and setting individual targets.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

65. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. Since she took up her post in September 2002, her breadth of knowledge and wide experience have been brought to bear very successfully in achieving excellent improvements in key areas of the school. For example, her support and encouragement has had significant impact upon the quality of education provided in the reception classes and Years 1 and 2; this, in part, accounts for the improved results in reading and writing seen during the inspection. The headteacher has used her insights into the school not only to offer relevant and meaningful support now, but also to formulate a view of its long-term development. She is totally committed to maintaining the school's high standards and reputation, while fulfilling its aim of providing opportunities for all pupils to achieve their best, both academically and socially. There is a very strong commitment to ensure that all pupils, regardless of attainment level, ethnic, cultural or social backgrounds are included fully in the life of the school. These laudable intentions are nearly perfectly reflected in the work of the school and are totally supported by both parents and governors.
66. The headteacher delegates responsibilities to senior managers and subject co-ordinators very well; building well upon the structure she inherited. Since the move into the new building last year, the inspiration and influence that she and the senior management team have had has been instrumental in forging the strong feeling of being one school. All staff and, in particular, the deputy headteacher and the senior management team, have been very supportive of each other and the new headteacher during the establishment of this new school. The senior management team is very strong and has a positive effect on many aspects of the school; they are highly regarded within the school community. In many subjects the role of the subject coordinator is very well developed and, occasionally, excellent. The great majority offer good management. They have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and ensure that the future direction of their subjects reflects both the pupils' greatest needs and the school's overall ambitions for them. In a minority of subjects, such as religious education, and in the area of English as an additional language, the co-ordination is not as strong. For example, the recent appointment of the subject co-ordinator in religious education has hindered the development of a consistent approach to the teaching of this subject, and therefore, pupils' progress. In a few other subjects, such as history and geography, because of the co-ordinator's other commitments and a lack of opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, overall management in these subjects is only satisfactory.
67. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is good, with the potential for being very good. The new co-ordinator has worked hard, with good support from the headteacher and staff in the Foundation Stage, to ensure that the children make a good start to their formal education. Due to the good leadership and management skills, there is a very good team approach where views of all adults are valued, and all make good contributions to the running and development of this stage in the children's education.
68. The special educational needs co-ordinator leads the provision for pupils with special educational needs with considerable knowledge, experience and commitment. She has a vision of excellent provision for pupils whatever their disability. This enables her to work very effectively with the headteacher to ensure that the school retains its strong commitment to pupils with special educational needs, even through periods of considerable staff change. This makes a significant contribution to pupils with special educational needs achieving so well. Nevertheless, paperwork is managed well, rather than very well. The special educational needs co-ordinator recognises the desirability of reflecting the strengths in provision more fully and accurately in documentation. The same co-ordinator also manages the provision for pupils whose mother tongue is not English. She has a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the needs of these pupils and how they can be addressed.
69. Overall the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is good overall but with some very good aspects. The senior management team, along with the headteacher, have a major role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The observations are very well

focused, and discussions with staff highlight areas of strength and areas for development. This has had a major impact in the reception classes and in Years 1 and 2. For a few subject co-ordinators, however, especially those new to the role, the monitoring of their subjects has been restricted by a lack of time and a lack of skill. Both these points have been recognised and remedial action taken. For example, individual staff have the development of these skills as part of their performance management objectives. In an attempt to compensate for the lack of time to observe lessons, nearly all staff analyse teachers' planning, national test results and school-based assessment and tracking procedures, very carefully, to provide a good insight into the strengths and weaknesses of the subjects that they manage. These they often use well to assist individuals develop their teaching by providing guidance and support.

70. Following the move into a new school building, and the appointment of a new headteacher, the school development plan has come to a natural end. The targets within this plan, and those currently being addressed, such as improving pupils' in achievement in Years 1 and 2, were very appropriate. The plan itself is of reasonable quality, as it includes all the necessary information. The school and governors evaluate progress, but the lack of sharply focused success criteria, especially in relation to attainment, hinders the school's ability to monitor its effectiveness accurately. Excellent progress has been made on the identified priorities of this year, such as standards in English at the end of Year 2. The new headteacher has used this past year very well to gain information, insights and views about the school. This is going to be used at the beginning of next term. It is intended that a meeting of staff and governors will re-affirm the school's aims, as well as develop a three to five year strategic development plan and a yearly management plan.
71. The school's systems for performance management and professional development of all staff, including support staff, are very good. The individual teacher targets are closely linked to the whole-school targets and they are effectively monitored to ensure that they are having an impact on teaching and learning. The staff's professional development is closely linked to these targets and this has had a positive impact in many areas, such as pupils' achievements in information and communication technology and English. There are very good procedures in place for the induction of staff new to the school, such as newly qualified teachers and trainee teachers. Mentors and other staff give very good support and this results in improvement in performance.
72. The work of the governors is very good overall. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. There is an appropriate policy for the promotion of racial equality and there is a plan to improve pupils' further access to education. Governors' training has a high profile within the body, and many governors regularly attend training sessions run by the local education authority; for example in how to use pupils' performance data to monitor the school's effectiveness. Governors meet regularly and the governing body's committee structure ensures that the work of the school is discussed and decisions made where appropriate. An impressive aspect of this work of the governors is their high level of responsiveness; special committees have been formed to oversee the move into the new school building, and the creation of a steering committee made up of the chair of all the other committees, ensures that a very clear overview of the school is always maintained. Many governors take an active role in monitoring the school, making visits and talking to subject co-ordinators. Numerous other channels by which they learn about the strength and weaknesses of the school supplement this. These include reports by the headteacher, discussions about the school development plan, individual governors linking with curriculum areas, and a yearly open forum with the parents, other than at the Annual General Meeting.
73. The school makes excellent use of new technology. The new computer suite is making a strong contribution to pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding of information and communication technology. This technology is also being used well to support work in other subjects. The subject coordinator is talented and proactive, and the school's Beacon status is partly due to the lead it gives to other schools in this aspect of the curriculum. As interactive white boards are installed in classrooms teachers are using them very effectively to support teaching and learning. Computers are also used very effectively in office systems and procedures.
74. The school's financial and administrative procedures are very good. The office operates very efficiently and makes a positive contribution to the smooth running of the school. The governors and staff are kept fully aware of school expenditure, and specific grants are suitably targeted.

Recommendations of the most recent audit report have been fully met. The process of deciding priorities and allocating funding is corporate and forms the basis for improvement planning. Governors are confident at looking at global measures to assess value, for example, the school's results in national tests and how these compare with similar schools. The school is therefore, continually challenging its effectiveness and identifying its priorities; as can be seen in the drive for greater achievement by pupils in Key Stage 1. The governors, however, are less aware of evaluating specific decisions for cost effectiveness, for example, the employment of support assistants to counter the effect of very high numbers in some classes. The views of pupils and parents are regularly considered by the school, and when it can, it accommodate them. Both the headteacher and the governing body place great emphasis on appointing good staff and then developing them professionally. The school, therefore, ensures that it receives high quality teaching from its resources. This idea of competitiveness is also very clear in the governors' choices and monitoring of services provided by support services. For example, they no longer 'buy-in' support for their newly qualified teachers, as they know that they have the quality and the systems to provide more than adequate support from their own resources.

