

INSPECTION REPORT

ELDENE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Swindon

LEA area: Swindon

Unique reference number: 132229

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Tinker

Reporting inspector: Geoff Burgess
OIN: 23708

Dates of inspection: 24th to 28th March 2003

Inspection number: 248956

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

School address: Colingsmead
Eldene
Swindon

Postcode: SN3 3TQ

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Jenny Grier

Date of previous inspection: Not applicable - new school

Information about the inspection team

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31758	Ted Tipper	Lay inspector		Partnership with parents Attitudes, values & personal development Adequacy of resources Personal welfare & care
24342	Denise Franklin	Team inspector	English Religious Education SEN	Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Eldene Primary School is a recently reorganised school combining the old Eldene Infant and Junior Schools. It serves a wide spectrum of families of mostly British heritage mainly from the estates surrounding the school in the east of the town but with an increasing number coming from other housing estates further afield. Take up of free school meals is above average but, with plenty of low paid work locally, many more families live on low incomes and so do not qualify. Movement of pupils in or out of school mid-year is less than in most schools. About a quarter of pupils are on the special needs register with twelve having statements of special need. Eight of these with very special need attend the Specialist Learning Centre in the school. Attainment on entry is below that found in most schools especially in expressive language and personal and social development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school where, with good teaching, boys and girls are achieving well and growing in confidence and maturity in a secure and caring environment. To achieve this in such a short time has taken very good leadership and management. With average levels of funding and below average attainment on entry, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Good and very good teaching and the overall very good work of teaching assistants is helping pupils to make good progress in literacy and numeracy and standards are rising.
- Four and five-year-olds make good progress in their development thanks to the high quality provision made for them in the youngest classes
- Pupils who find it difficult to learn or to behave appropriately are looked after excellently, make very good progress towards their targets and are included in all the school has to offer
- Boys' and girls' personal development has a high priority and they respond very well with good behaviour, real enthusiasm for school and very good relationships.
- It takes very good care to ensure that its pupils are secure, safe and happy so that they can do their best and makes every effort to involve parents in the life of the school
- The leadership team have brought the whole school community together and supported staff, governors and pupils in creating a caring and professional learning environment with its own special ethos and strengths

What could be improved

- The school has worked hard to increase the number of pupils achieving average standards but few are working at higher levels
- Literacy skills are well taught but pupils have few opportunities to write extended pieces of work and show how well they can use these skills when writing freely
- Standards are not rising as fast in information technology as seen in most schools

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Eldene Primary School has not been inspected before but there is good evidence of very good improvements in most aspects of provision in the short time the school has existed in its present form.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/a	D	E	E
mathematics	N/a	E	E	E
science	N/a	D	D	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Results obtained in national testing for eleven-year-olds in the two years the school has been operating appear disappointing. However, when compared with schools which achieved similar low average points scores for seven-year-olds, the position is much better. In both years the number of pupils achieving average and above average results was as good as in similar schools in English and science while lower numbers of higher achievers took the mathematics comparison to below average. For a variety of reasons acknowledged by the school, overall test results for seven-year-olds fell to well below average in 2002. Boys and girls of all ages are currently achieving well throughout the school and most in their foundation year will attain the early learning goals. Standards in literacy and numeracy in Years 2 and 6 are much higher though, with few higher achievers, not quite up to average. Pupils who find learning difficult, some very difficult, are making very good progress towards their learning goals. Progress and standards in most other subjects matches that in the core but the pace of improvement in information technology is not as fast as that seen in other similar schools.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The great majority of pupils enjoy the security and feeling of self-worth which the school encourages and the activities it provides. All do what is asked of them and most do their best and take a pride in their successes. Younger boys and girls are especially keen about learning but older pupils tend to conform and complete rather than enthuse. Otherwise, pupils' attitudes to school are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Boys and girls are very friendly, polite and helpful. Their generally very good behaviour around the school and in class makes it a happy and positive environment in which to teach and learn. The small number of pupils who find conforming difficult are given every help and support to cope and because of this little time is lost or upset caused.
Personal development and relationships	The school works very hard to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own actions and feel good about themselves. They very happily and proudly carry out any tasks they are asked to do around the school. Older pupils take good care of their younger schoolmates, relationships are very good and visitors are made extremely welcome. Overall, boys' and girls' personal development is good.
Attendance	Pupils see school as a positive experience so few miss school unnecessarily and punctuality is good.

Pupils make a very good contribution to their own learning and to the friendly, inclusive ethos of the school by their very good behaviour and relationships and willingness to do what is asked of them.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

Most teaching is good with much even better, some excellent, and the rest satisfactory. The quality of teaching is broadly consistent across the key stages with both very good and satisfactory teaching observed in most subjects and much very good teaching in English, mathematics and special needs. Better teaching is mainly associated with the expertise of individual teachers but very good teaching was observed in almost all year groups. Most teaching assistants supporting pupils who find learning difficult and boys and girls in the foundation stage make a very good contribution in enhancing learning for these pupils. Most boys and girls also make a strong contribution to their own learning by working hard and doing their best.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a stimulating and suitably varied curriculum very much enhanced by the contribution made by extra-curricular activities and the school's emphasis on working with the community. Literacy and numeracy are strongly represented and good connections are made with and between other subjects. Good planning arrangements ensure adequate coverage and that parallel classes receive a similar diet. Much good provision is made to enhance pupils' personal, social and health education. The curriculum for children in their foundation year is very well developed and appropriate and relevant to their needs.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils who find learning or conforming difficult is excellent and they make very good progress. Well trained and mainly very effective classroom assistants are closely involved with teachers in providing necessary support mainly as part of normal classroom work. Very good procedures for identifying, monitoring and supporting such pupils have been established and all the necessary paperwork is in place. Pupils with very special needs are excellently catered for and included in all the school has to offer.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Staff make very good provision for the development of pupils' social skills and attitudes and moral awareness. Curricular provision for pupils to appreciate the arts and their own cultural heritage, and learn about and value cultural diversity is also very good. Good attention is given to encouraging pupils to reflect on their feelings and life. This adds up to very good provision for promoting pupils' personal growth.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers and other staff know the children well and take good care to ensure their well being. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils are safe, happy and not at any risk and formal procedures for these aspects are already well established. Behaviour and personal development are monitored carefully and high standards are actively promoted but other than for pupils with extra needs, few records are kept. Very good assessment procedures are in place for the core subjects with a good start having been made in most foundation subjects. Good use is being made of the information gathered to set targets and modify planning.

The school has worked very hard to build up its relationship with parents by providing an open door, plenty of information and opportunities for parents to communicate their concerns and opinions. Many help in school or with trips and visits and the recently formed parents association is already providing a focus for social, fundraising and educational events. However, the response of parents to reading, homework, parents evenings and special needs reviews is sometimes disappointing.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	With the considerable help of the deputy head and the senior teacher, the head has shown outstanding qualities of leadership and very effective management in bringing the two schools together and creating a single community which already has a unique and positive ethos and identity. Many subject and other leaders are new to the job but all have been very active in developing their areas of interest and in supporting their colleagues. Overall leadership and management have been very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body has achieved a steep learning curve since its creation thanks to the sustained commitment of longer standing governors, notably the chair, and the enthusiasm of newer members. With much help from the head, senior staff and the local authority, governors are now much more aware of their responsibilities and the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Many are now active in the school observing, evaluating and discussing what is going on in their areas of interest. Good arrangements have been made for managing the workload involving committees and individual responsibilities. As confidence and expertise grow, they are making a good and ever-improving contribution to the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	A great deal of time and effort has been put into monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Information about pupils' attainment is collected and compared to prior attainment; pupils' work is compared to national standards; teaching and classroom practice is regularly observed; pupils' and parents' opinions and local authority judgements are sought. The evaluation of this has been increasingly used by staff and governors to establish priorities for planning for improvement. In all this, the focus has been on involvement, building a 'one school' ethos and raising standards.
The strategic use of resources	The head and governors have managed the transition to primary school status very well and the school is now running very efficiently. Financial affairs are dealt with very well by the bursar and the governing body is taking an ever more active role in managing the budget. A series of staff changes, funding opportunities and national and local initiatives have been well used to move the school forward. Important improvements have been made to the accommodation and shortages in resources have been dealt with. The contribution of the caretaker in maintaining the site and making it secure is very important to its smooth running.

The whole school community has every reason to be proud of the way it has taken the opportunity for a fresh start to make very substantial improvements to the educational provision made for Eldene pupils of all ages. The head deserves great credit for providing the optimism, clear vision for the future and will-power to see it through. Pupils, governors and staff are all enjoying the very much improved learning and working environment this has produced.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their children enjoy going to school • teaching is good • their children are making good progress • pupils work hard and do their best • the school is helping pupils to grow up sensibly and behaviour is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the range of extra activities provided by the school • work children are expected to do at home • the information about how well their children are doing • school's partnership with parents

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views but find that in all the areas noted for improvement, the school is already making provision at least as good as in most other schools and often better.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In absolute terms, in its two years as a primary school, Eldene has yet to achieve average results in any subject at the end of either key stage and apart from science, all grades were well below average in 2002. However, the picture is more complex than it appears and there are promising signs. For instance, the overall improvement made by Year 6's in 2001 and 2002 over results obtained as seven year olds matched schools in a similar situation even though both years included pupils from the Specialist Learning Centre. Information provided by the local authority also shows that current standards are well up on those obtained by eleven-year-olds four years before in the Junior School which preceded the amalgamation and especially so in writing. An unusual element of the drop in absolute standards in 2002 was the fact that overall, boys results matched those in the previous year but girls results were well down, especially in English.

2. Local authority data shows that, over the years, the pre-amalgamation infant school achieved below average results in tests in reading, writing and mathematics and this trend was continued in the first year after amalgamation. However, results for seven-year-olds in all three subjects fell considerably in 2002. Three factors contributed to this situation. Boys significantly outnumber girls in the year group (35 to 22) and levels of special need are much higher than usual. One of the two classes was seriously affected by staffing problems that could not be resolved before statutory testing took place. In addition, the school has consciously begun to apply the national testing regime more rigorously.

3. Consistently good teaching of the basics throughout the school is seeing most boys and girls of all ages achieving well in mathematics, writing and especially reading. A key factor in this has been the priority staff have given to helping pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in order that they can make the fullest contribution to oral work within these and other subjects. Boys and girls in the reception classes and in Year 1 have made remarkable progress from a low base in all these areas and both groups should be working at levels similar to most schools by the end of the year. Literacy and numeracy standards in Years 2 and 6 are much better this year with many more pupils achieving broadly average standards but the numbers working at higher levels are still low, especially in writing. Good provision for reading involving support staff and volunteers is seeing this aspect of literacy approaching average standards in most year groups. The exception is in Year 3 where, though improving, standards in numeracy and literacy reflect the low results achieved last year.

