

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MERRYLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Laindon, Basildon

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 132262

Headteacher: Mr C Whymark

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Cann  
2009

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 March 2003

Inspection number: 248977

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Cumberland Drive  
Laindon  
Basildon  
Essex

Postcode: SS15 6QS

Telephone number: 01268 417893

Fax number: 01268 491664

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs L Woodley

Date of previous inspection: N/A

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20009	David Cann	Registered inspector	Science	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9010	Gail Ellisdon	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
23385	Suzanne Gerred	Team inspector	<p>Educational inclusion</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p> <p>Physical education</p>	<p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p>
22578	Gavin Jones	Team inspector	<p>Foundation stage</p> <p>Art and design</p> <p>Design and technology</p>	
20877	David Pink	Team inspector	<p>Special educational needs</p> <p>English</p> <p>Religious education</p>	
8534	David Price	Team inspector	<p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Mathematics</p> <p>Music</p>	<p>How well are pupils taught?</p>

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House  
Station Road  
Cambridge  
CB1 2RS

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager  
Inspection Quality Division  
The Office for Standards in Education  
Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>11</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>27</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Merrylands Primary school has 396 pupils on roll between the ages of 4 and 11. The school draws pupils from the surrounding residential area where there is a mixture of rented and owner occupied accommodation. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is in line with the national average. There are a small number of pupils from ethnic minorities and four pupils from travelling communities. Some learn English as an additional language but none are at an early stage of language acquisition. On joining the school, pupils' skills are broadly average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is in line with the national average although the number of pupils with statements of special educational need is below average. Merrylands Primary School was created in April 2001 when the Infant and Junior schools amalgamated. Since that date the school has undergone a major re-roofing programme as well as a major rebuilding programme, the latter being completed just before the inspection. Staffing has been a major challenge to the school and at the time of the inspection, two classes were covered by supply teachers for staff absent on sick and maternity leave and two other classes were taught by overseas qualified teachers, on short-term contracts.

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

Merrylands Primary School provides pupils with a sound education in a secure and supportive learning environment. The headteacher is highly respected by parents, pupils and staff. His very good leadership has steered the school through extensive reorganisation and he works closely with staff to raise pupils' attainments. Pupils relate to each other very well. Most have very positive attitudes to school and learning, although a small number of Year 6 pupils are uncooperative in some lessons. Pupils achieve well above average results in mathematics tests by Year 6 and attain the levels expected of them in English and science tests. The school provides sound value for money.

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

- Pupils make good progress in mathematics through the school and by Year 6 they achieve levels which are well above national expectations for their age.
- Children enjoy a good start in the Foundation Stage and make good progress in their personal development and in learning to read, write and use numbers.
- Most pupils develop positive attitudes to school. The vast majority are enthusiastically involved in all that the school offers in class and many take part in the school's good range of extra-curricular activities.
- There is a strong emphasis on developing pupils' spiritual, moral and social understanding. Pupils learn to respect the feelings, views and beliefs of others well.
- Pupils behave well around the school and relationships between pupils are very good, both in class, lunch times and at play.
- The school has a strong working partnership with parents who value and support the school highly.

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

- Pupils' attainment in writing.
- The management of the curriculum to ensure consistent procedures and approaches to teaching and learning.
- Strategies for developing mature attitudes to learning among older pupils.

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

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

The school has not been inspected since its creation in 2001.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			Key
	all schools		similar schools*	
	2001	2002	2002	
English	C	C	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	B	A	A	
Science	B	C	C	

\* schools where there are a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals

Year 6 pupils achieve results in mathematics tests which are well above both the national average and the levels achieved in similar schools. In English and science, pupils attain the nationally expected levels and those achieved in similar schools. By Year 2 pupils' test results are in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. These results are in line with those achieved in similar schools in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. Children enter the school with skills which are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Their number skills are good but many have limited spoken language and reading skills and, for some, their personal development is below the level expected. Children make good progress in all areas of learning and most achieve the expected goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Pupils' progress through the rest of the school is good in mathematics and satisfactory in reading and science. The school has recently placed considerable emphasis on improving writing and this is raising pupils' skills throughout the school. However, older pupils still do not have enough opportunities to develop their spoken and written language through planned activities in subjects like history and geography. Teachers provide good individual support for pupils with special educational needs and in most subjects, they challenge higher attainers effectively. Both groups of pupils make sound progress. Pupils achieve satisfactory levels in information and communication technology and apply their knowledge across a range of subjects well. In other subjects, pupils attain the levels expected of them and make sound progress.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils are keen to learn and participate enthusiastically in all school activities. However, a few older pupils do not have a positive approach to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Around school behaviour is very good. In class, nearly all pupils behave well but inattention sometimes disrupts the pace of learning in the older classes.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships exist between pupils and in nearly all classes, there are good relationships between staff and pupils.
Attendance	Below the national average as a result of the poor attendance of a small number of pupils.



## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good up to Year 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6. Teachers implement the National Numeracy Strategy well and pupils' skills develop well as a result. Teaching follows the structure of the National Literacy Strategy well in Years 1-2 and satisfactorily in Years 3-6. In both subjects, the setting of pupils by ability and the use of booster classes are successful in promoting the progress of pupils with different levels of understanding and ability. Basic reading and writing skills are taught effectively with a successful emphasis on reading throughout the school. However, the time spent on handwriting and spelling in Years 3 to 6 does not have a significant impact on pupils' attainments. Pupils do not have enough time to redraft their written work and this particularly reduces the challenge for higher ability pupils. In classes up to Year 2, teachers often arrange for pupils to work in pairs and groups but this practice was not as evident in older classes. In Years 3 to 5, many tasks in history and geography are linked to worksheets which means that pupils are not required to record their ideas in their own words. Pupils develop their number skills well in numeracy lessons. They apply them successfully in subjects like science, carrying out measurements, recording their findings and often presenting their results with the aid of information and communication technology. Science is now effectively taught through pupils' own investigations but teachers are still adapting the newly introduced scheme of work to ensure that tasks are well matched to pupils' learning. Teachers' relationships with pupils are generally good. They share lesson objectives clearly and have high expectations of what they should achieve and how they should behave. However, teachers have not developed the strategies to develop a mature and responsible approach to learning among all pupils in Year 6 and relationships are not satisfactory. Tasks and learning objectives are not presented in a way which fully engages their attention and cooperation. Teachers maintain a close check on pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy but assessment in science and other subjects is in need of development. Teachers set targets for pupils to aim for in their learning but do not regularly refer to these when they mark pupils' work in order to explain the next steps needed for improvement. Classroom assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, especially for those with special educational needs. Teaching is good for children in the Foundation Stage where adults work together very effectively to develop children's social skills and their attainment in language and number.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. The school provides a good range of learning activities for pupils in the Foundation Stage and up to Year 2, but there are not enough opportunities for older pupils to develop their writing skills across all subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Support is good for younger pupils and satisfactory for older pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	In the main, the school develops pupils' personal and social awareness well but does not provide enough opportunities for older pupils to take responsibility and become more independent. There is a good emphasis on extending pupils' understanding of spiritual and moral issues and cultural development is sound.

How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers know pupils well and give them good personal support and guidance; the procedures and use of assessment are very well developed in literacy, numeracy but not yet fully developed across other subjects.
--	---

The school has established good relationships with parents, who are very well informed of the school's events, areas for study and their children's progress.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good direction to the school. He and senior staff work well with colleagues to raise standards and teaching skills. The management of the curriculum, however, requires development to ensure that consistent practices are established across subjects and throughout the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They are active and supportive and keep themselves well informed of the school's progress.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school measures its attainments well and sets clear goals for improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources effectively. Budgets are carefully allocated to raise standards and support the school's developments.

In spite of difficulties in recruiting staff, the school has an appropriate number of teachers and support staff for pupils. Resources are satisfactory and the accommodation is good with some very good recent improvements and some areas still in need of completion. The school is effective in applying the principles of best value in its spending.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• Children make good progress and are expected to work hard and do their best.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Children like school and behaviour is good.</li> <li>• The school is helping children become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Parents are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments and judge that the school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and is developing more.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In 2002 tests for Year 6 pupils, results were in line with the national average in English and science, and well above the national average in mathematics. When compared to the levels attained in schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals, the school's 2002 test results were average in English and science but well above average in mathematics. Given the level of skills which pupils have on entry to the school, the progress of these pupils was sound in English and science and good in mathematics. Test results have improved over the last two years and kept pace with the rising national trend.
2. Current pupils in Year 6 are achieving the nationally expected levels in English, and science and exceeding them in mathematics. The school sets appropriate targets in literacy and numeracy. In 2002, pupils exceeded the targets set in numeracy but fell just short of them in literacy. They are in line to meet the targets set for them in 2003 in both subjects. Although there are minor variations year on year, there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls over time.
3. In 2002, pupils' Year 2 test results were average in reading, writing and mathematics. Against similar schools, pupils' results were average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. In science assessments, pupils attained levels which were in line with the national expectations and those achieved in similar schools. Results have improved in the last two years and the attainment of current pupils indicates that they are set to improve again. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in Year 2 test results.
4. Children enter school with skills that are just below those expected from children of a similar age. While their number skills are sound, many do not have well developed language and social skills. Teachers place considerable emphasis on language development and children make good progress from a low starting point. Most pupils enter Year 1 with average skills in language, number and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their personal and social development is in line with the level expected as a result of good teaching and the welcoming atmosphere created in the Early Years and reception classes.
5. Pupils attain satisfactory speaking and listening skills by Years 2 and 6. Good teaching in Years 1 and 2 assists pupils to develop spoken language. They extend their vocabulary through discussion and reading and by Year 2, pupils are expected to speak in complete sentences. In Years 3 - 6 pupils have fewer opportunities for developing spoken language in English and in other subjects and while their progress is satisfactory it is not as rapid as earlier. In reading, pupils achieve well throughout the school and considerable time and emphasis is placed in regular group and individual reading. The school has recently placed considerable emphasis on improving pupils' writing and their skills are improving. However, older pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their spoken and written language through planned activities in subjects like history and geography.
6. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good overall progress and reach standards that are above average in mathematics thanks to good teaching. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and plan lessons well. They are confident in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy and ensure that the work given to pupils is suitable and matches their individual abilities. Pupils with special educational needs receive well organised support and make good progress. Teachers are good at questioning more able pupils and develop their ability to use mental processes to solve problems swiftly.
7. Pupils' attainment in science is in line with national expectations at Years 2 and 6 and they make sound progress. Teaching now places a strong emphasis on investigational work which helps to

develop pupils' understanding and interest in the subject. This is clearly raising

standards by Year 2 and is beginning to have an impact on the learning of older pupils. Pupils' knowledge of life and living forces is often good and they are developing a sound understanding of physical processes through their work on forces.