75. The school had a significant balance of ten per cent carried forward from the last financial year into this one. This is because the move into the new school was due during the early part of 2002. The school allocated additional funds to finance this, and the purchase of new resources and equipment. However, the move did not take place until June 2002. This sum had to be carried over; it has now been wisely and sensibly spent.
76. The school has successfully addressed the challenges of moving to a new building at a time of numerous staff changes. There is a good number of adults to pupils at the school. Their skills and experiences are matched to the needs of the curriculum very well. Members of staff represent a wide range of experience and expertise and all work together in the best interests of pupils. There are two leading mathematics teachers and one leading literacy teacher in the school. This, coupled with additional expertise in information and communication technology, French and science, means that pupils benefit enormously from specialist teaching. The quality of teachers' expertise is a significant feature in pupils achieving such high standards. Similarly, there is a generous number of classroom support staff who make a very valuable contribution to pupils maintaining these standards, especially when they are taught in large groups. The entire school staff, including the site service supervisor, team of cleaners, and midday supervisors, share a highly conscientious commitment to the school. This is valued and remarked upon by pupils. In most classes the ratio of pupils to adults is reasonable. In Years 4 and 5, however, class sizes are much higher than seen elsewhere; in one case there are 37 pupils in one class. When there is no adult support in these classes, pupils' learning is adversely affected. This has been recognised and an additional teacher has been employed to offer part time support to these classes.
77. The new accommodation is very good, with separate specialist rooms in addition to the classrooms, conference room and library. It provides pupils between Years 1 and 6 with a mostly spacious environment and all the benefits of extra rooms for music and drama, art and design and design and technology and information and communication technology. Some of these such as the 'Art Room' and the library have only become fully operational in the last few weeks. The school does not currently have a grassed area. However, during the inspection, work was being undertaken to remove a mound of rubble from an area of the school site that is intended to provide a playing field. There is currently, however, plenty of outside space for pupils during lunch and break times. The outside hard-surface areas are attractive and divided into separate sections within sight of each other. This means that they are relatively straightforward for midday supervisors to oversee pupils' activities and ensure their safety.
78. Many aspects of the accommodation for children in the reception classes are very good, but staff have had to be very resourceful in creating some areas which are normally standard in Foundation Stage. For example, there is no designated quiet area for small group story time, cosy reading or imaginative role-play and areas of the cloakroom have to be used, leaving cramped space for coats, particularly in wet weather. Although there is a small, safe outdoor play area, its use is limited because there is no shade or cover to protect children against extremes of weather, and the storage of large equipment is not adjacent to it.

79. The building and site have some very good facilities for pupils with disabilities. There is a lift for wheelchair users, should it be required, as well as spacious toilet facilities. However, the medical room is small and some types of specialist treatment would be difficult in the space provided. Corridors are quite narrow and travelling around the school is peaceful because of the very good behaviour of the pupils. The space in the corridors would be very tight if a pupil was using a wheelchair.
80. The school has a good supply of good quality learning resources for teachers and pupils. The new library is well stocked and organised, including, for example several science and music books. The information and communication technology suite is very well equipped with 32 computers, and there is plenty of software to support other subjects. Additionally, several classrooms benefit from interactive whiteboards. There are also plenty of extra materials to help pupils who have difficulties with literacy and numeracy.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

There are no significant weaknesses at the school. However, areas for further development include:

- More opportunities to celebrate the cultural and linguistic diversity of members of the school community. (*Paragraph 47*)
- The teaching of religious education. (*Paragraphs 11, 22, 29, 36, 53, 66, and 166-171*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	63

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	25	37	11	1	0	0
Percentage	6	32	47	14	1	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	Y R – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	463
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	8
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	69
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	29
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	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	30	30	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	28
	Girls	28	28	29
	Total	52	53	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (85)	88 (90)	95 (99)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	30
	Girls	28	28	29
	Total	53	54	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (92)	90 (92)	98 (92)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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
	2002	31	36	67

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	31	30	32
	Girls	36	34	36
	Total	67	64	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (99)	96 (100)	100 (99)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	29	30
	Girls	36	33	36
	Total	63	62	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	94 (96)	93 (99)	99 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	327	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	16	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	31	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	12	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	9	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y R – Y 6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27:1
Average class size	31

Education support staff: Y R – Y 6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	289

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2002/03
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	£
Total income	935,315
Total expenditure	881,104
Expenditure per pupil	1,843
Balance brought forward from previous year	36,402
Balance carried forward to next year	90,613

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6
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	463
Number of questionnaires returned	188
Percentage of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	36	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	43	4	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	37	1	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	48	11	4	3
The teaching is good.	60	36	1	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	43	20	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	32	7	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	27	49	19	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	44	45	4	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	46	2	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	43	19	5	11

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

81. Provision for the children in the Foundation Stage is good. Before starting school most of the children have had experience of playgroups and a few have attended a nursery. Children enter the reception classes at the start of the term in which they are five; consequently, at the time of the inspection, some of them have only been in full-time education for six weeks. At the time of the inspection 52 children were attending full time. Children enter school with well-developed skills, particularly in their personal development and their ability to communicate. In relation to their prior attainment, all children make good progress and many are likely to exceed the expected level by the time they start Year 1. Children achieve well as a result of the good teaching, caring environment and the wide range of learning opportunities presented to them. Children with special educational needs achieve well because of the good ratio of adults to children; this provides them with good and focused support. Children who use English as an additional language make good progress, because most teachers are aware of the most suitable methods to teach these children English. There is a wide range of children from different ethnic groups in the reception classes. They are fully involved in all activities and make similar progress to their classmates.

Personal, social and emotional development

82. Most children enter the reception classes with good personal and social skills and find little difficulty adjusting to school life. The quality of teaching is very good. The caring, personal approach of all the adults enables the children to settle very quickly and happily. Well-established routines, opportunities for independence, and a range of interesting and challenging activities, ensure that the children know the high standards of work and behaviour that is expected of them. The adults continually reinforce the rules, and these help to ensure that the children understand the routines of school, how to behave well and stay safe. Children show a mature ability to concentrate and play, both independently and co-operatively, and activities are planned to build on and extend these qualities. Through appropriate praise and challenging questions, children are continually encouraged to explore ideas and make suggestions. This then gives them pride in what they achieve and the confidence to go on to the next stage in their learning. Generous staffing levels offer all children good support and guidance as they often work in small groups. During whole class sessions, which are mostly led well by the teachers, children value the contributions of others and generally listen well. Adults treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect, and this leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to succeed. Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted well, and they make good progress, most achieving the expected Early Learning Goals well before they leave the reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

83. The quality of the teaching of communication, language and literacy is very good. The adults are aware of the good language skills with which most children start school and use opportunities well to extend children's vocabulary further and develop their speaking and listening skills. A good range of activities, such as role-play and group as well as class discussions, provide many opportunities for children to develop these skills further. The majority of children are very eager to share what they know and use sophisticated language in response, for instance, *'The caterpillars in my garden are very greedy, they eat all our beans.'* By the end of the reception year, the majority of children have an extensive vocabulary, readily volunteer information, and most use complex sentences in everyday speech. However, not every opportunity is used well to engage the one or two children, who are at an early stage of learning to speak English, in activities that would stimulate their spoken English.

84. Adults help the children use books well for enjoyment, fact finding and as models for their writing. Children quickly learn the sounds of letters, recognise individual words and enjoy stories and rhymes. They are keen to talk about books and are beginning to have a good understanding of the difference between those that contain facts and those which are just stories. Their ability to

describe what is happening is good, using picture clues to enhance the text. Good teaching focuses appropriately on the development of sounds. Most children know and can recognise initial sounds at the beginning and endings of words, and really enjoy playing with rhyming words, especially when stringing together words that rhyme, for instance, with *'Zug, the Bug'*. The higher-attaining children are beginning to blend a number of sounds together and suggest words, such as *'slug'* and *'shrug'*. They use their growing knowledge of sounds to help them with words that they do not know and confidently relate what has happened in stories they have heard. Occasionally, children are expected to sit on the carpet for too long. Children then devise their own strategies to move the pace along, such as suggesting sentences when words were asked for! Most children know where to find the title of the book, and some know what an author and an illustrator do. All children take their books home each night and share them with adults. This leads to a love of books, as well as enhancing their early reading skills.

85. Early writing skills are promoted well, and children willingly choose to do writing activities. Children show a good understanding of letters and words in their writing. Most children can write their first names and second names unaided and can sequence events correctly to make a simple story. A good majority write simple words from memory and are aware of where they can find words they need, for example, from lists, books and labels around the room. The higher-attaining children record their ideas and experiences confidently, through writing simple sentences independently. Several have a good understanding of writing for different purposes, such as listing facts, writing letters, and compiling a mini-book. Children's attainment remains above expectations overall at the end of the reception year and the children achieve well as a result of the good, focused teaching, especially considering the short time many of them have spent in school.