4. Pupils in most classes are working at expected levels in science and most other subjects except art where standards are higher, and information technology and music where they are lower. The knowledge and understanding of pupils in Years 5 and 6 in science, geography, history and religious education as demonstrated in discussions is good but the quality of written evidence is below average. Recent improvements in provision in music and information technology are seeing gains in both subjects but low levels of expertise and confidence in both are limiting these gains in many classes and this is not helped by problems of space and noise when music is taught in the bays.

5. All pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Those identified as requiring additional support, have individual plans that include short-term targets. These targets are consistently specific and pupils' achievements are assessed against them. The individual education plans are applied in all lessons and this ensures that pupil's progress is maintained.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils' attitudes to school are very good. They talk about their school with pride and are determined to ensure it is kept clean and tidy with a noticeable absence of litter and graffiti. Most pupils are eager to come to school and approach their lessons and extra-curricular activities with enthusiasm. However, while younger pupils are especially keen about learning, older ones tend to be less enthusiastic. Attendance has been stable for the last three years at just below the national average and punctuality is good. Unauthorised absence is below the national average.

7. Behaviour throughout the school is very good and this helps to create a happy and positive environment in which to teach and learn. Pupils behave themselves well in most lessons and, although some pupils can be disruptive at times, they are given help and support to ensure this does not adversely affect the learning of themselves or their schoolmates. They move about the school quietly and in an orderly manner and behaviour in the dining halls is good. In assemblies, pupils are very attentive and involved throughout and they generally play well together in the outside play areas at break-times. No pupils were excluded in the past year.

8. Relationships amongst the pupils, and with adults, are very good. Most relate very well to adults working in the school and approach visitors in a confident and friendly manner. They are also courteous and polite to each other and adults, and the majority work and play well in pairs and group situations. Pupils are taught to appreciate the impact of their words and actions on others by the constant reinforcement of teaching and other staff. The personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme is also beginning to be influential in this aspect of personal development. A very harmonious atmosphere within the school has led to an almost total lack of oppressive behaviour such as sexism and racism; no instances of such behaviour were witnessed during the inspection. The clear anti-bullying code is well implemented with most incidents dealt with promptly. Bullying is not seen as a major problem by pupils, staff or parents.

9. The example set by staff within the school has enabled pupils to demonstrate respect for the feelings of others. This is reinforced during the day and in school assemblies. They develop a good understanding of the values and beliefs of other cultures through subjects such as geography and religious education and trips to places of worship. Visitors such as the one who was seen introducing Indian dancing to pupils in Year 4 reinforce this. Good opportunities provided show pupils' ability to demonstrate initiative and personal responsibility. The school council, consisting of representatives from classes across the school, is an example of democracy in action and gives pupils opportunities to influence their life in school. Among other changes, the council has been involved in decisions to set up 'bully boxes' and ensure healthier items are stocked in the tuck shop. Pupils from Year 6, also carry out other responsibilities such as running the tuck shop and helping younger pupils in the playground.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

10. Teaching is good overall with no unsatisfactory lessons observed. The great majority of lessons are at least good in Key Stages 1 and 2 with more than three-fifths good and better in each, and all lessons are at least good in the foundation stage. Very good teaching featured in every year group except Year 3 and in all subjects except history, information technology and music, and two lessons were judged to be excellent. The strongest teaching was observed in Years 1, 4, 6 and the Specialist Learning Centre, and in literacy and numeracy. Only in Year 3 were more lessons satisfactory than good. Most teaching assistants made a very good contribution to learning throughout the school by supporting groups and individuals. Pupils' very good behaviour, willingness to do as they are asked and very good relationships enhances learning throughout the school. Younger boys and girls are enthusiastic and confident about learning and happy to use their initiative, be creative and not worry about failure. However, although older pupils contribute well in oral sessions and enjoy practical activities, any activity involving written work produces a muted response from many and the pace of learning slows.

11. The main feature of teaching in the reception classes is that it is consistently good with the teachers, teaching assistants and other helpers involved in well planned, interesting activities well matched to the needs and interests of the children and well established ways of working. A very good lesson with a language and literacy focus, started with the whole group going through

the days of the week and then singing 'The Grand Old Duke of York' with actions before moving on to a range of activities, some working with adults, some independently. Lower attainers are very well supported and encouraged in 'reading' and matching high frequency words. Some boys and girls dress up and play in role in the Shoe Shop making lists, using the phone and manning the till. Others work on the computers or cut and sequence pictures before the whole group shares the Big Book 'Poppy's Pot' with some enthusiasm and the teacher enlists boys' and girls' help to model writing a list of things Poppy needed.

12. The effect of the positive implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies on teaching styles is plain to see and not just in English and mathematics. All lessons have clear and specific learning objectives that are shared with pupils, reviewed at the end of lessons to see what has been learned and revisited before the next lesson. Whole class teaching and oral work, not just whole class organising, precedes other activities which themselves are carefully chosen to meet the learning needs of the group of pupils concerned. .

13. In a Year 1 literacy lesson, a support teacher dressed as a Victorian 'Mrs Brown' told pupils about her big black kettle and answered questions to stimulate them to write captions under their quick pictures. After a quick reminder about full stops, capital letters etc., every pupil soon had written their first sentence with the higher attaining group using connectives such as 'however' to compare the Victorian kettle with a modern one. A shared reading session reviewing the format of non-fiction books followed by reading activities at four different levels including a word search and written book reviews completed a very good lesson. Year 2 pupils studying stories from other cultures worked animatedly mixing up the syllables of lion, tiger, monkey and zebra to produce strange animals such as a 'libra'. This showed they fully understood the difference between letters and syllables and that a good strategy for reading compound words is to break them into syllables. This was followed by the teacher 'hot seating' as 'Jamil' from their book and answering prepared questions before pupils used writing frames to write character profiles with the teaching assistant scribing for the lower attaining group and higher attainers word processing their profiles.

14. A Year 5 teacher taking a class of lower attaining pupils for literacy used every strategy available to encourage her charges to join in and have a go at work they find difficult. Clear explanations, lots of participation and praise, short tasks and time limits, constantly checking understanding, focused support by the teaching assistant, good use of prompts and examples and activities very well matched to pupils' capacities all contributed to the great majority of pupils being successful in understanding explanatory texts. Year 6 pupils working on interpreting data, which had been identified as a weakness, benefited greatly from the confidence and expertise of their teacher who is a numeracy coordinator. Pupils responded very well to her high expectations and attention to detail and concentrated hard on completing their work and presenting it well. With good support for those who needed it, suitable extension work for more able mathematicians within the group and encouragement to develop their own strategies for problem solving, this middle ability group learned a lot during the session.

15. The impact of teachers with particular expertise and interest was observed in several other subjects taken by coordinators. Notable among these were excellent science and art lessons in Years 1 and 4 respectively, with both teachers making the best use of their own particular talents and personalities. In Year 1 this involved a teacher with a flair for performance and creativity donning a lab coat and becoming a scientist to encourage her young pupils to also 'put on their scientist faces'. By relating the concept of absorbency to the story of 'Mrs Armitage on Wheels', giving lots of opportunities for discussion, excellent demonstrations and explanations and not least, promising that pupils could play with the pipettes and coloured water outside if they were sensible doing the experiment, every pupil completed a challenging task quickly and sensibly with lots of energy and enthusiasm. In Year 4 pupils working on designing Islamic style patterns for their pots and painting these designs were working in a quiet, gentle environment with quiet music playing. The levels of thought and concentration shown were excellent and, with the teacher quietly offering technical help or prompting pupils to think about ways of improving or simply appreciating their efforts, the quality of learning and the outcomes were much better than expected.

16. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream and in the Special Learning Centre (SLC), is very good. This is seen in the careful planning of lessons, the match of work to the ability of each pupil and in the organisation of classes for literacy and numeracy. Teachers very regularly plan and review the targets on each pupil's individual education plan and set new targets. The individual education plans are working documents, used very effectively by teachers and support staff to track progress and as a record of achievement. Teachers target their questions very well to enable the pupils to succeed. Clear instructions by teachers and support staff, build confidence and this, together with focussed support in the classroom, enables pupils to sustain concentration and complete the tasks set for them. Learning support staff are very well deployed and provide very good support. All are dedicated to their jobs, keep detailed notes and several members of the support staff offered voluntary support so that pupils from the SLC can take part in extra-curricular activities. Support staff also very effectively deliver specific programmes such as speech therapy, provided by the specialist agencies, as identified on statements of special educational needs.

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

17. The overall quality and range of learning activities provided by the school is good with very good provision being made for pupils in their first year to experience all the foundation areas of learning in structured and interesting ways. Boys and girls throughout the rest of the school are given a wide range of interesting and stimulating learning experiences that cover all the required elements. However, in some subjects, constraints such as the timetable, the accommodation or limited subject expertise and confidence limit the scope of the activities presented. For example in music, less-confident staff, aware of the other class in the bay, are inhibited from allowing their pupils to really 'have a go' with percussion and other instruments.

18. Suitable emphasis is placed on the teaching of English, mathematics and science and both the Literacy and Numeracy strategies have been effectively implemented. A growing feature of the curriculum is the way in which cross-curricular links are being exploited as when young pupils used a Victorian kettle as a stimulus for writing a caption. However, there is scope for much more flexibility and integration of subjects to make best use of time and add relevance and continuity to learning. Staff are aware of this and a review of the 'draft' curriculum map is planned. The introduction of a personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme building on work in the foundation year is beginning to enhance provision but at the moment, much of it is unplanned. Special weeks focusing on particular subjects, and trips, such as the town walk undertaken by Year 3 during the inspection, and visitors, such as the Indian Dancer in Year 4, further strengthen provision.

19. Comprehensive curriculum planning covers all aspects of the National Curriculum. All subjects have appropriate policies and schemes of work in place to ensure coverage, progression and continuity. National and local guidance is considered and incorporated at a level that is relevant to the ability of pupils. Overall the planning is thorough, involving all the teaching staff and this has a positive impact on teaching and learning. Joint planning in year groups strengthens the delivery of the curriculum and encourages staff to share their ideas and expertise. Lesson plans clearly identify the subject specific learning objectives to be taught and these are shared with pupils and reviewed to see if they are achieved. These plans make clear how pupils of all abilities are to be challenged, often by providing work at a variety of different levels. The school recognises the need to continue to seek to improve provision for more able pupils. It makes satisfactory use of subject expertise, usually by subject managers providing in-house support. Subject managers occasionally teach their subject to more than one class, but this is an area that could be further developed.

20. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent. Its full commitment to inclusion is evident in the high priority placed on special educational needs provision to ensure that the needs of the pupils are met. The policy for pupils in the Special Learning Centre to be integrated into the mainstream for appropriate lessons is excellent. For

example, some join with Year 4 for science, very ably supported by the teacher and support staff. Provision for pupils in mainstream who find learning difficult includes working in smaller groups for some literacy and numeracy lessons or being very well supported by very well trained support staff. Support for each pupil is mainly within the classroom, although small groups are sometimes withdrawn for special programmes to meet their individual needs. Pupils who find conforming difficult are very carefully monitored and have detailed plans with targets to help them improve and work appropriately with the rest of the class.

21. Very good provision is made for extra-curricular activities. Teachers, supported by other school staff and parents, organise a range of after-school clubs including art, brass band, football and netball. All are enthusiastically attended by a large number of very keen pupils. On one day during the inspection, no less than one-quarter of the school's pupils were involved in an activity after school. All activities are open to, and attended by, boys and girls and cater for pupils from Year 1 upwards.

22. Overall, the local community makes a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. Several local people are regular visitors and listen to readers while pupils visit local churches and, in turn, receive visits from their ministers. The local Beavers group uses the school as do local football teams and photographs of many local people adorn corridor walls emphasising the importance of mathematics in their lives. A particularly valuable initiative has seen each year group undertake a mathematics project in conjunction with a different local business. The school has developed very close links with the nearby playgroup and attends regular meetings with local primary schools and the main receiving secondary school. This involves discussions on the teaching of various subjects and in preparing pupils for the successful transition between schools. Several joint projects are also undertaken with the secondary school which includes a sharing of teaching expertise. The school is also involved in several sports competitions and attends events such as the Swindon Music Festivals.

23. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development which is very evident through its very strong ethos and full commitment to inclusion. Opportunities for spiritual awareness are good. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on values and beliefs during acts of collective worship and many visitors associated with the local churches regularly contribute to these assemblies. The school also ensures that pupils have opportunities to think about others and reflection times are often built into lessons. During religious education lessons pupils can think about their own beliefs and those of others.

24. Provision for moral development is very good. The school places this as a high priority and provides a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is consistent through all aspects of school life. Class rules are negotiated at the beginning of the year and the school has a comprehensive behaviour management policy. During assemblies and through the personal, social and health education programme pupils have time to discuss moral issues and are encouraged to make positive decisions about life styles. A comprehensive reward system effectively promotes good behaviour and includes informing parents when their child behaves well for specific periods. Both the head teacher and deputy head teacher offer groups of pupils additional support and guidance to help to develop appropriate behaviour management strategies and social skills.

25. Staff are very effective in promoting pupils' social skills. Lunchtimes are expected to be social occasions when pupils can talk to their friends and to pupils in other classes. Some pupils are trained to be 'play leaders' and help others to socialise during break and lunchtimes. The school has purchased some large play equipment to support this project and also has organised training for midday supervisors so that they can help to organise playground games for the pupils. Residential visits and school trips help to develop pupils' social skills when outside the school environment. Many pupils have responsibilities within their classrooms and older pupils also have additional responsibilities around the school such as taking registers to classrooms, organising a 'tuck shop' at break and taking care of their school environment. The School Council meets regularly providing a forum for pupils to air their views about school matters. Pupils often raise money for charities of their choice.

26. Provision for cultural development is very good. Several areas of the curriculum, particularly art, religious education and history provide pupils with very good opportunities to experience aspects of both their own culture and those of others. For example, Year 4 pupils are currently studying aspects of Islam and in art have been making clay pots using Islamic designs. In literacy, pupils have the opportunity to read a good range of multi-cultural books and the school sometimes focuses on special themes such as cooking from different countries. Local traditions are also a large focus in history and geography lessons. For example, pupils learn about both the history of their local area and about the strong tradition Swindon has with the railways. In assemblies, they have the opportunity to think about the life of people whose beliefs have influenced the lives of others. Recently pupils have looked at the life of Martin Luther King. The school invites a very good range of visitors to school, including Indian dancers, a member of the local mosque, music groups and representatives from the local church. Members of the local community are regular visitors to the school. The school is successful in providing many opportunities for pupils to gain a clear understanding of the rich and diverse cultures in Britain today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. This is a very caring school where the teachers and support staff get to know their pupils well and show vigilance in their concern for their health, welfare and safety.

28. The health and safety policy is due to be updated but is very detailed in its identification of the responsibilities carried out diligently by the head teacher, site manager, health and safety committee and members of staff. Risk assessments are made of all areas of the school and all visitors are given an identity badge which reminds them to familiarise themselves with the contents of the health and safety leaflet given to them at the same time. A recent audit by the local authority has identified areas for improvement which are currently being considered by the school. The headteacher as the designated person responsible for child protection is operating a system in line with local procedures. She has received appropriate training along with two other teachers and this is passed on to staff when they join the school and regularly updated during staff training sessions. All adults who work in the school have been subject to criminal record checks. The school is well provided for in terms of first-aid cover with one qualified first-aider and fifteen appointed persons and a dedicated treatment room.

29. Staff help pupils to develop healthy lifestyles by encouraging them to eat fruit, which is sold in the tuck shop, and allowing them to drink from water bottles throughout the day. It is also supported in this by the Life Education Centre and pupils in Years 5 and 6 follow a course in health education. A drugs awareness policy has recently been produced and the topic is discussed as part of the PSHE programme. However, there is no whole-school focus in terms of large wall displays in the public areas and the school has not yet committed itself to the Healthy Schools Standard.

30. The school has a clear behaviour policy based on a list of four 'golden' rules supported by class rules which are agreed by the pupils with their teachers. These are prominently displayed in classrooms and public areas. Poor behaviour is generally resolved by the class teacher and the situation rarely develops beyond this point. The use of 'privilege' time, a twenty minute period at the end of the week where pupils carry out activities they have been involved in choosing, is an effective incentive for encouraging good behaviour. Pupils are keen not to lose some of this time as a result of misbehaving during the week. A very clear anti-bullying code and a prompt and sensitive system for dealing with any incidents of oppressive behaviour such as bullying or harassment of any kind are very well used.

31. Computerised systems are used for recording attendance and the registers are completed promptly and accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions. An analysis of the attendance figure has enabled pupils with poor records to be targeted. Letters are sent to parents who may then be invited to a meeting to discuss the situation and, if this fails to improve it, the educational welfare officer is involved. While there is a good system for controlling

non-attendance, the school could do more to promote, and therefore improve, attendance. Certificates are awarded to individual pupils for perfect attendance, but there is scope to introduce rewards for encouraging attendance on a class or year group basis and for more of a focus within the school on highlighting its importance.

32. Arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress are very good. Procedures used include the statutory assessments for pupils in Years 2 and 6, the optional tests in Years 3 to 5, additional nationally accepted standardised tests in reading and a range of other assessments. National assessments are recorded electronically, and the information analysed is very well used to set targets in English and mathematics related to national curriculum levels. All the assessment information is recorded in pupils' individual assessment files that also include assessment in the foundation subjects. There is a whole staff commitment to assessment and staff training has involved improving skills in matching pupils' work against national curriculum levels particularly in pupils' writing. Arrangements for completing the recently introduced national Foundation Stage Profile are well advanced. Assessment is used well to guide future planning but, especially in the foundation subjects, systems, procedures and ways of recording assessments have not been in place long enough to produce the kind of information really needed for this purpose.

33. The school makes very good use of its detailed assessment procedures to identify those pupils who find learning difficult. Their progress is very carefully monitored through the targets on their individual education plans and through the assessment tasks, taken by all pupils at the end of each year. There are also very good procedures for pupils who attend the Specialist Learning Centre. The school has excellent links with outside agencies so that they can provide the best possible support for each pupil. Annual reviews are appropriately completed and all agencies involved in the pupil's education and welfare contribute. Provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is very good.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. Overall, the school has developed good links with its parents. Informative school newsletters are produced twice a term which, in addition to a 'dates for diary' list, keep parents well-informed of future events and classroom activities as do noticeboards in the main school and foundation stage entrance areas. Parents are informed about what their pupils will be studying through leaflets sent home by their teachers at the beginning of each term. The school has also held literacy and numeracy evenings for parents but attendance has been poor. It has also set up a 'maths trail' competition that it hopes will encourage more parents to become involved in talking to their children about maths. An annual questionnaire is sent to parents and a thorough analysis of the findings carried out. The school then looks to address any issues and provides a detailed written feedback to parents.

35. Parents have several opportunities to discuss the progress of their children. In addition to formal meetings in October, March and July, parents are welcome to have informal discussions with the teachers. Open afternoons have been organised in the coming summer term where parents can see their children at work and play and the reception class has a weekly half-hour session for parents to attend with their children which is well supported. The annual reports are produced in July and provide a brief description of pupils' achievements in each subject. In English, mathematics and science, some reports state where pupils are in relation to expected performance, but this is not consistent throughout the school, and some provide limited information on what a pupil needs to do to make progress. There are usually, however, some helpful comments on the pupil's personal development. Each report contains a contribution from the pupil and parents are requested to add their comments.

36. The home-school link books, which include details of reading books and termly writing and reading targets, make a valuable contribution to informing parents of their children's progress but the effectiveness of their use varies from pupil to pupil. Unfortunately, some parents find it difficult to help their children with reading or provide encouragement for

their homework. Parents are welcome to assist in the life of the school with several taking up the opportunity to do so. A group meets fortnightly to produce story sacks and others assist in the working life of the school. The recently formed school friends association, run by an enthusiastic band of volunteers, is becoming active in organising social and fund-raising events that should prove to be of benefit to the school.

37. Parents have very good opportunities to share the targets set on their child's individual education plans. The plans are shared at consultation meetings each term and for those who cannot attend alternative arrangements can be made. Copies of individual education plans are sent home for parents to sign and there is usually a target on their plan so that they can support their child at home. For example some parents are asked to take their child regularly to the park and use the large climbing apparatus to help improve their child's coordination or to help their child to count various items around the house. For pupils who attend the Specialist Learning Centre and therefore travel to school by taxi a good home/school link book has been set up so that parents can keep in touch with their child's teacher.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. Eldene School has been the focus of a fundamental change in the way education for primary aged children in the area is organized, including significant changes in personnel both on the staff and on the governing body. In a remarkably short time it has developed its own unique ethos and personality to match its aims and become one community with shared values and ambitions. Relationships and communications within the school and with governors, the local community and the great majority of parents are very good. Everything is managed efficiently and unobtrusively both at the strategic level and on a day to day basis. Central to all this has been the very good leadership of the headteacher, very well supported by the deputy head and the senior teacher. Together they form the backbone of the school, having provided the stability, determination and clear sense of direction to make it all possible.

39. Very good use has been made of the opportunities presented by the fresh start, national and local initiatives, and staff and governor changes to achieve all the above. For instance:

- while the leadership team form the backbone, the spacious newly developed reception/ office area and large well equipped staff room in the middle of the school have become the clearly defined heart, face and nerve centre of the whole school community;
- the literacy and numeracy strategies and the foundation curriculum have provided clear planning structures and expectations in these important areas
- national and local projects such as the Value Added Pilot Scheme and the Swindon Project have been taken up to support the drive for higher standards;
- performance management has been welcomed by staff as a structured way of reviewing and developing their teaching and management skills;
- new appointments have been used to ensure that there is appropriate expertise in all subjects and at all levels.