8. Standards in information and communication technology are in line with national expectations. In Years 1 and 2, pupils know how to use the computer keyboard satisfactorily and use their word processing skills to write text and art programs. Year 2 pupils investigate websites to find out specific information in history. By Year 6, pupils achieved satisfactory standards. They combine text with graphics, know how to enter and compare data and use spreadsheets to explore the relationship between the perimeter and area of rectangles.
9. Pupils' attainments in other subjects are broadly in line with those expected. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well against the targets in their individual programmes in Years 1 and 2. They achieve satisfactorily in Years 3-6. The attitude of the pupils is good and they respond very well to their teachers and learning support assistants. Pupils from ethnic minorities make sound progress and where needed receive appropriate support. Pupils from the travelling community are supported satisfactorily and those who attend regularly make good progress. Pupils with specific gifts and talents make satisfactory progress overall. Such pupils are identified and supported with planned tasks in most lessons but resources for them are not co-ordinated and widely developed.

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

10. Pupils of all ages have positive attitudes towards school and learning and this has a beneficial impact on their progress. The majority of parents who completed the pre-inspection questionnaire strongly agreed with the statement 'my child likes school' and parents spoken with during the inspection stressed how happy the pupils are. The enthusiastic way children participate in extra-curricular activities is further evidence that they enjoy school.
11. The school's good induction programme and good links with parents positively impact on the way the young children feel about the school and their attitudes to learning. The children quickly become familiar with the school's expectations and routines and purposefully set about their activities. These good attitudes persist as pupils move through the school. Most pupils are well motivated and work with interest and involvement. When teaching is good they settle very quickly to classroom activities and concentrate on them until they are finished. However, a few pupils in year 6 lack the self-discipline to apply themselves consistently. This results in wasted time and hampers progress. Most pupils are keen to do well though not all of them take sufficient care over the presentation of their work. In general teachers do not organise enough classroom activities for older pupils to develop their independent learning and research skills.
12. Inspection evidence supports the view of most parents that behaviour at the school is generally good, although six pupils were excluded for fixed periods during the school year prior to the inspection. Pupils move around the school in an orderly way showing due consideration for the needs of others. They show appropriate social skills in the dining halls and conduct themselves very well at playtimes. This contributes to the calm and purposeful atmosphere that prevails throughout the school for most of the day. In assemblies and most lessons pupils understand and follow set routines and codes of conduct, ensuring that behaviour is good. Pupils put up their hands to answer questions and take turns when doing so. They listen carefully to their teachers and to one another and the speed with which they respond when called to attention is impressive. However, although most pupils show that they are capable of good behaviour there are sometimes significant amounts of unsatisfactory behaviour in lessons, particularly in Year 6. Pupils talk amongst themselves and ignore the teacher. Some try to distract others who are working. One or two openly defy staff. Such behaviour is most obvious in lessons that lack pace or where activities are not interesting and the teacher's behaviour management skills are weak. In these lessons some pupils become distracted and progress is impaired. Most pupils look after their

own and the school's possessions and no vandalism or graffiti and very little litter were evident during the inspection.

13. Because the pupils are taught to value and respect others, relationships in the school are very good. Children mix well, and work and play together harmoniously. They relate well with each other and with adults and are courteous, warm and welcoming towards visitors. No oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection and although pupils and parents say that bullying does occasionally occur, they do not view it as a major problem at the school. Pupils support each other for example when they help each other tidy up. They are positive about each other's efforts and achievements. A good example was seen in a physical education lesson in year 4 when pupils spontaneously clapped classmates who succeeded in combining three movements into a dance sequence to the rhythm of a South African busking tune.
14. Many pupils respond well to opportunities to take responsibility. They volunteer for monitoring and messenger duties keenly, and they perform them conscientiously and with pride. As they move up the school, pupils willingly take on more responsibility; for instance older pupils set up the hall for assemblies and help the younger ones at wet playtimes. School Council representatives undertake their role seriously and sensibly but say they would welcome more chances to show initiative.
15. Overall attendance at the school is below the national and local authority averages although it is better than at many of the other primary schools in Laindon. The percentage of unauthorised absences is well above average but this is almost entirely due to the very poor attendance of a few pupils. Scrutiny of recent attendance data indicates that the vast majority of pupils attend very regularly. A significant number of pupils are taken for holidays in term time although many of these are for one week or less. Most children are punctual and lessons start on time. However there are a few persistent latecomers. The school complies with statutory requirements for reporting attendance in the brochure, governors' annual report to parents and pupils' annual reports.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

16. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the foundation stage and in Years 1 and 2. It is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The good quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is an important factor in the way children develop good personal, emotional and social skills and attitudes to learning and behaviour. The quality of lesson planning is very good and reflects the national guidance for teaching children of this age. In one lesson on number recognition, the teacher's planning ensured that children worked in groups with appropriate activities such as using unifix cubes to create a given number. A good range of well-organised activities is provided which maintains the children's interest and supports their learning. Appropriate attention has been placed on settling children into school. Routines are well established and children are managed very effectively. They listen to teachers and to each other with great concentration. The teachers and support staff work closely together to form very effective teams. Their good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn contributes to the good teaching. The children's knowledge, skills and understanding are well prepared to start the National Curriculum. The good teaching in the Foundation Stage promotes good achievement for all pupils, including those with special educational needs who are well supported and make good progress.
17. In Year 1 and 2 classes, a feature of the good teaching is the planning. This is securely based on the schemes of work, which the school has adopted and in some cases is still developing. Lesson objectives are clearly stated and carefully explained to the pupils. This enables them to know why they are undertaking the work and what they have to achieve by the end of the lesson. In nearly all numeracy lessons, clear objectives are set, together with differentiated work for higher, average and lower-attaining pupils. This enables all pupils to be fully involved throughout the lesson. However, the planning in some classes in Years 3 to 6 is not quite so thorough and differentiated work is not made clear.

18. The basic skills of literacy are taught satisfactorily overall, but there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their writing skills beyond the literacy lessons. Older pupils spend too much time recording what they have learnt on worksheets in subjects like history and geography which restricts their opportunities to write creatively and at length. This reflects low expectations on the part of some teachers, in particular, in Years 3 to 6 and a lack of challenge for potentially higher-attaining pupils. Reading is particularly well taught and a period of time is dedicated to Early Reading Research for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Guided Reading for pupils in Years 3 to 6 every day.
19. The quality of teaching is good in mathematics and physical education, good in Years 1-2 in literacy and science and sound in all other subjects and years. The children in the Foundation Stage are introduced to the skills of counting in a gradual way through rhymes, songs, games and play so that they always relate the numbers to real practical experiences and therefore learn them well. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6, so that the pupils practise their mental skills regularly and apply what they learn to solving practical problems. They are given opportunities to practise and develop their skills in other subjects. They take measurements in science experiments and apply and extend their skills using computers, for example in sorting and classifying data.
20. The management of pupils is mostly good. In a small number of lessons in Years 3 to 6, the teachers do not have high enough expectations of behaviour and pupils' attitudes to learning. Consequently, some pupils do not settle well and work hard enough. A minority of pupils find it difficult to maintain concentration and need further help with developing their independent skills.
21. Teachers know their pupils well. The majority of teachers use this knowledge to encourage pupils to improve and work harder. In contrast, some teachers do not comment enough on pupils' work through their marking. Consequently, pupils are not always clear about how they can improve. Provision of homework is satisfactory overall and supports the work done in school.
22. In nearly all classes, pupils and staff have good relationships with one another and these add significantly to the quality of the work that the pupils produce and the way in which they learn. The pupils feel that their contributions are valued and this appreciation helps to build their self-esteem and encourages them to try harder. Teachers' caring approach towards pupils ensures that they listen attentively and are fully engaged in their learning. When asked to go to their group activities they do so without any fuss. Nonetheless, some teachers have not adjusted their approach to ensure that older pupils always develop mature attitudes and take responsibility for their own learning.
23. In the majority of lessons, teachers use assessment to help pupils improve, by ensuring that they know what they have to do to raise the level of their work. There is a need to ensure that this is true of all lessons. Much useful assessment is achieved through the careful questioning of pupils. This is clearly seen in the opening sessions of the majority of numeracy lessons. Teachers set a fast pace to their questioning of pupils' understanding of a variety of mental arithmetic problems. This is usually followed by a quick review of previous work, before new ideas are introduced.
24. In the best lessons teachers shared the learning objective with pupils and clearly indicated what they were to learn. Teachers normally support and challenge pupils appropriately which ensures that pupils of all abilities maintain a good pace in their learning. In one good numeracy lesson, the variety of needs were well met and tasks were challenging for all abilities. The teacher expertly focused on the higher-attaining pupils to extend learning and together with the learning support assistant, supports those who lack confidence. Consequently all made good progress. Where teaching and learning was unsatisfactory, planning was not detailed enough to set a clear focus for pupils and as a result they made insufficient progress.
25. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. In small group activities led by the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) teaching is very good. It is good in activities, which are led by learning support assistants. Pupils are very well supported in Years 1 and 2. However, in Years 3-6, and especially in Years 5 and 6, the

precise support for pupils is not planned in enough detail. Support for the few pupils learning English as an additional language are sound as is the support for pupils from travelling communities.