Mathematical development

86. Children have good mathematical understanding when they start school. They achieve well in the reception classes, because the quality of teaching is good, and the good curriculum contains many opportunities for them to develop their basic skills. The attainment of most children is above the level expected for their age. The teachers show good subject expertise and plan interesting activities to enhance children's learning. Children extend and broaden their knowledge, through many practical activities, and apply mathematical understanding in a range of situations. As well as being able to complete simple addition and subtraction sums to ten successfully, many children handle numbers to 20 competently. Adults link mathematical development with language development very well, encouraging the children to explain how they know certain things, for example, how a rectangle differs from a square, and how they know that it is a cuboid and not a cube. Children are usually highly motivated and get very involved in their activities, such as in a group game where, from a selection of familiar objects, they describe in mathematical terms one object for the others to guess. They confidently do so using vocabulary such as colour, shape, (including hexagon), two- and three-dimensional properties, corners and sides.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

87. Children have a good understanding of the world about them when they start the reception year. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good, and most children make good progress, building on their previous knowledge. As a consequence, most children have already achieved the expected level for children starting Year 1. The teachers plan a variety of activities to widen the children's experiences and use questioning well to enhance their understanding. There are satisfactory opportunities for children to use the classroom computers and most use them with confidence. However, access and progress is limited, due to the large numbers of children requiring access and the youngest children in the school do not have a regularly allocated time to work in the computer suite. Most children understand how to operate the mouse to click on icons, and show wide-ranging control when using the mouse to write their names. They learn about living things as they study mini-beasts, carefully observing the growth of caterpillars and tadpoles in the classrooms and going on 'bug-hunts' in the school grounds. Very good links are made with language and literacy, as books about mini-beasts are used in a variety of ways, for example, in group reading and in compiling factual sentences about caterpillars. Through good questioning, children are encouraged to look carefully and use precise descriptions when making observations.

For example, they know that insects are recognisable by having six legs, but that spiders have eight.

Physical development

88. The quality of teaching for children's physical development is good. Children enjoy a range of opportunities in their secure outdoor play area and, in preparation for next term in Year 1, in the larger playground with older children. The use of tricycles, and outdoor climbing equipment, helps them to develop their control and co-ordination, but these opportunities are limited by the inaccessibility of the large toys. This is compensated for, to a large extent, by regular physical education sessions in the hall. Sessions are also planned, both in and out of doors, involving action songs and circle games that encourage children to co-operate sensibly. In lessons, there are many opportunities for children to use scissors, paintbrushes and pencils, and they do this with good control drawing recognisable pictures, letters and words. All children play very imaginatively with construction toys, large and small, and there are suitable activities for children to use soft materials such as 'play-doh' and to learn to sew. Progress in this area of learning is good, and all the children are on course to reach the expected goals by the time they finish the reception year.

Creative development

89. Children have a wide range of opportunities to develop their creativity, and they achieve well. Most children are on course to attain the expected standards by the end of the reception year, several having already done so. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers plan a good range of artistic experiences that the children enjoy. They have opportunities to use a variety of pencils, pastels and collage materials to create images. Most children use modelling materials and fabrics such as pipe-cleaners and felt, very effectively, to make representations of mini-beasts. They have opportunities to use different types and colours of paper and paint, and have made a vibrant class collage of mini-beasts. The children know a range of songs and rhymes, delighting in performing these and learning new ones, especially those about creepy-crawlies and bugs! Through good provision, children are encouraged to use their imagination during role-play sessions. A very stimulating 'Bug-corner', with green lighting effect and imaginary vegetation, has been created, in which the children use cameras, binoculars, magnifying glasses and reference books to identify the many life-like rubber mini-beasts. Good adult interaction further extends the children's learning.

ENGLISH

90. The results of the national tests in 2002 taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 were very high, as they have been over the last three years, thereby placing the school in the top five per cent nationally. In relation to their prior attainment, pupils who sat the national tests in 2002 made very rapid progress. The results of the national tests taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 has been erratic over the last few years; some years have been in line with the national average, and others have been above average. In 2002, although the results were in line with the national average, they were below average when compared with similar schools; this indicates underachievement in both reading and writing.
91. Standards seen during the inspection in Year 6 are well above the expected level for their age. They are not as high as those achieved in the 2002 national tests, because the current year group has a higher level of special educational need than the previous year group. In relation to their ability, their achievements are very good. Standards achieved in reading and writing by the pupils currently in Year 2 are much better than those achieved in the national tests in 2002. Younger pupils have made good progress this year, due to a determined focus on improving attainment by the teachers and the school's leadership.
92. Based on the average performances of boys and girls over the last three years, and in 2002, boys out-performed girls, thus bucking the national trend. This was also evident in the inspection. The school is very aware of the potential for boys to underachieve and have purchased books, chosen activities, and attempted to engage boys in literacy, by providing many opportunities for them to use their skills in subjects such as science and history.

93. Pupils with special educational needs make good and very good progress, because the work they are given is carefully matched to their capabilities, and they are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. In 2002, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, and those who use English as an additional language, achieved at least the expected Level 4. Pupils whose mother tongue is not English achieved so well because of the very good teaching of the basic skills of literacy and the many opportunities given to participate in speaking and listening activities, such as class discussions. All pupils benefit from a culture in the school that expects pupils to perform as well as they can, whatever their ability. This means that average and higher-attaining pupils are stretched, with the percentage achieving the higher Level 5 in the 2002 national tests in Year 6 at nearly double the national picture. When the results of the 2002 test results for pupils from different ethnic minorities are compared to those of other pupils at the school, the data indicates that they all achieve equally well. Gifted and talented pupils are catered for well and they achieve very well. Not only do teachers provide for them outside the classroom, such as trips to the theatre, but the teachers' love of books and great skills in teaching, enthralls these pupils to do their best.
94. Throughout the school, pupils' standards in speaking and listening are above expectations for their age; by the time they reach Year 6 they are well above. Pupils enter Year 1 with a broader range of vocabulary than is found in most schools. By Year 2, they discuss a range of subjects with good understanding. For example, they not only know what happened in the Great Fire of London, and the date, but are also aware that Samuel Pepys' diaries are a good source of contemporary information. They understand the concept of a riddle and produce their own, listening intently to each other's and offering sensible solutions. They are attentive to their teachers and the majority are keen to answer questions.
95. The use of discussion partners, a focus in most English lessons, makes a strong contribution to standards when pupils speak. Pupils are used to this procedure and take part readily and sensibly. It is noticeable how much more confident they are after a minute spent talking to a friend, and how it helps them to express their ideas clearly and sustain a point of view. A higher-attaining pupil in Year 6 talked with clarity and considerable empathy about the problems facing a child whose parents have divorced in an extract the class have read. She showed a very adult grasp of the problem, and equally impressive was the way the rest of the class listened and offered their own viewpoints. Discussion of this standard does not happen by accident, but is a consequence of good quality provision and teaching over the years. These types of discussions are common across the school and were evident in many 'Circle Time' sessions in which pupils speak about the problems of every day life. These add considerably to pupils' personal development and in particular to their moral and social development.
96. Standards in reading are also well above those expected by the end of Year 6, and they are above average at the end of Year 2. The most impressive aspect is the attitude pupils have to reading and the enjoyment they get out of it. This is true of pupils of all levels of ability, including lower-attaining pupils, although the standard of almost all pupils' reading at least matches the expected level for their age. While many pupils enter school with reading skills that are above average and might be expected to do well, it is the progress of those who find it difficult that is outstanding, due to the support and encouragement they get from class teachers and learning support assistants. For example, lower-attaining pupils in Year 1 use letter sounds and picture clues to 'attack' new words, as well as being confident with a good range of familiar words. A higher-attaining pupil in Year 2 worked out *aphids*, as she knew *ph* is sounded as *f*. The lower-attaining pupil wanted to read the whole book!
97. In Year 6 a higher-attaining pupil joked that she gets told off at home for reading too much! Teachers foster the love of reading effectively. Class texts are well chosen to appeal to the age group and boys, and pupils are encouraged to read other books by the same author. In their reading and discussions, teachers show enthusiasm and interest, and these transfer to the pupils.
98. While most pupils are members of public libraries and read fiction and non-fiction, their library skills are not well developed. Even in Year 6 pupils were reduced to looking along the library shelves when asked to find a book on dinosaurs. Due to the recent move into a new building the school has been without a functioning library for some time and this has adversely affected pupils' skills. Since the move into the school, however, the library co-ordinator has worked hard, with help from

volunteer parents, to organise the new library, but it lacks aids to help pupils to find their way around it: the library co-ordinator has this in hand. Conversely, pupils are confident about accessing information from the Internet, and also know how to use an index and a glossary.