40. While the primary focus has been on raising standards, great care has been taken to give everyone a voice and the opportunity to share in the decision making process. Through this, agreed whole school policies, ways of working and a clear management structure have been established with clear and specific roles and responsibilities. This has given teachers with little experience of management the opportunity to take on important responsibilities within the school which they relish while established staff manage their subject and other responsibilities effectively and are very conscientious. Everyone fully understands his or her respective role and is committed to fulfilling it and to constantly improving. All have management targets and action plans and release time in which to work on them developing support materials and resources, monitoring planning and evaluating outcomes, and supporting colleagues. Much is asked and expected of managers and they already form a force for good in their areas of responsibility.

41. Management of the provision for special educational needs is very good. The two coordinators (SENCO) have set up simple but effective systems to ensure that the needs of all

the pupils are met. Both monitor the individual education plans regularly and are regularly available to support staff. All paperwork is extremely well organised so that the progress of each pupil can be carefully monitored. Support staff are very well trained, many attending training both in school, organised by the SENCOs, and out of school courses. Management of the Specialist Learning Centre is excellent and all staff, very ably led by the teacher, contribute extremely well to the provision provided for these pupils. The governing body are kept very well informed about special needs provision in the school.

42. Monitoring and evaluation now have a high priority in the school community with the lead taken by the head and the leadership team who keep a very close watch on what is happening. Standards, classroom practice and the effectiveness of policies and procedures are kept under review by the staff and governors responsible. Extensive use is made of information gained from national and optional tests to identify priorities and trends and, as records build up from recently developed assessment procedures, they are steadily being used for the same purpose. The school has set itself challenging targets over the next few years and improvement planning is focused on achieving these targets. The clearly structured, very practical school improvement plan is a comprehensive document that focuses on improving standards. As staff and governor confidence increases, the leadership team is involving everyone more and more in deciding what should be included and how effective actions have been.

43. The governing body is very inexperienced with most joining in the last two years. However, thanks to the efforts of the head, the local authority and the current chair, plus the commitment and enthusiasm of the new governors, it is already fulfilling all its statutory duties and strategic role in a very 'professional' way. Governors are very supportive and keen for the school to succeed. They have a well-defined and understood structure of committees and individual responsibilities and are developing rolling programmes for managing on-going agenda items. Governors are steadily developing their monitoring role, visiting regularly and receiving comments from the head and staff on the effectiveness of various current policy developments or items of expenditure. This combined with local authority and in-house training is increasing levels of knowledge, insight and confidence each term and, as individuals and as a body, they know their school and their responsibilities well. It is to the great credit of everyone involved that the governing body is already making a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school.

44. In the time since the two schools were amalgamated, the governing body has received guidance in determining its strategic plan through involvement with the Improving Standards in Swindon Schools Project. The resulting Six Year Vision Plan for the school provides effective focus to its strategic plan and direction for the development of the school. The key priority is to raise standards and decisions on spending have supported that aim. The decision to maintain staffing levels that enable some small groupings in part of the school promotes the learning, confidence and self-esteem of pupils. With the long-term plan in mind, and its seven main aims, subject coordinators undertake an annual subject audit and the resulting subject action plans become part of the overall school improvement plan. Although the improvement plan effectively identifies the educational direction of the school the resource requirements need to be more specific with detailed costings and estimates linked to the long-term budget plans. Governors and staff are committed to school improvement and have taken on subject link roles that involve them in the day to day functioning of the school which increasingly enables them to plan effectively in the longer term.

45. The school has a welcoming atmosphere and all of the office procedures are well organised and efficient. Computerised management information systems are up to date and well maintained. The bursar manages day-to-day financial management of the school very efficiently and there is an effective working partnership with the headteacher and governors. Expenditure analysis reports provide the headteacher and governors' finance committee with valuable information with which to monitor the budget. Careful analysis of future trends led to the decision to carry forward a significant amount of money to this year's budget. Subject coordinators are also provided with reports on the budgets they manage. The bursar who actively challenges costs and seeks more efficient services applies the principles of best value. Good examples of

saving include the renewed grounds maintenance contract and the re-cycled waste materials that are collected free of charge. The recommendations of the most recent audit have been fully implemented. Governors have delegated spending powers to the head and the terms of reference of the finance committee make responsibilities clear.

46. Good use is made of grants and the school seeks opportunities to improve its facilities and resources. Grants are sought for special projects, such as the provision of specialist tuition for the after school music club. Other grants have been used to promote home-school links such as with the "Keeping up with your child" project and the family literacy and family numeracy initiatives. A newly formed parents' association raises funds for the school and other fund-raisers have provided money for the renewal of library books. The Standards Fund is used effectively for staff training and also supports school initiatives.

47. The match of staff to the demands of the curriculum is good. Each member of staff has a responsibility for at least one curriculum area for which their qualifications and experience make them ideally suited. The support staff in the school are well utilised throughout the school and especially in the specialist learning centre.

48. School buildings are in an overall good state of repair both inside and outside. However, the windows and doors in some areas of the school do need replacing as does some of the flooring in certain classrooms and corridors. The playgrounds are well maintained and the large playing fields and wildlife area are of great benefit to the pupils' learning and welfare. The pond area, in contrast, is underdeveloped as an education resource and its fencing needs repairing. Some of the perimeter fencing also needs replacing. The school is aware of such deficiencies and the caretaker, in particular, is vigilant in carrying out ongoing repairs where possible. Currently, the major shortcoming is the lack of an undercover connection between the two school buildings which is being held up by the lack of sufficient funding. Internally, the buildings are well utilised in terms of classrooms, storage and assembly areas although there is a lack of storage for gymnastics equipment.

49. Good resources are available to support teaching and learning in most subjects, except in geography and music where they are satisfactory. Provision for the foundation stage in terms of both accommodation and learning resources is very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50. To build on the many recent improvements in provision and extend further the good progress its pupils achieve in many areas, the governors, headteacher and staff of Eldene School should:

- (1) Seek to increase the percentage of pupils achieving higher levels in the basic skills throughout the school by:
 - using existing information to identify pupils in each year group capable of achieving well above average standards
 - setting challenging but achievable targets for year groups and individual pupils designed to increase the number actually doing so

- raising expectations for these pupils in literacy and numeracy lessons by planning work designed to explore their potential and giving them opportunities to take responsibility for and extend their own learning
(Paragraphs 3, 64, 71, 73, 79 & 103)
- (2) Provide pupils with regular opportunities to write freely for extended periods by:
- consolidating time in some literacy lessons so that the learning objectives can include working on extended or open-ended pieces of writing
 - focusing some literacy teaching on providing pupils with strategies which will make it easier for pupils to write fluently for long periods
 - making one focus of extended writing the opportunity to use skills being learned for a real purpose
 - using pupils' extended free writing as an assessment opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of on-going literacy teaching and pupil progress
(Paragraphs 3, 4, 10, 65, 66, 68, 110 & 119)
- (3) Increase the pace of learning in information technology so that Eldene pupils can begin to catch up with those in other schools by:
- timetabling the computer suites to be used right through the week to increase the opportunities pupils have to use computers for learning
 - increasing the use of information technology in other subjects using classroom and base computers
 - fully adopting national expectations in all aspects of the subject as targets for each year group over time
 - building on the programme of professional development in the subject by taking advantage of all training opportunities and extending it to teaching assistants
 - creating opportunities within the school for pupils without access to computers at home to experiment and 'play' with computers and develop confidence in using them
(Paragraphs 4, 104 - 108))

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Despite some progress, several factors are inhibiting the development of music throughout the school
(Paragraphs 4, 17, 109 - 113)
- Older pupils are much less enthusiastic about learning than younger pupils
(Paragraphs 6 & 10)
- There is scope to be more flexible in integrating subjects and in making best use of teacher expertise in teaching them
(Paragraphs 18 & 19)
- The school's programme for developing pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education does not yet ensure adequate coverage and consistency
(Paragraph 18)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

92

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	20	56	14			
Percentage	2	22	61	15			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		433
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		63

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		59

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	12

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.1
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	35	22	57

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	19	32
	Girls	16	16	17
	Total	39	35	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (72)	61 (80)	86 (93)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	33	33
	Girls	16	18	18
	Total	41	51	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (75)	89 (85)	89 (80)
	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	35	30	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	23	27
	Girls	18	17	25
	Total	40	40	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (74)	63 (61)	81 (89)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	25	28
	Girls	18	20	24
	Total	39	47	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	58 (69)	70 (64)	81 (79)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
390	0	
6	0	
4	0	
1	0	
1	0	
6	0	
2	0	
1	0	
2	0	
3	0	
17	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**Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6**

Number of qualified teachers (FTE)	22
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.6
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	290

Financial information

Financial year	2002
	£
Total income	1035425
Total expenditure	911590
Expenditure per pupil	2140
Balance brought forward from previous year	104140
Balance carried forward to next year	123835

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	11
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 433

Number of questionnaires returned 89

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	48	3		
My child is making good progress in school.	38	55	5		2
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	62	5		5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	58	15	6	4
The teaching is good.	36	56	3		5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	57	15	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	33	58	9	2	
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	56	2		2
The school works closely with parents.	21	51	21	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	27	55	12	3	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	55	11		2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	15	51	10	9	14

Other issues raised by parents

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

51. The provision for children in the foundation stage is very good. Children are taught in two classes in a spacious area, well equipped and imaginatively arranged in areas that focus on their learning. An outdoor area provides opportunities for a range of planned creative and physical activities and is a focus for further development. The early years coordinator, recently in post, has very successfully continued to develop planning in line with the nationally accepted early learning goals and to coordinate the roles of teaching assistants (TA) and other adult helpers. Links with the preschool playgroup have also recently been improved and children visit the school regularly. A well-planned programme introduces new children and their parents and carers to the school and ensures that positive relationships are quickly forged. Parents and carers are welcomed into the classrooms on a Wednesday morning for half an hour to encourage them to work with the children. The coordinator has also successfully started the introduction of the new Foundation Stage Profile to be completed by the end of the year.

52. All children are eager to come to school, behave well and work hard in response to good teaching and high quality support from the teaching assistants, and other adult helpers. Planning is very thorough and teachers are very skilled at challenging the children to extend their knowledge and vocabulary and seize every opportunity to reinforce their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers use their assistants effectively to support groups and individual children's learning. They are always well briefed and know how to guide and encourage them. At times they observe and record, for example, the contribution individual children make to group discussion, as part of assessment procedures. The quiet but firm management of pupils, and the consistently high expectation of good behaviour, have achieved a calm purposeful working atmosphere where all relationships are very good.