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

26. The range and quality of learning opportunities from Year 1 to Year 2 are good and are satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage are good and provide a good range of activities across the recommended areas of learning for children of this age. All the required subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and requirements are met for religious education. The time allocation for subjects, including English, mathematics and science is appropriate. English is given a high priority and to good effect, particularly in the case of reading. Additional support is provided for lower attaining pupils across the school as well as “booster” classes for gifted and talented pupils in Year 6.
27. There are suitable policies for all subjects. The school has made appropriate use of national guidance in putting together its long term curriculum plan, which also includes religious education and personal, health and social education. Since the amalgamation, the school has brought together some of the existing schemes of work from the two schools. In some subjects, such as science, history and geography, published schemes have been bought to provide continuity and progression across the two stages and to support investigative work. The schemes are used satisfactorily as the basis for teachers’ weekly plans. However, none of the bought schemes has yet been evaluated or specifically adapted to meet the particular needs of pupils in this school. Consequently, in some instances but mainly in Year 3 to 6, there is insufficient flexibility in their use.
28. Teachers follow the National Literacy Strategy effectively and supplement it with extra sessions for reading, handwriting and spelling. Pupils also follow sessions of extended writing in Years 1 and 2. Teachers ensure that pupils use information and communication technology to word process and to search for information on the Internet. However, there is not enough structured use of these skills to improve pupils’ writing skills in all subjects.
29. The school’s strategy for numeracy is good. Learning opportunities ensure that pupils’ basic skills in mathematics are developed well from Year 1 to Year 6. From Year 2 upwards pupils are grouped according to their prior attainment for numeracy lessons. This enables teachers to match work to pupils’ needs and contributes significantly to the above average standards seen at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
30. All pupils have equal access to learning opportunities. The very small number of pupils from ethnic minority groups, those who have English as an additional language and pupils from the travelling community are well included in all lessons. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and satisfactory provision is made for these pupils in Years 5 and 6 to develop writing skills. Some talented pupils have the opportunity to develop skills through extra-curricular activities such as those of a musical or sporting nature. However, the school recognises the need to develop the curriculum further to meet the needs of these pupils.
31. The provision for pupils’ personal, social and health education is good and is given high priority. Good arrangements are made for sex and drugs education. Pupils are taught how to keep safe in a range of situations. Emphasis is placed on pupils developing understanding of citizenship through discussion about rules, responsibilities and community.
32. While a small number of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the provision for extra-curricular activities, inspectors are of the opinion that the number and range of activities outside lessons are good. A high priority is given to out of school hours activities as demonstrated by the appointment of a teacher as co-ordinator. Before school, lunchtime and after school clubs include activities as diverse as French, choir, football, netball, rugby, gym trail, country dancing and computer clubs. The school participates in league fixtures with other local schools in sporting events such as football and netball and participates in the district sports and swimming galas. Pupils also have the opportunity to perform with other schools in musical festivals. The school



has heard very recently that it has been successful in its bids for grant funding in order to start up a "breakfast club" as well as a parent and pupil computer club.

33. Day visits, such as to the British Museum, Kentwell Hall, Mountfitchet and Colchester Castles and to the Plotlands and to Horndon-on-the-Hill are good examples of the enrichment of the history and geography curriculum. Visits to museums and galleries and to local theatres are also used well to support learning in art and English. These events help to bring subjects to life for pupils. Visiting performers, such as theatre groups enhance the work in science and environmental aspects.
34. The school has successful links with the local community, which make a good contribution to pupils' learning. The local police, fire-services and railway police are involved in training older pupils in aspects of personal safety. Ministers from local churches regularly contribute to school worship and assemblies. The school has successfully forged links with local businesses and companies, which have provided funding to enable the school to purchase additional resources including computers. There are also strong links with pre-school nurseries and play groups that children attend before entering Merrylands School and also with the local secondary school to which some pupils transfer at the end of year 6. There are good examples of pupils using the other school's facilities, such as for swimming, and of staff working together to ensure links between the work undertaken at each stage of pupils' education.
35. The opportunities that are offered to pupils with special educational needs are very good. Well-trained learning assistants support an enthusiastic and knowledgeable coordinator. The morning "Gym Trail" is an effective extra activity to help younger pupils master physical skills. Good relationships are maintained with the local support agencies.
36. The overall provision for pupils' personal development is good. There is good provision for their spiritual, moral and social development, and satisfactory opportunities are provided for their cultural development. Pupils gain insights into the beliefs and values of Christianity and other world religions in religious education lessons. Assemblies and the daily acts of collective worship make particularly effective contributions to pupils' spiritual development. Two very good examples were seen in which pupils were helped to consider how amazing it is that new animal and plant life is created every spring and they were helped to see the seasons as a continuing process in God's creation. Visiting speakers such as representatives of local Christian churches make effective contributions to assemblies. Nevertheless there are missed opportunities within the broader scope of subjects such as science, art, music and literature to plan for spiritual development.
37. There is good promotion of the principles that distinguish right from wrong, and this particularly pleases parents. The school has effective systems for rewarding good behaviour, as well as sanctions that apply to inappropriate behaviour. Clear rules are displayed around the school and in classrooms and teachers have high expectations of good behaviour both in class and around the school. As a result, most pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong and the effect their actions have on others. Teachers and support staff are good role models for behaviour towards others. The school's personal, social and health education lessons provide effective opportunities for pupils to discuss wider moral issues and to help pupils explore issues of peer group pressure and misuse of substances such as drugs.
38. Provision for social development is good. Personal, social and health education lessons and 'circle time', when pupils sit together in a circle, provide effective opportunities for pupils to express their thoughts and feelings and listen to what their classmates have to say. Visits from the police, fire services and school nurse successfully develop pupils' awareness of health and safety and environmental concerns. Work in pairs, teams and groups, particularly in science and physical education, also contribute well to social development on a daily basis. Fund raising opportunities satisfactorily increase pupils' awareness of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves, including the elderly. A residential visit for pupils in Year 6 to the Isle of Wight and the many activities additional to lessons give further opportunities for pupils to work and play together outside lessons. Older pupils have some added responsibilities, for example as

monitors undertaking jobs around the school. The school council provides a limited forum for pupils to express their opinions about school life and the decision-making process. However, there is scope for pupils to be given greater responsibility and to have further opportunities to use their initiative.

39. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. There is good provision for pupils to appreciate national heritage and culture, particularly through the wide range of visits, such as those to museums and places of historical and geographical interest. Many visitors, such as musicians and theatre groups, also support pupils' cultural development well. In subjects such as geography and religious education and in assemblies, pupils have adequate opportunities to learn about the traditions and customs of people from various faith backgrounds and from different parts of the world. Nevertheless, this is a weaker element of provision and there could be more opportunities across the curriculum to develop pupils' awareness of the rich diversity of multi-cultural Britain.

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

40. The school makes sound provision for supporting pupils and in ensuring their well being. Most staff give the pupils good pastoral support that reflects the caring ethos of the school. They know the children well and take appropriate account of individual needs. Relationships are very good and there is mutual respect between adults and pupils. This makes the pupils feel secure and is reflected in the confidence with which they approach staff and the positive attitudes they show towards their work and in their play.
41. The school's arrangements for the pupil's health and welfare are sound. There is first aid cover throughout the day. All incidents requiring treatment are logged and parents are always informed in writing if their child receives a bump to the head or if any other injury is perceived to be 'more serious'. Levels of supervision at break and lunchtimes are satisfactory though supervisors are not always vigilant in ensuring that all pupils are in sight during play times. The school's child protection arrangements comply with national recommendations; staff are sensitive to child protection issues and know about procedures. There is an appropriate policy to ensure that pupils have access only to approved Internet sites. The personal, social and health education, science and physical education programmes are effectively used to promote healthy lifestyles.
42. Fire exits are clear and well signed and fire drills are held, logged and carefully evaluated each term. Risk assessments have been carried out and all equipment and apparatus is checked regularly by outside specialists. The local authority oversees the school's arrangements for health and safety. It carried out a health and safety audit in 2001 and makes sure that the school undertakes a formal health and safety check each term so that potential hazards can be identified. There is also a book for recording day-to-day concerns. The school is generally well maintained in a safe condition.
43. The school is successful in promoting good standards of behaviour. Each class develops its' own 'code of conduct' following discussion of the school rules with their teachers and this ensures that pupils understand what is expected of them. In circle time and assemblies they learn about the effect of their behaviour on others thus raising their sensitivity to other people's feelings. The promotion of mutual respect and trust, and the development of pupils' self esteem are central to the school's behaviour management policy. Most staff understand the policy and use it well. They apply discipline firmly but fairly. They consistently praise good or improved work and behaviour, which are further reinforced by the judicious use of rewards such as 'stickers' or acclamation at an achievement assembly. Procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour are also generally well applied. Parents and pupils are confident that any incidents of bullying are dealt with speedily and well.
44. Governors are mindful that while the majority of children attend very regularly, there is a small minority of pupils whose attendance is unacceptably low. Overall a good range of strategies to monitor and promote attendance is now in place. Registration is brisk and efficient although there

is some inconsistency in the use of absence codes. The computerised attendance data system allows information to be quickly retrieved, making the analysis of individual and group attendance very easy. Parents are frequently reminded of the importance of good attendance and pupils receive book prizes and certificates to encourage them. It is also made clear to parents that 'first morning' reporting of absences is expected, and the school assiduously follows up any pupil who is absent without reason after 9.30 am. Parents who wish to remove their children for holidays during term are required to apply using a standard proforma at least two weeks in advance. However, requests for up to ten days leave are always granted irrespective of the pupil's attendance record. The school enjoys good support from the educational welfare officer who checks registers every four weeks and works with parents of children whose attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern. She has also helped governors produce an attendance action plan and has run 'Early Bird' sessions with the children.

45. Children in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs are given good support for their personal development. In the rest of the school, procedures are satisfactory but informal.
46. Assessments are used well to identify the achievements made by pupils in literacy and numeracy and this is being used with increasing effectiveness to promote pupils' progress. Information is collected, which provides a good overview of pupils' achievement. Regular testing in reading, writing, spelling and mathematics ensures that pupils are monitored closely. This information is used to set targets both for teachers in their classes and for individual pupils. Pupils are aware of the standards expected of them in English and mathematics. Teachers keep records of pupils' progress on a day-to-day basis. These are used to guide teachers' planning of work but are not always analysed to provide sufficient challenges for more able pupils in English. However, a common approach to assessment is not yet in place in all subjects. In science, teachers record the work pupils cover but do not focus sufficiently on how their skills develop. In art, design and technology, history and geography teachers are not always assessing pupils' achievements against National Curriculum levels. The way assessments are gathered does not facilitate the use of information to plan teaching nor the transfer of records from one year to another.
47. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school lives. This assessment is effective among the younger pupils. However, some older pupils have joined the school with records of special educational needs and they require further assessment over time and the involvement of parents before the school can determine the appropriate level of support for them.