99. Writing is well taught from the earliest stages and pupils make at first good and later very good progress, as their confidence in their own ability grows. By Year 2, the majority of pupils are joining their letters and spelling common words accurately. Spelling is taught well, with teachers using a good range of strategies to challenge pupils and keep their interest. Average-attaining pupils show a good range of vocabulary, when writing riddles, for example, using the words *'gibbon'* and *'mammal'* correctly.
100. From Years 2 to 6, pupils are taught English in ability groups. This helps teachers to focus on providing the most appropriate challenge for pupils of different abilities. In Year 6, where there are more pupils than in other year groups, they are taught in three ability groups. Lower-attaining pupils tackle spelling rules at a level appropriate to their age, and those with special educational needs make particularly good progress as they do with their reading. Higher attainers write letters to an 'agony aunt' in which they show real skill in expressing their feelings and marshalling their thoughts. Homework is regularly set, especially for spellings, but also has sufficient variety to maintain pupils' interest.
101. Pupils are used to using draft books as a first step in their writing. It is the quality of teaching throughout the school, and the encouragement given to pupils to write well, which results in work in Year 6 of such good quality as shown in part of a pastiche of 'Jabberwocky', by Lewis Carroll:
- 'And as in the foolish mood she thought
The miniature lady with eyes of flame
Came crawling through the toilet doors
And slithered as she came.'*
102. Teaching was at least good in all the lessons seen, and in a majority it was very good; this is a very positive profile and explains why pupils' achievement is so high. Teachers know their pupils very well and treat them with respect that is fully reciprocated. There is plenty of praise, but only when it is deserved, so that it is not devalued by being given too readily. Lessons are usually stimulating learning opportunities where teachers have high expectations and pupils respond accordingly. The ethos is very much one of 'giving it a go' and most teachers balance challenge and support very effectively. As a direct result most pupils are eager learners, interested and involved. Methods promote interest and the school's good resources are well chosen to provide an appropriate level of challenge. Teachers use the interactive whiteboards very effectively, as do some pupils. The marking of work is particularly good throughout the school. It provides not only praise but also clear direction on how pupils could improve their work.
103. The subject co-ordinator is new to the role and also to Year 2. She had a clear brief to improve standards by the end of Year 2 and, with the support of the leadership of the school, has succeeded admirably. This represents very good leadership in a relatively short space of time. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has provided a great deal of support, encouragement and training to staff to ensure the continued high profile of the subject and to promote higher standards in Years 1 and 2. However, there has been insufficient time for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning through lesson observations and the analysis of pupils' work. The National Literacy Strategy has been very effectively introduced, and high quality and relevant links have been made to many other subjects. This provides a considerable number of opportunities for pupils to use and develop their literacy skills. This includes information and communication technology, where good use is made of computers to word-process written work, and of the Internet to carry out research, for example, on pupils' favourite authors. There is a comprehensive range of very good assessment procedures recording pupils' attainment and progress. These are used well to guide planning and set targets. Each pupil and their parents are fully aware of the targets and this helps parents support their child's learning and, at the same time, directly involves pupils in knowing what they need to do to improve.

MATHEMATICS

104. The results of national tests in 2002 taken by pupils at the end of Year 6 were very high, in the top five per cent nationally, and well above what was achieved by similar schools. High standards and good and sometimes very good achievement have been the pattern over the last few years and continue to be so. Inspectors found standards currently to be well above average, with a significant number of pupils attaining very high standards. Overall, standards are not as high as those achieved in 2002, because the current year group has a number of pupils with a higher level of special educational needs than last year. In the national tests, in 2002, taken by pupils at the end of Year 2, results were above average. In relation to similar schools, they were average. In the last three years standards have improved at a rate faster than the national trend. In relation to their prior attainment pupils made reasonable progress. The standards being achieved by pupils currently in Year 2 are similar to those attained in the national tests of 2002. In relation to their prior attainment, most pupils are making better than expected progress.
105. However, very good progress is not consistent across the school. At times, large numbers in the class hamper the learning of pupils in Years 4 and 5, especially when there is no adult support present. This is because the teachers, although good practitioners, find great difficulty monitoring and supporting all pupils as well as they would like, because of the large numbers. This has now been remedied by the appointment of a part time teacher who is due to start in September 2003. Conversely, in Year 6, pupils' learning is boosted because they are taught in smaller ability groups and by some excellent teachers.
106. Pupils with special educational needs make good and, at times, very good progress in relation to their prior attainment and are well supported to meet their individual needs. Pupils with English as an additional language make good and often very good progress. All teachers question higher attaining pupils sufficiently to extend their thinking further. In the national tests taken in Year 6, boys have, in the last few years, performed better than girls by a greater margin than is normally found. This pattern is confirmed by the inspection.
107. In Year 2, pupils' skills in the key area of number are above the expected level. Pupils display good strategies for counting on in twos, fours and fives. They demonstrate a good understanding of place value, know the value of each digit in a two-digit number, for example, that 66 is made up of six tens and six units. They add and subtract two digit numbers, understand basic mathematical symbols and recognise and use coins appropriately. Pupils have a good understanding of shape, and identify two-dimensional shapes such as triangle, square, rectangle and circle by reference to properties, such as the number of sides and corners.
108. The majority of pupils in Year 6 have a very good knowledge of number; many have instant recall of their multiplication tables. Their understanding of place value is very secure and they add, subtract, multiply and divide numbers accurately. Pupils' knowledge of fractions is good and most pupils understand the relationship between fractions and decimals. Pupils' knowledge of shape, space and measures is very good. They recognise lines of symmetry in shapes and they have a sound knowledge of the functions of a calculator that they often use well to either estimate or check their work. Pupils' data handling skills are good. Pupils collect information, record it in appropriate ways, including frequency charts, and then use bar, line and pie graphs to display the information. Higher-attaining pupils understand the terms mean, median and mode.
109. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. In Years 1 and 2 it is good, and in Years 3 to 6 it is often very good and sometimes excellent. Throughout the school, teachers' planning and their subject knowledge are very good. This enables them to teach the basic skills very well, giving pupils a very firm foundation on which to build their future learning. Because teachers have a very good understanding of how to teach the subject, and how pupils learn, lessons are both lively and interesting. Teachers often require pupils to use a wide range of mathematical skills in any one lesson. This approach encourages pupils to continually apply their knowledge and extend their thinking. What is to be learnt is clearly identified and focused on at the start of a lesson, and often returned to during the lesson and at the end. Therefore, both pupils and teachers are involved in assessment. This, coupled with informative marking, involves pupils in their own learning, and clearly identifies what they need to do next to improve. Teachers have very high expectations of

what pupils can do and achieve in lessons, including their behaviour. Lessons are, therefore, extremely orderly and pupils very productive. Due to very good assessment systems and relationships, teachers know their pupils very well. They are, therefore, able to prepare work for pupils of different abilities, even when working in ability groups in Years 2 to 6. All pupils, regardless of ability, gender, ethnicity or linguistic background, are included and appropriately challenged. Teachers use time and resources well, which have a positive impact on the good rates of learning achieved by pupils in lessons. Pupils enjoy taking part in the oral and mental parts of the lesson and in other practical, group or individual activities planned for them. When available, the interactive white boards are used very well by teachers to explain complex concepts and calculations visually and at speed.

110. In the excellent lessons it is the teachers' enthusiasm, born out of a love of the subject and excellent knowledge of how to teach it, that captures pupils' interest, so that they hang on every word their teacher says, and their learning is superb. In two excellent Year 6 lessons, pupils applied their thinking to problem solving in a very mature and sophisticated way because of their teacher's excellent coaching.
111. There is a very good curriculum for mathematics. Across the school, work was seen that related to number, shape and space, measures and the handling of data. Mathematical skills are used and developed effectively in other areas of the curriculum. In history, pupils use a time line to chronicle events and record significant changes in society. In geography, the development of mapping skills to fix the position of places accurately using scale, and understanding co-ordinates, is linked well to work in mathematics. Pupils use their skills in information and communication technology very well to help them programme the floor robot and to record and display data collected in surveys in a range of formats. The development of mathematical vocabulary in all classes makes a positive contribution to the literacy development in the school. Pupils' reading skills are used to good effect in interpreting problems.
112. The co-ordinator manages and leads the subject very well. The co-ordinator has helped maintain high standards by providing support and direction to all staff. She has a good understanding of the subject's strengths and weaknesses, due to a comprehensive analysis of assessment data, and the detailed monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the school; perceptive and informative feedback is given to teachers to develop their skills. There is a good range of resources available to support teaching and learning across the school. The policy and the scheme of work reflect the requirements of the national numeracy initiative in the subject. There are very well developed assessment procedures in place, which keep teachers and the co-ordinator very well informed and aware of how well pupils are achieving. For example, the co-ordinator monitors test results to identify the strengths and areas in need of development in order to raise standards further. Formal assessment records of each pupil are kept, and group targets are set and shared with pupils and parents.