53. The school uses a baseline assessment when children start that shows attainment is below that found in most schools, especially in expressive language, mathematics and personal development. Through good teaching and very good provision children are expected to reach the early learning goals, in all areas of learning, by the end of their reception year and be confident and ready to start in Year 1. This represents a good level of achievement.

Personal, social and emotional development.

54. Boys and girls are eager to come to school and have settled very quickly into the class routines. They enjoy integrated learning through themes such as the current one on Fairy Stories. Parents and adults welcomed into the classroom with the children each morning contribute to a calm and purposeful start to the day as well as providing an opportunity to discuss any matters. The children self register and have quickly learned the rules and conventions related to the classroom and school life. This area of development is well taught, and teachers and TAs have high expectations of what pupils should do for themselves. The use of circle time contributes to their development by providing opportunities to share views and experiences. For example, when discussing, 'What are we afraid of?', children are taught the importance of sharing each other's views. Children play and work happily together and know the rules associated with taking turns, tidying up and listening to others. They undress and dress themselves, put on their outdoor clothes and collect their belongings sensibly at the end of the day.

Communication, language and literacy

55. Teachers provide many purposeful activities, which make a valuable contribution to this area. Children recount their news and learn to sing a large repertoire of rhymes which helps them to practise putting words into sequence. Their speaking and listening skills are developing, and

they contribute to class and group discussions. Further opportunities for speaking are provided as children develop their imagination and language through role-play as in the Eldene Shoe Shop. Boys and girls enjoy taking books home but comments in their home school reading journal indicate a wide variation in the level of support and encouragement of reading. They handle books carefully and understand that print is read from left to right, talk enthusiastically about the pictures and eagerly predict what will happen next. They are beginning to recognise many clearly displayed captions and display notices in the classroom and when following text, make plausible guesses at covered words and letters. A good range of initial letter sounds and letter names are well known. While some boys and girls recognised their name, none had a sight vocabulary on entry to school but some are now reading books with simple text. This is due to the good teaching they receive, the support at home and their readiness to read. Many are starting to copy words and simple sentences, and know where to find words around the classroom to help them. They have regular practise at forming letters.

Mathematical development

56. Teachers encourage children's mathematical development effectively through day-to-day use of number. Children enjoy their work with numbers responding quickly and with a good degree of accuracy in their mental maths work. They can 'count on' given a random number below ten and know numbers less than and more than a given number, recording answers confidently on their small individual white boards. In a lesson focusing on the number 7, children sang the days of the week rhyme and then ordered items such as, a towel, teddy, books and school clothes into the times of day when they would be used. They use language such as 'circle' and 'bigger' to describe the shape and size of solids and flat shapes. Role-play in the Eldene Shoe Shop gives children the opportunity to make lists, use a till, and count. Number songs, daily routines and number lines around the classroom are used to reinforce counting activities and, as a result, the children learn quickly and progress well. Children learn about direction by programming the floor turtle.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World.

57. Children are gaining a good understanding of the world in which they live through investigating how plants, fruits and vegetables grow. They looked at seeds and what they grow into and planted sunflower seeds, discussing what they need for growth. In the computer suite children used a database programme to make a pictogram of favourite fruits. They can log on using a password and open a programme. Leading up to Easter, emphasis is placed on spring as being the season of new life. Boys and girls have good opportunities to use a variety of construction kits to make their own models. Good teaching enables children to have a good balance of formal investigation and guided play. This helps them to 'discover' new knowledge and make good progress.

Creative development.

58. Teachers organise the curriculum well and provide the children with regular planned opportunities for music, play dough, paint and a range of materials. They made flower collages using different seeds and decorated flowerpots for their sunflowers. Creative areas provide opportunities for them to explore the use of paints and play dough, pastels and wax crayons. In music children worked together in groups to find the best instrument for each character in the Jack and the Beanstalk story. They know a variety of rhymes and jingles and are beginning to develop a sense of time and rhythm through clapping.

Physical development.

59. The area of physical development is well taught with good use made of the hall and the outdoor area. Children have many opportunities to develop fine motor skills as they handle small tools such as pencils, crayons, paintbrushes, glue sticks and scissors. For example, one group of children cut round a leaf for the Beanstalk and sponge printed it. They frequently put together and take apart construction materials and work with jigsaws and other tabletop equipment. These activities are making a significant contribution to their physical development. In a lesson in the hall good use was made of the apparatus for movements and jumping. In another lesson, all children practised simple ball control with their hands. However, in both lessons children spent

varying amounts of time waiting for their turn, rather than having another activity to keep them active. Children use a variety of wheeled vehicles in the outdoor area.

ENGLISH

60. Standards overall are below the national average at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, standards in reading are improving significantly and, although they are currently still below at the end of Year 6, are average at the end of Year 2. The school has had a particular focus on developing reading skills and has extremely good support from members of the community, who listen to pupils read and share books with them. Most pupils are making good progress in literacy because of consistently good quality teaching in most years. The school is also making very good use of all government initiatives such as the early and further literacy interventions programmes, the additional literacy strategy and booster groups. They also receive additional support and funding from the local education authority to support raising standards. Pupils, who find learning difficult, are making very good progress because of the excellent provision made by the school for them. Pupils, who attend the Specialist Learning Centre, also make very good progress in relation to their prior attainment.

61. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards in speaking and listening are average and all pupils are achieving well. Many pupils enter school with limited speaking skills and they achieve so well because teachers are very skilled at using every opportunity to develop these skills. For example, Year 4 pupils are learning how to use descriptive and expressive language in their work. Most of the discussions are oral and pupils are beginning to use more adventurous language when talking about imaginary situations. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are beginning to show confidence in talking and listening in a range of situations, particularly where the topics interest them. During one lesson pupils in a Year 2 class were very keen to respond to a teacher who had taken on the role of a character from a story and to ask her questions. In another role-play situation pupils in Year 1 compare a kettle used in Victorian times with one used today. This very good provision enabled all pupils to make very good progress.

62. Most Year 6 pupils are reasonably confident to talk and listen in an increasing range of contexts. For example, they describe characters from stories and begin to use more interesting language in their conversations. This is because teachers continually emphasise the use of more interesting and adventurous words and are skilled at ensuring pupils understand and begin to use unfamiliar vocabulary used by some writers.

63. Year 2 pupils use a range of strategies to read unfamiliar words and they show an interest in reading. Most can discuss the contents of the book they are currently reading, both at an individual level and those shared with the whole class, and also the books they read at home. Many name a favourite author but few can explain how a library is organised, particularly when looking for a non-fiction book. Pupils in Year 2 describe clearly the characters in 'Jamil's Clever Cat'. Younger pupils understand the format of non-fiction books and that the 'blurb' gives a little information about the book. Very good support from most parents and members of the community enable all pupils to achieve well.

64. Inspection evidence indicates that, overall, standards in reading in Year 6 are improving from previously well below average but are still below. Most pupils are beginning to respond to a range of text and show understanding of significant ideas, themes events and characters. They talk reasonably confidently about stories and some indicate their preference of authors. However very few are reading at the higher levels or choose to read more challenging texts. Too few pupils are confident, enthusiastic readers. Most know how the school library is organised and how to use non-fiction books for research. Pupils in Year 5 read and explain the main features of 'explanatory text' and in Year 6 pupils describe characters using information from a given text.

65. By the end of Year 2 standards in writing are below the national average, although standards are improving. There is little evidence of pupils achieving Level 3 in writing, which is the higher level some pupils of this age are expected to achieve. Some are beginning to sequence sentences so that their ideas are recorded logically and they use the basic grammatical structure

of sentences correctly. Spellings are often phonetically plausible but not consistently accurate. Most have satisfactory opportunities for writing for different purposes and are beginning to recognise the correct format to use. For example pupils in Year 2 use writing frames to write a character profile but few are able to complete this task without a series of questions as prompts. Good teaching enables most pupils to make good progress and very good focused support for pupils who find learning difficult ensures they make very good progress in relation to their writing targets on their individual education plans. However, pupils have few opportunities to write unaided for sustained periods appropriate for their ages.

66. Year 6 pupils are beginning to organise their writing, to engage the interest of the readers. They are beginning to use grammatically complex sentences, extending meaning but this is often as a result of adult intervention and support. Basic punctuation is generally accurate but few are using a wider range of punctuation within sentences. Pupils in Year 3 write a few simple sentences based on the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood' from the point of view of one of the characters and Year 4 pupils begin to write a description of an imaginary setting. They record their ideas on a prepared worksheet. Older pupils write an opening paragraph for a story. Again, although teaching of the basic skills is good, pupils have too few opportunities to write unaided and therefore many lack confidence to record their thoughts and ideas on paper. Presentation of work varies and clearly indicates that many pupils lack confidence to write.

67. The quality of teaching and learning is good and this impacts well on the school's aim to raise standards. Lessons are well planned and teachers use a very good range of teaching strategies to encourage and gain the interest of the pupils. For example, role-play activities are used very effectively in the younger classes to support learning. Behaviour management is generally very good and support staff are very well deployed to ensure that pupils are very well supported in class. Teachers question effectively to promote discussions and to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding. They use praise well to raise self-esteem and to encourage pupils to respond to their questioning. However, in satisfactory lessons, the pace of the lesson is slower and expectations are not as high. Very good teaching helps pupils focus throughout the lesson and teachers have high expectations of behaviour and effort.

68. All teachers follow the literacy strategy format which is adapted very well to meet the individual needs of the pupils in the Specialist Learning Centre. The teaching of basic skills for literacy is good overall but the school has not yet adapted the literacy format to meet the needs of the school. For example many teachers spend too long on whole class activities, which leaves only a short time for individual or group activities. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write unaided for a sustained period from an early age. As a result many older pupils lack confidence when writing and feel this is an area of literacy they do not enjoy.

69. Assessment procedures are very good and are generally used well to guide planning. Assessment information is used well to set targets, track individual pupil's progress and to enable pupils to work in classes according to their ability for some literacy lessons and for targeting additional teaching support for small groups of pupils. A comprehensive overview sheet has recently been introduced to collate each pupil's test and assessment results and the school is keeping careful records of any additional support given to individuals so they can track the impact of the support on improving standards. Samples of each pupil's writing are collected each half term and assessed using the National Curriculum attainment targets. Staff meet regularly to discuss what is expected for each National Curriculum level.

70. The subject is managed well by two coordinators, one from each key stage. They work well together to monitor the quality of learning opportunities provided for the pupils. The head has recently undertaken monitoring of teaching and has also identified the limited provision for extended writing activities across the school. Both coordinators have led several training sessions for staff and their action plans are appropriate. Resources are good and the school provides good opportunities for pupils to experience theatre groups and other visitors such as authors and poets to support learning. The school is beginning to make satisfactory use of information technology to support learning. Literacy supports pupils' cultural development very well through the very good range of multi-cultural books available to them.