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

48. The school is successful in establishing good relationships with most parents and this has a positive impact on pupils' progress. The school believes close cooperation between home and school is vital if pupils are to achieve of their best, and actively encourages parents to support their children's education. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to the annual reviews of pupils learning programmes and communications are good. The majority of parents express high levels of satisfaction with nearly every aspect of the school. They consider it well managed with good teaching. They like the fact that their children are expected to work hard and feel they are making good all round progress. They are pleased about the good standard of behaviour at the school and the fact that their children are happy there. Inspection evidence supports these positive views. A significant minority of parents thinks there are not enough extra curricular activities. The inspectors do not agree with this view; they consider provision to be good. Despite this the school has already responded to the parents' concern – highlighted through its' own evaluation procedures - by appointing an 'Out of School' coordinator who has obtained grant funding for a breakfast/homework club and a range of other extra activities. These are due to start soon.
49. The majority of parents are also satisfied with the school's very good arrangements for keeping them informed about their child's' work and progress. They particularly appreciate being able to see their child's profile book containing samples of work and targets prior to the formal

consultation meetings in the autumn and spring terms as they say this allows them to more effectively support their children's learning. Apart from the formal meetings, parents feel able to approach teachers at any other time to share concerns about their children's education because they find staff very willing to listen and to help. Parents are also confident that the school would be quick to alert them of any problems affecting their child.

50. The pupils' annual reports are generally of a good quality. They give clear details of the individual's attainment in terms of the national curriculum in English, mathematics and science, and how they might improve. However sometimes targets are too general. Comments about the pupil's work in other subjects and for their personal development are also helpful. The opportunity for parents to comment on the report in writing, and the pupils' self-evaluations are good features.
51. The school successfully keeps parents informed about its work. The school brochure and governors' annual report contain all the details required by law and much other useful information. Regular newsletters give diary dates and reminders of such things as parking safely and the importance of good attendance. In addition they include clear details of any changes to school organisation or the curriculum as well as reports of recent 'special' events. A brief overview of the curriculum is given in the brochure and teachers send parents a letter at the beginning of each half term, explaining the topic areas to be covered in their child's class together with useful suggestions as to how they might help them. Parents say they find these very helpful. Curriculum meetings on such topics as numeracy and reading are held from time to time.
52. The school is particularly successful in getting parents to support their children's learning at the Foundation Stage and in years 1 and 2. Most such parents help by listening to their children reading at home and by reinforcing lessons on road safety. This enables them to play an active part in their children's learning and development. In Years 3 - 6 the home reading programme is not maintained with the same rigour, nor is the school's "learning habit" book used consistently well to monitor homework and establish a meaningful on-going dialogue between home and school. The school is always anxious to persuade more parents to participate in their children's education. For example a computer course for parents is being run in the summer term with the aim of boosting their own self esteem so that they will feel more confident in helping their children to progress.
53. Many parents enjoy attending special assemblies, festivals and other 'whole school' events with their children. Some are more actively involved in the life of the school. About sixteen give valuable classroom support on a regular basis by listening to 'readers' or assisting with art or cookery. Others help on 'trips' and one runs a netball club. The school is anxious to strengthen such links for example by encouraging more parents to help with extra curricular activities.
54. A small but enthusiastic group of parents runs a successful and greatly appreciated parent teacher association – 'The Friends of Merrylands School'. The association works hard to raise funds and engender a community spirit through events such as bazaars, plant sales, discotheques and other social events. Monies raised are used judiciously to provide the pupils' with 'treats' such as an entertainer at Christmas and to purchase furniture and other resources for the benefit of all pupils.

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

55. The headteacher's sensitive leadership has successfully led the school through the recent amalgamation and the complex rebuilding programme which has followed. His experienced and calm approach is highly respected by staff, parents and pupils and this has enabled the school to maintain a sound quality of education and raise pupils' attainment over the last two years. He is well supported by the two deputy headteachers who fulfil their roles well in supporting teachers and managing day-to-day administration. The school recognises that the management of the curriculum still needs development, especially with the imminent departure of one of the deputies to assume a headship in another school. While most subject coordinators are developing their management roles effectively they do not have enough non-contact time to extend their influence

as widely as required. The deputies and coordinators are still principally active within the former Infant and Junior parts of the school and there is insufficient exchange of good practice between the two parts to establish consistent approaches. There is no overall coordinator of the curriculum and in areas such as the development of writing skills improvements are being implemented piecemeal rather than across the whole school. In art, design and technology, geography and history, the monitoring

of teaching and learning is not yet satisfactorily developed to ensure that all staff are aware of the standards expected, nor to help them develop the best approaches to presenting the subjects.