SCIENCE

113. In the teachers' assessments in 2002, pupils at the end of Year 2 achieved results that were above average; the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 was very high. In the national tests at the end of Year 6, results were in the top five per cent of schools, when compared both nationally and with similar schools, and also when compared with this age-group's performance when they were assessed in Year 2. The trend in the results in Year 6, over the last three years, has been upwards. In the current Year 2, standards are still above average and pupils are making good progress. In Year 6 they are well above average, but not as high as last year's results indicated because there is a higher proportion of pupils who are recognised as having special educational needs in this year group. However, all pupils make very good progress.
114. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the level of support they receive from both support assistants and class teachers. Pupils who use English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups also achieve very well and are involved fully in all lessons, often by teachers directing questions specifically at them to ensure they have understood fully. Boys and girls achieve equally well, as they do nationally.

115. In Year 2, pupils show a good knowledge of all areas of the science curriculum. They begin to develop an understanding of how to carry out an investigation. Pupils predict what will be the outcome, for instance, when testing some of the changes in materials, and check their predictions against the results. In a lesson observed during the inspection, pupils showed a good knowledge of the range of animals they had observed on their visit to the Cotswold Wildlife Park. They were able to write well about their distinguishing features. Pupils' previous work shows a good understanding of how plants produce seeds, and of some of the effects of exercise on the human body. They also know about different materials, for instance, distinguishing those that are natural from those that are man-made. They are able to construct an electrical circuit. All pupils achieve well, making good progress as they move through Years 1 and 2.
116. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a very good understanding across all the areas of the curriculum. Pupils of all levels of ability record and present their work immaculately, illustrating it very well with drawings and diagrams. Although the amount of investigation pupils carry out in Year 6 is limited by their preparation for the national tests, their skills of enquiry have been developed very well in the previous years. For instance, in Year 5 pupils conduct an experiment to discover which material makes the best soundproofing for an alarm clock. They have a good understanding of how to make the test fair and are able to make accurate predictions. From Year 3 onwards, pupils are given the opportunity to devise their own methods of recording, although teachers provide good support for less able pupils by giving them a framework in which to record their findings. Pupils enjoy investigative work, and this contributes to their very good learning.
117. Pupils in Year 6 have a very good knowledge of plants, and of processes such as photosynthesis. They also have a very good understanding of how some animals adapt to their habitats, and of food chains. They have a clear understanding of the differences between solids, liquids and gases, and of changes that take place, for instance in evaporation. They have a very good understanding of physical processes, such as light, understanding how it helps them see things and identifying objects that make their own light. They also show a very good knowledge of the earth, sun and moon in space, and what causes the changes in the seasons.
118. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and enrich it through their own experience. For instance, in a very good lesson in Year 2, the teacher added to the pupils' own observations at the wildlife park, by showing them photographs from a safari she had undertaken in South Africa. In Year 6, the expertise of the school nurse contributed to a very effective session of sex education. Teachers plan lessons very well, using the national guidelines. They explain tasks clearly to pupils before they begin them, and good support is provided to less able pupils by classroom assistants. In an excellent lesson in Year 3 the teacher asked particularly challenging questions to assess the depth of pupils' understanding of light and was able to make use of their misunderstandings to extend their knowledge. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and the very good relationship they establish with pupils makes them keen to learn. Teachers use resources very well, including the interactive whiteboards that are available in some classrooms.
119. Pupils learn very well because of the good links teachers make with other subjects. In a very good lesson in Year 1 the teacher introduced the topic of sound by reading a fiction book with them by an author they knew. In Year 6, good links are made with history when pupils discuss Napoleon's introduction of canned food, as they consider why food decays. Pupils also develop their numeracy skills when they compile graphs, for instance of their favourite foods, or when they record changes in temperature. Although their use of information and communication technology in science is limited, they have used a sensor linked to a computer to measure changes in the temperature of water and ice.
120. The subject contributes very well to pupils' personal development. They have many opportunities to work together in pairs and in groups, which also develops their skills of speaking and listening, as, for instance, in Year 4 when they discuss the similarities and differences between different organisms. Education about the misuse of drugs, and about sex and relationships, promotes their respect for their own bodies, and for other people, very well.

121. Due to staff illness, the subject has a temporary co-ordinator at present, but he manages the subject effectively and provides good leadership to other teachers. He also gives specialist teaching to all the Year 6 classes, which has helped to promote the high standards achieved there. There are good systems in place to assess pupils' progress, particularly in investigative work, and the information gained from these is used well to plan the next stage of pupils' work. Resources for the subject are adequate. There is a good range of books in the library but full use of this has not been made, due to the relocation of the library; it is now, however, open and in use.

ART AND DESIGN

122. Standards for pupils in Year 2 exceed the expectations for their age. Most girls and boys have good observation skills. They use pencils, chalks and paint with greater precision than is usual for their age. These and other strengths in art are sustained until the end of Year 5. However, by the end of Year 6 standards, overall, are similar to those expected for this age group. At this age, while a minority of pupils continues to produce mature work, most boys and girls are working within expected levels. Pupils, therefore, achieve satisfactorily overall in this subject, because progress slows in the final year. This is because teachers have other priorities and the subject receives less time and attention.

123. Pupils with special educational needs follow the same pattern of progress as their classmates, because they share the same curriculum throughout the school. Similarly, pupils who use English as an additional language make the same rate of progress as all other pupils. Commendably, the school has begun to identify pupils who have particular creative talent. This is a recent initiative and staff have not yet developed additional, more challenging projects for them. Consequently, they, too, make similar rates of progress in relation to their prior attainment.

124. Pupils in Year 6 are very confident about evaluating their work. They are sensitive and constructive with each other, demonstrating considerable social maturity. This ability to evaluate work is a key skill in the subject that makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

125. By the end of Year 2, pupils mix paints confidently and have experimented with inks and oils to produce marbling effects. They do this with a strong sense of purpose which is indicated in their skies illuminated by the 'Great Fire of London'. They evaluate their own work and that of their classmates with assurance. They know what they like and why. In spite of these strengths, their knowledge of famous artists is not equally well developed. This element of the subject, while satisfactory, is an area of relative weakness throughout the school.

126. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, but when pupils work with teachers who have particular skills, confidence or enjoyment in the subject, their work reflects very good teaching. For example, in Year 1 the standard of most of the charcoal sketches and the sculptures produced with 'woodies' inspired by Goldsworthy's the 'Woven Circle' is impressive. Similarly, in Year 5 pupils arrange natural materials such as pieces of wood, fir cones, shells and stones into aesthetically interesting compositions with ambitious design ideas. However, the quality of teachers' expectations is affected by the amount of time that is given to the subject. This is evident when pupils in Year 6 talk about famous artists. They are less certain about the styles of a range of artists than it is reasonable to expect given their other considerable abilities.

127. Overall, art and design makes a reasonable contribution to other subjects. The curriculum is noticeably enriched by links with history in Year 6, although pupils do not look at the work of Victorian artists such as William Morris. When pupils are undertaking ambitious sculptures, the subject makes good use of their knowledge and understanding of shapes, space and perspective. There is satisfactory use of computers for research and therefore reasonable opportunities for pupils to read and take notes supporting their literacy skills.