MATHEMATICS

71. Since the school opened in 2001 test results for 7 and 11 year olds have been well below the national average. Evidence obtained during the inspection indicates that attainment is improving rapidly, so that it is now only just below the national average in both Key stages. Many pupils are reaching satisfactory levels of attainment but the smaller number of higher attainers keeps this comparison low. The predicted results for Summer 2003 SATs confirm this. With the school's focus on improvement in mathematics, there is reason to believe that in following years it can achieve results in line with national expectations. Progress is satisfactory for the majority of pupils, including those with special educational needs as a result of the predominantly good teaching that exists in the school. The subject coordinators have a clear idea of the work needed to maintain improvement and have set initiatives in place to make this improvement.

72. The national numeracy strategy is well implemented through precise planning and a satisfactory emphasis on the four sections of the mathematics curriculum: using and applying mathematics, number and algebra, shape space and measure, and handling data. Good connections are made to other curriculum areas and in ICT the use of spreadsheets in Year 6 was directly linked to a prior maths lesson on data handling.

73. Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are always satisfactory and often good. They listen attentively, respond well in lessons and are eager to volunteer answers and explain their mathematical thinking in mental mathematics. Most concentrate well on written tasks and make good use of the time available. Pupils have responded well to the school's focus on problem solving. They quickly identify the nature of a problem, use jottings to work through the process and present solutions in an organised fashion. There is a wealth of good mathematics teaching in the school. Where it is most effective teachers create a supportive atmosphere where challenging questioning develops pupils' thinking and every attempt at an answer is valued. Lessons are well planned and show differentiation, although some lessons need closer targeting for the more able children in order to strengthen their mathematical attainment.

74. In a very good Year 1 lesson, pupils work together using a shopping list and coins to give money and receive change. Boys and girls were given a challenge to be the first child to use a number line to count back and work out amounts of change from 10p. A high level of interest and commitment was shown and good support was offered by teaching assistants. Pupils in Year 2 work through a good range of numerical operations: adding and subtracting accurately with two digit numbers, performing simple multiplication and division and using tally charts. They interpret simple block graphs, use apparatus to find fractions of numbers, measure accurately and adopt suitable strategies for solving written problems.

75. Year 3 pupils working on fractions in a satisfactory lesson were able to identify and explain equivalent fractions and then use their own self-made cards to solve problems. Pupils were challenged in their thinking, though better use could have been made of questioning when wrong answers were offered. In a very good Year 4 lesson, pupils took part in a game to identify the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes; very good questioning and support challenged pupils' thinking. They were then instructed in the use of Carroll diagrams and were able to classify a large number of shapes accurately using a well prepared sheet. The lesson was very well summarised at the end and there was very good support throughout by the teaching assistant.

76. In a good Year 5 lesson, pupils worked on their personal targets of solving word problems by choosing the correct number operations for a given problem. Work was well matched to various abilities and the working atmosphere was positive and supportive with slightly low levels of attainment. Year 6 pupils have focused on data handling as a result of the analysis conducted following the use of preparatory SATs papers. During a visit to Swindon Town Football Club, a small group of boys and girls gathered a wide range of data and statistics. Year 6 teachers then prepared a very good resource booklet. This data was used in two lessons observed during the inspection week. Teachers made good use of the information gathered, both to teach new subject matter, and to set interesting tasks that involved both creating graphs and extracting

information from existing graphs. Pupils were also required to explain the patterns of attendance for different matches, where the attendance, the age group of those watching and the spread of ages varied; this gave rise to some good quality reasoning and explanation, aided by supportive questioning. Where higher ability pupils were involved, extra work was provided for those pupils, though this work did not necessarily extend their mathematical development. With the school needing to focus on how to increase the number of pupils attaining SATs results in the level above national expectations, this must be a consideration in all work for those with higher abilities.

77. Good assessment procedures are in place for mathematics. Termly targets are set and these are communicated to parents in a booklet that also includes the levels of work the pupil should be achieving. Targets, which are set by groups, are clearly displayed in the classrooms. The process could be further enhanced by a consistent approach to constructive marking so that all pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their day to day work.

78. The two mathematics coordinators have worked hard to improve standards in the school and there is a very good focus on improving the profile of mathematics in the school. They have observed teaching regularly and provided whole school training on aspects that arose from the monitoring. Teachers' complete evaluations are monitored by the headteacher and relevant information is passed on to the coordinators. School maths days are organised so that for a whole day there is a cross-curricular focus with mathematics as the common factor. At the end of these days parents are invited in to take part in a maths trail. The school has many posters that show how adults in the school and the surrounding community use mathematics. An attractive hall display shows how children have used mathematics on out of school visits to local shops and supermarkets, to an hotel, to the town's football club and to the science display in Bristol. The coordinators regularly monitor the school's good levels of resources for mathematics.

SCIENCE

79. Results for pupils at Key Stage 2 in the 2002 National Curriculum tests were below average when compared to national averages and those of similar schools. Standards of work in the lessons observed during the inspection week were broadly in line with national expectations and pupils are making good progress throughout both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. The school has identified the need to raise standards of attainment, particularly of the potential higher achievers.

80. Pupils develop good observational skills and show a sound understanding of fair testing. Throughout the school, they develop investigative skills effectively and are able to record and measure their observations. Year 1 pupils predict which material they think will be the most absorbent when learning about properties. When investigating sound in Year 2, they conduct a fair test by investigating the sound produced by different shakers. These are made using a variety of dried seeds such as rice and dried peas and initial discussions focus on how they will make them so that comparisons will be fair. Some pupils suggest putting the same amount into the containers whilst others think that filling up to a line drawn on the container will be fair. In further work on sound, pupils walk around the school and record the sound that they hear and learn to distinguish between quieter and noisier areas. After listening to the sounds they record what they hear – birds singing, cars moving, a hammering noise, people talking - and note that loudness is also dependent on whether the source is near or far away. Some pupils record their findings in a table and others use a plan of the school to record their location. Investigative skills are built through first hand experience and pupils are able to identify patterns and relationships and offer explanations based on their knowledge and understanding.

81. Year three pupils build on these skills when investigating whether or not objects are magnetic. Predictions are made before testing and as they record their findings they realise that the objects that were made from a mixture of materials are difficult to classify. They are familiar with the terms "attract" and "repel" in describing how objects react to the magnet. As part of the study on human development year four pupils undertake some research at home, they discuss

their own growth needs since babyhood with their parents, and reflect on the human life cycle. This promotes good discussion on the changes they have undergone since they were younger and they extend their thinking by showing an awareness that some elderly folk may require a walking stick to aid their movement. They know that humans need movement, reproduction, sensitivity, growth, respiration, excretion and nutrition for survival and they use the mnemonic – Mrs Gren – as a memory aid. When recording their work they put the various stages of life into chronological order and some add their own experiences to further demonstrate their understanding.

82. Pupils in year six investigate electric circuits and design a 2-way switch for use in a parallel circuit that will independently light two bulbs. They work productively in making the circuit and when faced with a problem in lighting each of the bulbs independently, they persevere by systematically checking parts of the circuit until they resolve the difficulty. Learning is enhanced for a group of pupils through the use of a computer program which simulates the components required for circuits and enables them to be constructed and modified on the screen. A good understanding is acquired of the differences between series and parallel circuits and they record their circuits using conventional symbols.

83. Boys and girls have a positive attitude towards science and they enjoy the practical investigative activities. Most pupils sit quietly and listen carefully, and are keen to answer questions, contribute to discussions and demonstrate their previous knowledge. However, in some classes the level of independence and self-discipline is not so well developed and this results in disruptive and off-task behaviour. There is good cooperation and teamwork between pupils, equipment is shared sensibly and they make positive comments when evaluating the work of others. They express an interest in their work and are responsive and enthusiastic about the investigations they have undertaken.

84. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good, never less than satisfactory and in some lessons it was very good and excellent. Detailed and well structured planning outlines the key objectives, vocabulary and expected outcomes for lessons. Teachers' knowledge of science is good and there is a balance in lessons of explanation, discussion and investigative work. Where the teaching is very good, introductions to lessons are purposeful and scientific ideas are clearly expressed to pupils, with good examples that enable them to learn. Pupils' scientific thinking is challenged by the use of "Quick Science" that is used at the beginning of many lessons to reinforce the vocabulary and to develop pupils' experience of investigative science. Subjects are introduced with a clear progression of ideas and pupils' knowledge is probed through skilful questioning. The management of pupils is generally very good and effective support and firm guidance is given to those with learning or behaviour difficulties. Where pupils are highly focused, teachers value everyone's contributions and pupils are confident in expressing their ideas and in contributing to discussions. Positive reinforcement and praise is used extensively and this promotes good attitudes to learning.

85. Although pupils learn well, the task in some lessons could have been more challenging, particularly for able pupils. In a few lessons pupils were given less opportunity to explain and elaborate on their understanding and to predict the outcome of investigations. The plenary sessions are effective in reviewing and reinforcing learning. Progress of pupils is regularly reviewed with assessments at the end of each unit of work. Year six pupils have weekly homework to reinforce learning in the classroom and to prepare them for the end of year tests. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils who have learning difficulties and for whom concentration and the ability to listen are difficult.

86. Science is effectively led by two well-qualified subject coordinators and given good support by the link governor. The time allocated for monitoring has been used for discussions with staff, for providing support with planning and for scrutinising pupils' work. The observation of science teaching and visits to classrooms is a planned development of the role. The monitoring process includes a subject audit followed by an action plan that feeds into the whole school improvement plan. End of key stage assessment results are analysed and assessment files for each pupil contain dated records that show progress following each of the units of work. Through

this monitoring the school has identified the need to raise standards of science, particularly of higher attaining pupils. The policy for science is regularly updated and emphasises the importance of practical activity for pupils and the need to develop links to other subjects. A scheme of work effectively covers the range of science activity and ensures there is progression in the development of skills across the primary years.

87. Good resources for the subject are well organised and stored by topic title for ease of access. The use of computers to support science activities, particularly in the use of sensors and data logging, is underdeveloped. Good use is made of the nature areas in the school grounds for science investigations. Curriculum visits enhance the curriculum and promote learning in science. Pupils enjoy visits to a local farm for nature study and Year 4 pupils express their enjoyment of the interactive basketball simulation and the rainforest display at the science museum. Older pupils benefit from visitors to the school for drugs and sex education lessons and good links with the local secondary school where they participate in science based technology work. Good links with local industry resulted in a day of activity being organised in the school based on human energy.

ART AND DESIGN

88. The standard attained by pupils throughout the school in art and design is in line with national expectations. The school has developed portfolios of pupils' work and introduced a scheme of work that has raised the profile of the subject. It is evident from pupils' work and from the work on display around the school that the subject has high priority and is seen as a valuable part of pupils' progress and development.