128. The new co-ordinator is a recently qualified teacher who has made a good start to developing the subject this year and has led it well. For example, she has introduced the use of sketchbooks to some year groups. Since being in the new school, the organisation of the new specialist art room, which is still awaiting suitable seating for pupils, has taken considerable time and effort and has

been managed well. However, overall management is satisfactory, as there has been insufficient time to monitor the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. This has been recognised and is now a school priority.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

129. By the end of Year 2, the standards achieved exceed expectations. The vast majority of pupils are confident in designing, making and evaluating. These high standards are maintained until the end of Year 4. While older pupils sustain strengths in evaluating work, they spend less time on the subject and standards overall are satisfactory by the end of Year 6. Achievement overall is, therefore, satisfactory because older pupils do not make equally good progress in all elements of the subject.
130. Pupils who use English as an additional language, and those from different ethnic heritages, follow the same pattern of strengths in standards and satisfactory achievement as their classmates. Pupils with special educational needs make a similar rate of progress to others in their class, because they share the same curriculum throughout the school. At the time of the inspection there were no pupils identified as gifted or talented in the subject.
131. In Year 6 pupils have good conversational skills and this means that, in discussion, they evaluate work with a level of detail and understanding that exceeds expectations for their age. However, their puppet making project is not consistently planned and evaluated on paper to the same detailed extent. Much of the design and technology work planned for pupils in Year 6 is to take place towards the end of the summer term after they have sat the national tests.
132. By the end of Year 2, pupils design and build vehicles that they describe as 'limousines', as well as cars and lorries. Girls and boys make good use of their literacy skills and their vocabulary when they label their planning sketches. They also describe the process of making a model in considerable detail. They use their experience to debate the relative merits of different materials with a level of assurance that exceeds expectations for their age. This was evident when pupils considered the inadequacy of paper for making 'Incy Wincy Spider's' water pipe, and the benefits of sellotape over glue when trying to join to thin edges. At this stage, the subject makes good use of pupils' literacy skills and their scientific knowledge and understanding.
133. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Pupils benefit from teachers planning to ensure that skills are developed incrementally. As a result, pupils continue to develop their skills in making products at a satisfactory rate, even when the subject has less emphasis. Pupils frequently apply their mathematical skills in measuring components when designing and making. During the inspection there was an excellent lesson in Year 3. This lesson was exceptional because of the extent to which the teacher inspired and motivated pupils to learn through their own discovery. Extremely skilful questioning and appreciation of all ideas meant that pupils evaluated their work in process. For example, pupils remarked, '*this isn't working how I thought*', while trying to make spirals to depict Medusa's eyes for their Greek face mask. All staff set a good example in valuing pupils' efforts and giving constructive criticism. This results in pupils being similarly appreciative and evaluative and makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
134. There are good links with many other subjects, and also with literacy and numeracy. For example, pupils in Year 4 make very good use of their understanding of electrical circuits when they make torches. They use their literacy skills frequently when they clearly record their objectives and difficulties with the process. For example, they want a '*very bright light*' and write, '*we did have problems, mainly with the wiring not staying in the circuit*'. Information and communication technology is also used well. Younger pupils for example, have used simulation programs to design their own towns, and older pupils have used technology to control the flashing lights of a disco.
135. The subject is managed well and led satisfactorily. The co-ordinator has helped colleagues to plan productively and has introduced good procedures for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do. She has a good understanding of the subject and so is in a good position to help colleagues who seek advice. She has a realistic view of the strengths and areas for development

in the subject because she checks the standards of pupils' work. However, the school has rightly identified the development of subject co-ordinators' responsibilities to increase their monitoring role. This is intended to give more opportunity for the co-ordinator to ensure the consistent use of time and so sustain higher standards throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

136. Standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly in line with those expected and pupils have sound levels of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress, because they have good literacy skills and are appropriately supported, both through additional adult help and suitably demanding tasks. Pupils who use English as an additional language have a good understanding and take a full part in class discussions. The work pupils are expected to do does not, however, stretch higher-attaining pupils sufficiently, particularly in Year 6, and this coupled with an uneven distribution of time between year-groups accounts for the overall satisfactory progress.
137. In Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge base. They are particularly strong on naming political and physical features around the world. They have used various sources, such as textbooks, photographs and videos, to improve their understanding. The amount of work in their books, however, is disappointing. Four pieces of writing and a very thin folder comparing Bristol to Manaus are very limited, particularly when compared to the wealth of writing in history. In discussion pupils remember the areas they have covered, but are not particularly motivated by them. They are unable to give an example of using computing skills to explore a geographical topic, although pupils in Year 5 make use of the Internet when investigating rivers.
138. Pupils in Year 2 talk with a reasonable amount of knowledge about their studies of other places, recalling the work they have done, such as drawing maps and labelling features. From comparing these places with their own area they are aware of both their similarities and differences. There are, however, some gaps in their knowledge, for instance, their knowledge of directions is insecure because, although they have heard of north and south, they cannot point to north. Some pupils express too little interest in or liking for geography.
139. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 3, but on the basis of two lessons seen in Years 4 and 5, the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall and pupils make good progress. They have very positive attitudes to learning, particularly important in Year 4, where very large class numbers make it difficult for all pupils to be involved in discussion. However, the class teacher is aware of this, and the intelligent use of pupils talking in pairs mitigates this difficulty. The good choice of activities, and the use of pupils' literacy skills, helps build progressively on pupils' knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils wrote a persuasive letter to the headteacher about the number and siting of litterbins around the school. A lesson in Year 5 on waterfalls had a good focus on geographical vocabulary, and the pupils both used correctly, and understood words, such as '*erosion*', '*permeable*' and '*impermeable*'. The scrutiny of pupils' books from across the school suggests that they make the best progress in Year 5, when there is a much stronger focus on geography.
140. Although the quality and presentation of pupils' work is often good, the organisation of their work in Years 2 and 3, when geography, history and religious education are tackled, at random, in pupils' exercise books, makes it difficult for pupils to get a clear picture of their learning. This, as well as the uneven approach in different year groups, helps to explain why standards, while satisfactory, are not above expectations as they are in many other subjects. There are, however, many positive features. The travels of 'Barnaby Bear' are thoroughly documented through well-written postcards from pupils who have taken him on holiday with them. This also provides a good link with literacy, as does the admirable work involving writing to pupils at a school in Nepal, which also makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development in Year 3. Much of the work in Year 5 builds upon pupils' numeracy skills, through mapping, coordinates and tables, although this is not built on in Year 6, where much less time is devoted to the subject.
141. The subject co-ordinator gives positive leadership, not least through her involvement with the Nepal project, which is time-consuming but very worthwhile. Because of her recent new role co-ordinating assessment there has been less time to focus on geography and the management of

this subject is, therefore, only satisfactory. She has ensured that planning covers the appropriate areas, suitable resources are purchased and staff receive support. However, due to a lack of time to monitor the subject her knowledge of standards, and the progress made by different year groups, is limited.

HISTORY

142. Standards in history are above the expected level at the end of both Years 2 and 6. This represents good achievement by all groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. By Year 6, lower-attaining pupils attain the expected standards. Pupils who use English as an additional language make similar progress to their classmates. The standards of literacy in the school, and the quality of writing overall, make a strong contribution to this positive picture.
143. Pupils in Year 6 study the Victorian period in some depth. They, too, are strong on factual information, which they relate with accuracy and interest. Their work shows evidence of tackling the subject from many angles, including comparison between then and now, independent research, looking at lifestyles, timescales and writing from different points of view, for example the 'diary' of a factory worker. Their projects on eminent Victorians are outstanding, being individual, thoroughly researched, and very well written, complete with index, glossary and bibliography. Within this work, pupils have used information and communication technology very well to research, and produce, their work. The work is of a high standard and very personal, as shown by the pupil who writes as part of her dedication *'no children or animals were harmed in the making of this project; but my mum did get a bit stressed out!'* However, in view of these good standards, it is surprising that older pupils are unfamiliar with terms, such as *'primary and secondary sources'* or *'contemporary accounts'*, although they make use of them.
144. Pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of the events of the Great Fire of London. They know many facts, which they are eager to share, but are also able to look beyond this to find reasons for what happened and how lessons were learned. They are aware, for example, that different sources give conflicting information because records were not kept accurately. They understand that Pepys' diary is good evidence because someone who was there at the time wrote it. A visit by the fire brigade is very well planned to bring out similarities and differences in fire-fighting techniques, and the pupils have lots of appropriate questions ready.
145. Teaching is good overall, with examples of very good teaching in some lessons seen. Most teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it. Many lessons are, therefore, well planned, and build upon pupils' previous learning in stimulating and lively ways. One of the greatest strengths in teaching of history is the very wide range of methods and resources that teachers use. For example in Year 1, a practical approach to learning about seaside holidays today and in the past, helped pupils to compare then and now. Similarly, a Year 6 teacher makes a very good job of playing the role of a Victorian 'schoolmarm'. This brought the lesson to life, and the tasks that followed were well chosen to help groups of pupils consolidate their understanding very effectively. Such fun and meaningful activities add considerably to pupils' enjoyment of studying history. Most teachers have high expectations both of pupils' written work and their contributions to lessons. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, the teacher made good use of pupils' discussion skills when talking about a video of the Vikings. A good pace was maintained, with lots of probing questions that made pupils think. However, this level of challenge is not consistent across the school and some tasks, such as the one that required pupils to write about Greek theatre, was not well structured to make best use of the pupils' talents, and in a Year 5 lesson there were too few opportunities for pupils to act as 'detectives', which was the expressed intention, in their search for clues about the Spanish Armada.
146. The co-ordinator provides good leadership. This has ensured that history has a high profile within the school and standards are high. It has also led to a strong and enriched curriculum that includes many visits and visitors, and which adds very positively to pupils' cultural development. The co-ordinator has an appropriate vision for the subject that includes the greater use of information and communication technology. However, her other roles have taken precedence recently and, therefore, the management of the subject is only sound. She has organised the curriculum well, and purchased an adequate range of resources, although there are too few historical artefacts.

However, there has been no formal monitoring, by either looking at pupils' work or observing teaching, which limits her knowledge of the standards achieved and progress over time. Pupils' work is adequately assessed at the end of each topic and results are passed on through the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

147. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are, overall, above those expected; on occasions they are well above. In relation to their prior attainment all pupils, irrespective of ethnic background, make good and sometimes very good progress because of the good teaching they receive from a very well qualified and very enthusiastic teacher and the very good resources that the school possesses.
148. Pupils with special educational needs make at least good progress, because of the good ratio of adults to pupils in many lessons. Pupils who use English as an additional language make similar progress because they, like all other pupils, benefit from the quality education provided. There is no difference in the attainment of boys and girls. Those pupils identified as gifted and talented make good progress because of the focused support they receive, through targeted questioning, and access to computers at a local high school.
149. In Year 6, most pupils are technically very confident. They know how to log on to and off the network, move around the desktop exceedingly quickly, and locate files on a variety of drives. The display they provided of their multimedia presentations included text, moving pictures and sound, some of which they had downloaded from the Internet. They are very adept at refining their searches to find specific information. The very wide choice of topics, from the myth of Loch Ness to drugs awareness, demonstrated not only their maturity, but also their appreciation of the usefulness of technology. Most pupils are more adept at finding information out from websites, rather than the school library, due to its closure during the school move. Although, because of technical difficulties, pupils have had no significant exposure to emails at school, they are aware of the benefits of emailing, and also appreciate that hand-written letters are sometimes more appropriate. Pupils' technical skills in word-processing are very good; they are fast, accurate and regularly use many functions, such as the spell checker and aligning text. Through careful reflection pupils often refine their work to improve its accuracy and to make it more appealing to the audience for whom they are creating it. Pupils' knowledge and use of data handling is good. They have collected the prices of specific household items, from a variety of national websites, and entered this into spreadsheets to interrogate the data in detail. Pupils fully appreciate that information and communication technology can be used to control every day events. Their 'inventions', using a series of sensors and controls, include voice commands for starting a car and sunlight sensitive curtains. This builds well upon the work undertaken in Year 5, where pupils have created a series of instructions to control the flashing lights at a disco that were connected to the music that they had mixed themselves.
150. In discussion, pupils in Year 2 eloquently describe how computers are useful both in school and at home; helping them learn, play, stay in touch with friends and find things out. They are technically competent and most could locate programs for the desktop and files from different drives. Pupils have good control of the mouse and use the keyboard with familiarity. From the evidence of stories and poems written on the computer, and from demonstrations during the inspection, most pupils have a good command of word-processing skills and can import both text and graphics into their work. They use the Internet regularly to locate information about favourite authors and books and describe in detail how to refine a search, use links on the home page and move between pages. They are very enthusiastic about using paint programs. They have used the full range of tools to create their pictures of Florence Nightingale. In a lesson seen on collecting and representing data, on favourite food for a party, most pupils had a good understanding that certain information and graphs had specific limitations that determine how it could be interrogated. They have a good understanding of how to make things happen and they can programme a floor robot to move both randomly and to draw a shape, such as a square or a star.
151. The quality of teaching is always at least good, and sometime very good. The specialist teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject is excellent. Because of this, lessons are very well

planned, incorporating both the development of skills and their application. The teacher's ability to explain new concepts and skills, clearly and easily, coupled with his own enthusiasm, ensures that pupils make good progress. He has very high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and they frequently respond well to this challenge. They are keen and enthusiastic and the teacher's good management of these pupils is only occasionally required to rein in their exuberance. Lessons are extremely busy, with little time wasted; however, on occasions too much is packed into a lesson and pupils are not given sufficient time to consolidate their learning. A wide variety of methods are used well in lessons, with pupils working in pairs as well as groups; this adds well to their personal development. The additional adults in a room, that often consist of the class teacher as well as technician, means that very good support is given to pupils so that they are all included and each given the opportunity to achieve their best. The teachers' assessment of pupils' work is often intuitive, and is often woven in very well to the questions and activities at the end of a lesson. However, on a few occasions insufficient time is given to pupils to explain their own work or to assess their own learning in relation to the lesson's stated objectives. This, therefore, slightly limits pupils' self-knowledge of their own learning.

152. The high academic standards are also achieved for numerous other reasons; primarily the leadership and management of the subject. The leadership is excellent. The co-ordinator has achieved a great deal since his appointment last September. He is visionary in how he hopes to develop the subject. He receives full support from the headteacher for his endeavours and the governors are closely involved with the choice of priorities and monitor the work carefully. The co-ordinator's aspirations, such as video conferencing with French schools, are based on a very good understanding of the current strengths and weaknesses of the subject, especially in terms of hardware, and the need to challenge such able pupils. To achieve this he is both innovative and highly persuasive. For example, he has forged links with local and national businesses that enrich the curriculum. Similarly, there are excellent relationships with local schools, not only through work associated with the school's Beacon status, but also with a local high school that is aimed at providing greater opportunities for gifted and talented pupils. The co-ordinator strongly believes in the benefits that computers can bring to the whole school community and to this end has established very good links with the community, including the 'Silver Surfers Club'. The management of the subject is also excellent. The current system of the class teacher and specialist teacher teaching together as a team offers superb opportunities for non-specialists to improve their skills and confidence. This has been very well thought out and is complemented well, by a range of training opportunities that the co-ordinator provides in school.
153. Pupils' good progress is also very well encouraged by the provision of very good resources. A wide range of up-to-date hardware around the school is used well by all teachers. Twice a week each class uses the purpose built computer suite. Pupils, therefore, benefit from one lesson in which they learn new computing skills and another lesson in which they apply them in a variety of subjects. The odd technical difficulty, such as access to emails is being remedied. A reasonable use is made of those computers that are based in the classroom. When in the suite, pupils in most classes have their own computer to work on, but in the larger classes in Years 4 and 5 a few pupils have to share. There are very good links with a wide range of other subjects, including history. Literacy skills are used well in many lessons and activities, such as multi-media presentations and desktop publishing. Numeracy skills are also developed very well through a range of programs for data handling and controlling the environment, as well as the programmable floor robot. There is a very comprehensive system for assessing pupils' attainment and monitoring their progress. This includes pupils' views. This system has been created and piloted at the school and the information gained is used very well; each pupil has their own target to focus on, thus ensuring their continued progress. Pupils' welfare is dutifully considered; websites are carefully vetted and an Internet safety agreement has been sent home for parents to sign.

MUSIC

154. At the end of Years 2 and 6 pupils achieve standards above those expected for their age. Teaching in class lessons is supplemented well by a range of instrumental lessons and extra-curricular activities for pupils in Years 3 to 6, including two choirs and an orchestra, as well as recorder groups, which all contribute to the good standards achieved by pupils. Individual music tuition provides well for pupils with particular musical talents. Pupils with special educational needs make

good progress. Pupils who use English as an additional language also participate fully in lessons and make good progress.