89. A strong emphasis on the design aspect of art helps pupils to explore and develop ideas. Year 1 pupils explore the use of man-made materials through weaving and are able to suggest ways of improving their own work. Natural materials are used by Year 2 pupils to make sculptures. Very effective sculptures emerge from the grass, moss, evergreen leaves and stones which are held together by clay. The sculptures vary in height with a contrast in texture and colour and dried silvery foliage. At the end of the lesson pupils are given the opportunity to discuss the textures and their thoughts when making the sculptures.

90. The work of Paul Klee, used as a stimulus for pupils in Year 3, is analysed carefully and pupils recognise shapes in some of the abstract paintings. The properties of pastels and crayons are explored in their own drawings and they create compositions that have line, colour and shape. Although the results of their own efforts vary in quality the best examples reflect good control, dexterity and creativity. Discussions at the beginning of a lesson and the use of photographs of Islamic designs help year four pupils plan their own decorations to paint onto clay pots. As part of the history topic on Ancient Egypt, Year 5 pupils design a canopic jar. The manipulation skills required for the clay work prove to be difficult even though pupils try to follow the teacher's directions but pupils working on the base manage to include hieroglyphics in their designs. Good technical control, fluency and sense of proportion are evident in the work of Year 6 pupils as they design and make print blocks for their own repeating patterns. They study native American designs and the work of the artist Escher before putting their own ideas into their sketchbooks. These are used as valuable planning tools and pupils remark on how they provide the opportunity to practise designs and try out ideas before starting a piece of work.

91. Pupils' attitudes towards art and design are good. They enjoy the practical nature of the work and are keen to share their ideas and thoughts. There were a few instances where pupils were unwilling to share equipment but behaviour, attitudes and concentration are generally good and make a positive contribution to learning.

92. Teaching in art and design is good throughout the school. Lessons are well planned and a variety of resources including artefacts, pictures and photographs are well organised and effectively used to promote learning. Good links are made with other subjects, such as when

identifying maths shapes, or in descriptive writing about pictures. The subject knowledge of teachers is generally good and they are able to offer effective technical support to pupils. Explanations at the beginning of lessons are clear and teachers demonstrate the materials, such as pastels and crayons, which are being used effectively. Questions are used well to review previous learning and help pupils to develop their own ideas. Good use is made of the work of established artists in stimulating ideas and these are represented in many displays around the school. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on their own and the work of others, leading to good cultural development. Teaching assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs. Parents are frequently recruited and provide good support with practical activities such as in making tissue paper flower baskets for Mothers' Day.

93. The subject coordinator had a positive impact on raising standards in art and design. As part of the monitoring process he has taught each year group and worked alongside teachers to improve confidence. Pupil progress is monitored through the use of individual assessment sheets completed at the end of each unit of work. A policy is in place and a new scheme of work will shortly be introduced which will outline the development of skills and experience for pupils as they proceed through the school. The profile of the subject has been raised through curriculum weeks like the 'We are Eldene' art week which involved a visit from a local artist and all classes being involved in art activities using a range of media. Pupils also visit the local art gallery where on the last visit, shape and image were investigated. The provision of resources is good and covers the range of the curriculum. The use of sketchbooks throughout the school enables teachers to build on experience in previous lessons and provides pupils with opportunities to evaluate and improve their work. However, sketchbooks vary in quality and in the range of experience that is represented. Art displays around the school, such as the Hindu rangoli patterns, reflect the subject's contribution to other areas of the curriculum. Although a number of computer generated patterns are on display, information and communication technology is underdeveloped as a creative tool.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Through the planned design activities pupils acquire a knowledge and understanding of the design and making process and acquire skills in making products. Based on the lesson observations, pupils' work that was seen and from discussions with staff and pupils, the standards achieved by pupils are judged to be satisfactory.

95. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are provided with a range of design experiences and the opportunity to reflect on what they produce. They record and evaluate each stage of the design process and make modifications as they proceed. Boys and girls design pull along toys and investigate the difference between a fixed and moving axle before testing their designs. They use a computer to assist their designs of football shirts and small versions of the shirt using fabric with sewn on patterns.

96. In Key Stage 2, packaging for Easter eggs is designed and pupils develop understanding and skill in employing finishing techniques to improve the appearance of a product. Careful thought is given to the presentation of the package and commercial boxes are looked at for ideas. Some pupils decide to include a window in their box through which to view the egg, and then to decorate the outside with a game or wordsearch, and pictures. The planning notes made by pupils provide a record of how the designs are modified after the first draft. Some simplified the Easter egg packaging when they realised the difficulties in making a more complicated design. They also appreciated the need for careful measurements in drawing their net in order for the box to assemble accurately. Different types of bread were evaluated with a food technology project to design a sandwich with an ideal filling. The sandwich was then put to the ultimate test and this led to the comment that a combination of olives, cheese and jam might have tasted better had the jam been left out.

97. When making money containers in Year 4, pupils made a practice version using textiles and a range of fastenings and decorative finishes. Changes are made, based on their experience, before constructing the final version. In their first draft, pupils use different types of stitching and

decide that overstitch is preferable to the backstitch because they feel it is easier and stronger. Another project, the "Bad Baby" storybooks, is designed to appeal to a young reader and includes a rotating wheel to give the impression of movement, moving smoke coming out of the cross mother's ears, flaps concealing a handshake and interchangeable sad and happy faces. Pupils in year five enjoy a day at the local secondary school where they make mechanisms with cams. Through practical experience pupils learn the principles of cams in making backward/forward and up/down movement. The resulting models have working cams that enable fish to rotate against a sea background. Year 6 pupils also visit the local secondary school and design a fairground ride that includes mechanisms with belts and motors. In discussion with Year 6 pupils they describe how they drew nets for containers for biscuits and designed the presentation but had to revise the packaging, having decided that their initial designs, heptagonal prisms, were too complicated.

98. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. Most teachers maintain a good pace to lessons. Good opportunities are provided through effective planning for pupils to develop design skills. Design tasks are clearly explained and pupils are given the opportunity to ask questions. As the design process progresses pupils are given the opportunity to test ideas and modify their designs. Teaching assistants and volunteer parents provide good support and advice and contribute to the good progress pupils make. Good links are made to other subjects, for example, in a literacy lesson on instructional texts that give directions for constructing a paper windmill. Assessment sheets completed at the end of each unit of work enable pupil progress to be tracked.

99. The subject coordinator is well qualified to develop the subject and provides good leadership. She works alongside teachers in other year groups and provides model lessons, leads staff meetings, audits staff training needs and is active in promoting the subject. The subject file contains the detail of curriculum activity for each year group and outlines the progression and development of pupils' skills as they progress through the school. Technology competitions and challenges are entered, some sponsored by local businesses, and these often result in additional resources for the school. Satisfactory resources include a range of construction equipment, tools and materials. The coordinator is aware of the need to extend pupils' experience by providing a wider range of materials and equipment, particularly to enable more advanced modelling. Opportunity for the use of computers is limited and there is scope for much more work in this area.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

100. Standards in history and geography are in line with national expectations, although the written accounts by the older pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils, are often limited and reflect lower than average standards in their literacy skills. Pupils' achievement over time and their progress in lessons is good. Although the school is currently reviewing the planned units for each year group as part of a more cohesive curriculum plan, there is good coverage of both subjects.

101. Year six pupils have a good understanding of chronology, place events appropriately and remember visits to, for example, the Roman arena and museum in year three, role-play in a Victorian school room in year four, and visitors, such as the centurion who showed them armour and talked about battle techniques. They understand the historical importance of Swindon as a railway town through visits to the Railway Village, and in a lighter vein, more recently, its contribution to roundabouts! In the only history lesson seen during the inspection, pupils in Year 2 responded very well to being cast in roles to act out the story of Grace Darling. A good range of costumes, sound effects and props for the lighthouse and rocks, enabled them to empathise with the story.

102. In a year one geography lesson, pupils questioned a visitor on changes in the local area in the last thirty years, learning how, from a rural landscape, the residential area of Eldene had developed. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils walked a route through Swindon Old Town that contributed to pupils' understanding of the town's industrial past, walking back to school through the modern estates that now surround it. Pupils' cultural development was extended in a year

four lesson by using photographs as a secondary source of information to look at the similarities and differences between Chembakolli in India and Swindon. Pupils in year six used OS maps to find a suitable area in which to relocate Swindon Town FC. They know the symbols used and can locate a site through a grid reference. The relocation was considered in terms of communications, including a new motorway junction 15a, contours, overhead power lines, flood plains and local opinion. In other work seen, Year 2 pupils compared life in the Scottish Isle of Struay with that in Swindon in terms of buildings, transport and occupations and Year 5 pupils' recent work included studies of rivers and mountains.

103. Teaching was good in the lessons observed. Lessons were well planned and teachers had good subject knowledge. Pupils are well managed and organised and there is good emphasis on enquiry and discussion within groups and as a whole class. However, the analysis of pupils written work showed a lack of challenging use of their literacy skills and the use of information and communication technology to support these subjects is also under developed. Discussion with pupils and their response in lessons showed good attitudes to both subjects. Both coordinators are working well to promote the subjects. Assessment activities have been introduced and portfolios of pupils' work are being developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

104. At a time when dramatic advances have been seen in provision and pupils' achievements in ICT in most other schools, the pace of improvement in Eldene has not been as fast despite a lot of effort. Several factors account for this including the facts that:

- A national focus on improving resources, training and challenging new expectations in ICT coincided with the process of amalgamation, so initially there were many other competing priorities while other schools were able to focus on the subject.
- The competence and confidence of many staff in ICT pre-amalgamation was low
- These two factors combined with multiple changes in staff resulted in a high drop out rate from the training programme started by all staff (including several support staff) but completed by only one in six
- Little support was available in this area from the newly constituted local authority
- The existing hardware and the geography of the accommodation meant that access to the suite and equivalent computers in or near class areas inhibited less confident staff

105. This was recognised by the school and a very comprehensive and honest audit in Summer 2002 identified all the areas for improvement and set up a very good action plan to begin to put things right. Key to this was the development of an ICT management group involving teachers from each year group, chaired by the previous coordinator who is a member of the leadership team but with a separate coordinator for the subject. The other crucial development was the re-introduction of appropriate training across the whole school using New Opportunities Fund resources that started in October 2002 and is ongoing. Related factors are helping to increase the pace of improvement. Release time is being used to monitor what is actually happening in the computer suite or in the classrooms so there is a greater awareness of the actual position. The coordinator is progressively providing planning support materials to expand the national scheme of work. Assessments are being made and noted against national expectations so that group and individual strengths or needs can be noted and targets set.