155. By the time pupils reach Year 6 they are able to perform rhythmic patterns using a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. They are able to keep time and use the graphic notation they are given. Pupils in both junior and infant choirs sing well, showing a good understanding of the mood of the music they are performing. Instrumental lessons on drums, guitars, brass and woodwind give pupils very good opportunities to develop their musical talents, with many also receiving tuition and performing at the local music centre. Boys and girls have equal opportunity to participate in musical activities.
156. In Year 2, pupils understand how music can convey an impression, for instance, of an animal. They have listened to the 'Carnival of Animals' and respond to the music by their movement. They choose for themselves which instrument they want to represent a particular animal, such as a snake. They are able to combine the sounds they make into a continuous piece of music.
157. The quality of both teaching and learning is good overall. Teachers use national guidance, which they adapt to the needs of their pupils, and there is a good range of instruments and other resources which teachers use well to involve pupils in lessons. They make some use of computers to assist pupils in composing music in Year 5, but this is an area the school has identified for development. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject, and the expertise of individuals is used well, for instance, in specialist teaching to the Year 6 classes.
158. Pupils are introduced to the work of a number of composers, such as Saint-Saens and Mozart, but during the inspection the opportunity was not taken to widen pupils' appreciation by identifying the music being played in assemblies. Music is used well in other areas of the curriculum, such as history, where pupils have learned Victorian songs and listened to Tudor music, or art, where pupils have expressed in painting their response to music from the 'Planets Suite'. Links are also made to science, with pupils learning the 'Toothbrush Song' (about dental hygiene) in Year 1, and a science revision song in Year 6, to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic. In Year 6, pupils also learn and perform Shakespearean songs for their annual production, creating a good link with their literacy work. Pupils are introduced to music from other cultures in a multi-cultural week. More opportunities could be taken to acquaint pupils with as wide a range of music as possible, but, in most year groups, the time given to class music is relatively short.
159. The subject has a temporary co-ordinator, who provides good leadership, promoting the subject well. The wide range of peripatetic lessons and other activities is managed well. However, there is no regular assessment of the progress pupils are making, which would assist teachers in planning the next stage of pupils' work.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

160. Standards at the end of Year 2 are as expected and above expectations at the end of Year 6. In relation to their prior attainment, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress across the school. Pupils who use English as an additional language are also making good progress. The arrangements for teaching pupils in Year 4 to swim are good. Almost all the pupils, with very few exceptions, achieve the minimum requirements, with a significant proportion attaining standards higher than expected, often engaging in swimming as a voluntary sporting activity.
161. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of fitness and healthy living. In Year 5 and 6, pupils were completely engrossed and concentrated well. By the end of the lessons, all pupils had improved their throwing, catching and positional skills. They run and jump with energy and skill, they throw and catch well. They showed awareness of safety and followed instructions immediately. Pupils of all ages understand the need for warming up before, and gentle cooling down after, exercise. Pupils in Year 6 warm up happily to music and cool down at the end of sessions. They develop their own balances and work in pairs to evaluate their work. Both boys and girls take an active part in the lesson and enjoy the challenge of

creating their balances. The quality of ball skills develops, as pupils move through the school. By watching their classmates and gaining inspiration, other pupils improve their skills.

162. By the end of Year 2, pupils develop a good range of movements and sequence them as they move around the hall. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop an appropriate response to instructions, changing and stopping on command. They develop understanding of the importance of warming up at the beginning of lessons and develop ways of moving in different directions at varying speeds. Pupils explore and repeat simple ball skills to show basic control and co-ordination. When practising basic techniques, they look to improve their performance. They develop confidence in performing in front of the whole class. They build on the skills of travelling around the hall and apparatus in different ways that they learned in Year 1. Pupils successfully balance on three points and evaluate each others performance. Pupils challenge themselves and try very hard to move slowly or quickly, as requested by the teacher.
163. Pupils have very good attitudes towards physical education. They enjoy the active and sometimes competitive nature of the subject and respond well to the tasks set, playing co-operatively together. Pupils benefit from a broad range of activities. Pupils enjoy opportunities for physical activity and express themselves confidently. The pupils, in their relationships with one another, follow the very good relationships between the teachers and pupils. They are generous in their applause for success and helpful and courteous when they make observations about each other's performance, encouraging each other to do better.
164. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers' levels of expertise and expectations of what pupils should do are developing and lessons are well planned. Teachers place good emphasis on the use of space and good use is made of pupils' evaluations of each other's work. Pupils learn effectively and gain new ideas in his way. Teachers demonstrate the required movements well, using higher attaining pupils or themselves to inspire pupils. In Year 2, the teachers give good demonstrations of how to pass the ball accurately and in a controlled way to a partner. They make good teaching points and pupils learn what to do. Good demonstrations have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' work. Teachers make effective use of praise to motivate pupils, especially those with less confidence.
165. The subject is co-ordinated well and the school's programme of extra-curricular activities is good. It includes netball, football, cricket, gymnastics and sporting visits to other schools. All of these activities raise the standards of pupils' work. The range and quality of resources is good although the grassed area is still under construction.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

166. Although there are some slight weaknesses in the teaching of religious education, by the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus and pupils have a mature attitude to their learning. Overall, in relation to their prior attainment, all pupils, including those who use English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. Although there is no significant evidence of different task being set for pupils of different abilities, pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates. However, there are great variations in the quality of teaching, and the amount of time allocated to the subject, particularly in Key Stage 2. This prevents the good progress that is evident in Years 1 and 2 continuing, so pupils, in relation to their prior attainment, achieve only in line with expectations by the time they leave school at the end of Year 6. Similarly, these inconsistencies are reflected in the impact religious education lessons have on pupils' personal development.
167. In Year 6, pupils have a reasonable knowledge of the main Christian events of Christmas and Easter and of the parables Jesus taught. They are aware of the different places of Christian worship within the locality and of the Islamic mosque in High Wycombe. Their knowledge of other religions is satisfactory, having being taught aspects of Islam and Hinduism. In discussion they were able to apply their knowledge well and draw significant conclusions. For example that all major religions all have places of worship, worship a supreme deity and use prayer. They also have very mature insights into what they themselves believe and why, though they had not considered how they had acquired such firm convictions.

168. By the end of Year 2, pupils know simple facts about Christianity and the Jewish faith. They are aware that people need to live by rules and enjoy celebrating special events. They also learn about cultural celebrations, such as Harvest and Remembrance Sunday. Work shows that pupils appreciate how beliefs affect what people do, such as wearing poppies, and what Jewish people do when they go to the synagogue.
169. Though the quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, it ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory. Consequently pupils' knowledge and understanding develop erratically, especially in Key Stage 2. In the excellent lessons, teachers' very good knowledge and understanding of the subject enables pupils to explore and talk about feelings and belief as well as gain knowledge. This contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual development. Through a very dramatic improvisation, pupils in Year 3 were excited and challenged as they learnt about Gladys Aylward and the tremendous faith it took to lead the children out of China. Very skilled questioning and excellent relationships helped the pupils to consider moments in their own lives when they needed courage and faith. The atmosphere was such that the pupils thought deeply and shared experiences, such as when, as a small child, one had been lost in a supermarket. Where the teaching is not good, lack of subject knowledge and understanding are the key features. This inhibits the teachers' confidence to explore with the pupils their own beliefs and the similarities between faiths.
170. Work scrutinised shows that all teachers pay good attention to aspects of literacy. In most lessons good opportunities are provided for pupils to use their thinking and literacy skills. The recorded work throughout the school shows good use of different writing styles. In the lessons observed there were many good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills. The use of information and communication technology is used well in some year groups. For example in Year 5, work relating to the Christian story of *'The Good Samaritan'* showed pupils using advanced word-processing skills to produce a very attractive class book. Such good use, however, is not consistent across the school.
171. The school has not identified religious education as being of high priority in its development planning. Because of recent changes in staffing, the co-ordinator is new to the role and as yet has not made any significant impact towards improving teaching and learning or raising the profile of the subject. Leadership is, therefore, currently unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator has endeavoured to seek support and guidance. This she has received from within the school. She is aware that improvements need to be made in some aspects of the provision, but because of lack of opportunity, there has been no significant monitoring of the quality teaching and learning. The management of the subject is barely satisfactory. At present, the school does not have its own scheme of work but teachers are using national guidelines in conjunction with Buckinghamshire's locally agreed syllabus. In some year groups, the time allocated to religious education does not meet the recommended amount suggested by Buckinghamshire. However, the overall amount of time allocated to the subject is just sufficient to meet the requirement of the locally agreed syllabus. These arrangements do not sufficiently ensure that pupils learn systematically from year to year. No assessment procedures have yet been established so it is difficult for the school to judge the progress pupils make or always plan work to offer every pupil an appropriate challenge when compared to their capabilities. The books in the library cover all major faiths and a range of emotional topics; the quality and quantity are good. Due to the move into the new school building, the library has only begun to be used recently. It has, therefore, made no significant contributions to learning in this subject. Other learning resources are few and in poorer condition. There are few artefacts, although the school does make good use of a local lending service. Only occasionally do assemblies reinforce aspects of religious education thus limiting the full impact that religious education has on pupils' spiritual development.