106. Activity in ICT was observed in most year groups and evidence of previous work is on display. However, this was less in quantity and more limited in scope than now usually seen with little evidence of the use of control technology other than in Year 2. A good sign for the future is the confidence with which pupils in the foundation year work with computers showing good mouse control and the ability to log-on, put in a password, highlight etc. In addition, although Year 1 pupils were not observed in the suite, in conversation they were enthusiastic about ICT and showed they also knew how to find their way around a computer and use it to write and make pictures. Year 2 showed less fluency with the mouse and keyboard in using a graphics programme to draw vertical and horizontal lines prior to downloading a picture of Elmer the

Elephant, drawing a grid pattern and filling this with colour. Mouse skills and knowledge of the programme were sound but in other areas, such as saving their work, many were less sure.

107. Little Year 3 work was in evidence other than some basic word-processing. Year 4 used a simple spreadsheet to interpret information gathered from the class about such things as age, gender, and membership of clubs. Making good use of the digital projector the teacher used good prompts to encourage pupils to explain how to access the programme and the data, use this to present this as a pie chart and add a caption in a box. With good support from the teacher and the teaching assistant, most pupils were able to use the tools to present their own graphs though several struggled to add a caption. In Year 5, pupils were taking this a little further using a 'grown-up' spreadsheet by stressing the importance of entering data correctly and noting when it isn't by looking for anomalies in graphs. Work on display shows how the same group has used graphical modelling to make room plans in geography. Year 6 work on display shows the use of the internet to interview Swindon Town footballers and look for map sites as part of a project to resite the Town ground. The football theme continued in class with pupils using data from the current Division 2 in a spreadsheet to find the averages and modes asked for, though few moved on to extension tasks.

108. A very positive aspect of all the above was the interest and enthusiasm shown by pupils of all ages. However, there is real scope to exploit this even more by making much more use of the available computers both in the suite and around the school especially in the mornings when few are actually in use. Another important consideration is the fact that a significant number of pupils do not have access to a computer at home and their needs, plus those of pupils in very computer literate families, will need to be addressed.

MUSIC

109. With neither of the 'old' schools having had a strong musical tradition and a very full agenda on amalgamation, music had a low priority in the early days of the new school. Low levels of confidence and expertise among staff and a scheme of work which they found difficult to use and a lack of musical 'extras' to promote the subject meant that standards in the subject were at best inconsistent. Staff changes made possible the appointment of another competent musician with experience of leading the subject as coordinator who has already made a big difference to the profile and level of activity in music, especially in the older classes. This has been greatly aided by the on-going introduction of a new commercial scheme with support materials which non-specialist staff find much easier to use and the upgrading of the school's stock of percussion instruments.

110. In all the music lessons observed, there was good evidence that this is having a positive impact on progress in the subject but because this is recent and because many staff lack confidence in teaching the subject, standards, especially in composing and performing are not as good as expected. However, in other ways, the evidence shows that music is beginning to take its rightful place in the life of the school. Thanks to a well-earned grant, a good sized group of Years 5 and 6 are making good use of brass instruments already in school to learn how to play the trumpet, trombone etc. with a visiting teacher and it is hoped to extend this to woodwind. The whole of Key Stage 2 were observed joining together in a very high quality singing assembly taken by the coordinator. In this they talked about the brass family after listening to Mozart's Horn Concerto, responded to changes in volume and tempo when echoing the teacher and sang 'Shalom', very well, in three parts getting louder and softer to match the 'conductor's' signals - all in 25 minutes. Music days, choirs in festivals, recorder groups and staff training are all signs of a subject on the move.

111. Music lessons were observed in most year groups. Year 1 use the three bears story to play with pitch with Daddy Bear very low, Mummy Bear normal and Baby Bear high. They understand what pitch means and in singing 'Hurrah for Jesus' show they know about beat and rhythm. Boys and girls in Year 2 take the understanding of pitch a little further by representing relative pitch with 'footprints' and identify the differing ends to two versions of the 'Fossils' melody

from Carnival of the Animals. Learning in this lesson was inhibited by noise from elsewhere in the bay and the cramped conditions in the class area.

112. Year 3 pupils learning to use the pentatonic scale they have worked on try to fit notes from the scale and various rhythms to a four beat bar but with only one pupil at a time trying, many pupils were disengaged. Again it was obvious that the teacher was very aware of the other class working in the bay. However, this problem did not inhibit a Year 5 teacher from playing 'Ode to Joy' at full volume since the other class was in the hall 'doing' physical education. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed listening carefully, noting the structures and the instruments etc. used and expressing their feelings - 'it woke me up' - 'too scary'. Another organisation saw a music coordinator taking both Year 6 classes together in a shared area where they worked in the Jazz genre setting pupils' ostinato against a song about bop, swing and jazz. Although the disturbance factor was accounted for, the cramped conditions and large numbers meant that the teaching and learning were inhibited.

113. It became obvious during the inspection that the teaching of music is being made difficult by the geography of the accommodation with extraneous noise, the needs of the other class and lack of space inhibiting what teachers are attempting - especially when it comes to the whole class using instruments. However, some creative timetabling and resourcing of the two halls could well solve this.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. Sound standards were observed in gymnastics, dance and games. Swimming lessons took place during the inspection week but were not observed and the school's records show that, by having blocks of lessons in Years 2 to 5, most boys and girls swim 25 metres before they leave the school. The good programme for physical education (PE) includes a rolling programme of dance, gymnastics and games from Years 1 to 6, swimming at a local pool for Years 2 to 6 and athletics in Years 3 to 6. In addition, Year 6 pupils undertake an eight week outdoor and adventurous activities course including orienteering tied in with the Year 6 residential visit to the Isle of Wight. The new subject coordinator has been very proactive in adding structure and focus to the PE programme by rewriting the policy, formalising planning arrangements and bringing in new schemes in some areas to match the curriculum plan.

115. During the inspection lessons in gymnastics, dance and games were seen. The overall good teaching seen in most lessons contributed to pupils' good response and enjoyment. Pupils and teachers are changed and ready in good time and in most cases, pupils are fully aware of what is expected of them in the hall or outside. Teachers are very aware of health and safety issues in PE and good at ensuring children carry equipment safely and warm up at the start of the lesson.

116. In gymnastics, work seen was limited to floor work, mats and moveable equipment; no fixed apparatus or ropes were used. Pupils in Year 2 practised a sequence of movements started the previous week over a mat. Year 3 worked as groups using moveable apparatus and collaborated together to develop pathways for the whole group to follow. Both lessons were well organised and pupils were active and on task but little attention was given to coaching to improve. However, in a short, sharp gymnastic session taken by the coordinator, learning objectives were clearly understood and the teacher spent the lesson actively coaching or intervening to make general points or point out good practice. As a consequence, when pupils showed each other their sequences at the end of the lesson, the improvements were plain.

117. Games lessons involved Year 1s learning how to dribble a football using both feet alternately which they did very well; Year 2 pupils engaged in a range of activities mainly involving striking and controlling skills; and Years 5 and 6 practicing racquet skills on the playground. Again the quality of learning was dependent on the confidence and expertise of the teacher with Year 5 pupils achieving much more than Year 6's by the end of their lesson. Although the coordinator acknowledges that dance is an area for development, three good dance lessons were observed, one very good. Year 1 pupils responded well to the sounds of a tambourine and a shaker to

produce strong and light movements moving from a strong starting position. Boys and girls in Year 2 were learning 'four around four' country dancing and despite time constraints, they managed to perform the dance and gain a good deal of enjoyment in the process. The best performance levels seen in any lesson were observed in a dance lesson taken by a visitor where pupils were learning Indian dancing. Photographs, demonstrations, explanations and skills practices ensure that all pupils are fully involved, showing precise control and fluency in their movements.

118. The coordinator has worked hard to promote the subject and understands the strengths and weakness in the teaching of PE, most feeling more competent with gymnastics and games than with dance. Planning for the subject is well monitored and teaching has been observed. Records of pupils' achievements related to national expectations are kept but this is at an early stage. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities for the older and younger pupils and enters very successfully in a wide range of local competitions. As in other areas, the school makes good use of the community by, for instance, pupils joining in football workshops run by coaches from Swindon Town. The school is well resourced in PE with two good-sized, well equipped halls, spacious grounds, ample hard standing and plenty of small equipment.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. Standards in religious education are broadly in line with those expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils are making good progress. Many pupils are confident to talk about their knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and practices but written evidence does not always reflect average standards because of pupils' limited ability to record their work.

120. By the end of Year 2 pupils are able to retell some of the stories Jesus told and to begin to appreciate how it feels to lose and find something important. They retell the story of 'The Lost Sheep', with adult support. Most recognise some of the special buildings that are used by people of different faiths for worshipping their God and know why certain places and people are special to them. Younger pupils recall the events of Palm Sunday and realise that this event is still celebrated annually by Christians. They know some of the significant features in a Christian church. By the end of Year 2 most recognise some religious beliefs associated with Christianity.

121. By Year 6, most pupils have a reasonably secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. They are beginning to recognise that they are changing and growing in their own beliefs and ideas as they get older. Pupils in Year 3 are beginning to understand the morals associated with several parables that Jesus taught and how these link closely with their own school and class rules. Older pupils explore the symbols of the 'bread and wine' and why these symbols are important to Christians. They can also explain some of the customs and practices associated with the Jewish festival of 'The Passover'. In Year 4, pupils have just started a study of Islam and know some of the festivals that are celebrated by Muslims. They know that the Qu'ran is a special book read by Muslims and the significance of 'The Five Pillars of Islam'.

122. The quality of teaching and learning is good and pupils achieve well. Lessons are well planned and teachers use resources well to support learning. Good use is made of the detailed guidelines from the Locally Agreed Syllabus and scheme of work. Very good use is also made of role-play activities to help pupils to sequence events and to express feelings and emotions. For example in Year 1, pupils in a role-play activity shared feelings and emotions they would experience if the Queen visited the school in order to understand how people felt during the events of Palm Sunday. In another role-play activity one teacher shared her feelings about losing some special keys, while the other teacher questioned very skillfully to help pupils understand and express how the first teacher was feeling. These very good teaching strategies enabled pupils to focus clearly on the learning objective of the lesson and made learning great fun for these pupils.

123. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Teachers are using suggested end of unit assessment tasks and the attainment targets from the Agreed Syllabus to highlight what each

pupil knows and understands. Assessment sheets are kept in each pupil's profile and passed to the next teacher for information. The use of information technology to support learning is underdeveloped. Religious Education makes a significant contribution to pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

124. Management is satisfactory. The coordinator has ensured that the subject is taught consistently throughout the school and that all are following the recommended guidelines. She has successfully introduced a separate exercise book for each pupil to record their work separately from other areas of the curriculum and has started to monitor standards. Good resources are used well to support learning. Some attractive displays of artefacts around the school effectively raise the profile of religious education. Visits to places of worship are encouraged and the school benefits from a good number of visitors to school, who share their beliefs with the pupils. The Islamic Awareness Centre provides the school with particularly good support.