56. The school development plan is a comprehensive document, which sets clear targets for improvements, timings and costings. It is created after consultation with all staff and is valuable as a means of informing governors and staff, as well as reviewing the school's progress towards its declared aims. Priorities are clearly identified and action plans for developing key areas are included. The plan establishes criteria for measuring progress towards the agreed aims but these are not always linked directly to improvements in pupils' attainment.
57. Governors take a close interest in the school's affairs and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They meet regularly and have a well-organised committee structure, which is good at monitoring the school's finances, premises and the support for pupils with special educational needs. Governors take an active part in shaping the school's developments and keep themselves well informed of the school's performance.
58. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well organised and has been improved with the appointment of the new coordinator. She has implemented the Revised Code of Practice well. Classroom assistants work effectively with teachers to ensure all pupils with special educational needs are fully included in lesson activities. This strong team work ensures that these pupils have equal access to learning and make equally good progress as other pupils. Clearer identification of the needs of older pupils would assist teachers in planning their lessons and enable the coordinator to give appropriate specific advice and support to those teachers in order to address the needs of pupils.
59. The finance officer and the headteacher efficiently manage the school finances. They regularly report to the governing body who have, as a result, a good understanding of current expenditure, commitment and balances. When looking at significant items of expenditure, such as computers or furniture, the school seeks to get "best value" for its money by comparing prices and quality of goods before buying.
60. The school plans ahead well and its financial planning is based on good current data and sound projections. Following amalgamation, the school has accrued a contingency reserve which is larger than normal. This was necessary to fund some of the recently completed new building costs and will now be used for equipping the new accommodation and completing other refurbishment projects connected with the reorganisation of the school. Subject co-ordinators are given budgets for resourcing their subjects, whilst overall budgeting is carried out effectively and efficiently and is closely linked to the school's strategic development planning. The most recent audit identified a small number of points for action and these have been satisfactorily carried out.
61. Difficulty with recruiting and retaining staff over the past few years has proved to be a hindrance to the school's development. At the time of the inspection the head teacher had ensured all classes were covered by employing two staff from overseas and a retired teacher on temporary contracts. Teachers work well as a team and share a common commitment to the aims of the school. They are ably assisted by a team of experienced support staff, who work particularly effectively with pupils with special educational needs and with children in the Foundation Stage.
62. The school views its staff as its most valuable resource and staff development is a priority. Appraisal and performance management targets are agreed and personal development opportunities are linked to whole school needs identified in the School Improvement Plan. If appropriate, those who attend courses subsequently share the knowledge gained with their

colleagues through staff training sessions. That staff are valued is further exemplified by the way newly qualified and other teachers new to the school say how well supported they feel. These good arrangements for professional development together with the school's very effective provision for initial teacher training are one of its real strengths.

63. Overall the accommodation is good for teaching a broad curriculum. The recently completed building programme has created a well-designed link between the two parts of the school, improved administrative offices and enlarged the hall for older pupils. This now provides better facilities for physical education, for library space and for the teaching of small groups of pupils. The school's plans for re-organising storage arrangements and creating a multi-purpose teaching area will further improve the accommodation. However there is no outside learning area for children in the Foundation Stage and the small size of classrooms in the upper school sometimes prevents teachers from planning more practical activities in them. Narrow passageways and a limited number of external ramps to classrooms currently restrict access for physically disabled pupils, which is an issue that governors are addressing. Inspectors share the parents' view that the clean and pleasant way in which the building and grounds are maintained is a particularly good feature of the school. The layout of the grounds is especially attractive. The wildlife garden and landscaped areas are used effectively as resources for science and geography.
64. Except in religious education, all subjects are adequately resourced to support the teaching of the full range of pupils at the school. Resources for information and communication technology are good. The school makes effective use of outside resources such as museums, galleries, a residential centre and 'specialist' speakers to enrich pupils' learning in a range of curriculum areas and for their personal development.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

65. In order to improve the standards of education and pupils' attainment, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- (1) Improve pupils' attainment in writing by:
    - increasing the opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects in Years 3-6;
    - improving the opportunities for pupils to develop the quality of their spoken language in Years 3-6;
    - using homework more effectively to promote pupils' writing;
    - improving the quality of drafting and redrafting so that pupils can build upon their previous learning.  
(Paragraphs 3, 5, 18, 28, 90-99, 110, 130, 137)
  - (2) improve the management of the curriculum to ensure consistent procedures and approaches to teaching and learning by:
    - providing more non-contact time for coordinators to monitor planning and observe lessons;
    - establishing consistent procedures for assessing pupils' progress across all subjects;
    - ensuring better exchange and implementation of good practice between Years 1-2 and Years 3 – 6.  
(Paragraphs 27, 28, 30, 55, 99, 111, 117, 123, 130, 138, 164)
  - (3) develop more mature attitudes to learning among older pupils by:
    - providing them with more opportunities to plan activities and investigations;
    - introducing them to the habit of evaluating their own learning and progress;
    - encouraging them to identify obstacles to learning and to plan ways of resolving them.  
(Paragraphs 12, 20, 22, 136)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	82
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	13	34	32	2	0	0
Percentage	1	16	42	39	2	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	396
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	70

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	66

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0

National comparative data	5.4
---------------------------	-----

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	33	25	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	28	26	31
	Girls	23	24	23
	Total	51	50	54
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	88 (81)	86 (76)	93 (84)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	29	31	32
	Girls	24	23	23
	Total	53	54	55
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	91 (81)	93 (79)	95 (90)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

### 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	41	37	78

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	30	35	39
	Girls	31	33	35
	Total	61	68	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (86)	87 (81)	95 (95)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Girls	n/a	n/a	n/a
	Total	n/a	n/a	n/a
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	n/a (78)	n/a (79)	n/a (90)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	313	6	0
White – Irish	1	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	1	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	27

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

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	240

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	1,109,723
Total expenditure	914,246
Expenditure per pupil	2,052
Balance brought forward from previous year	168,499
Balance carried forward to next year	195,477

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	8
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 29%

Number of questionnaires sent out	396
Number of questionnaires returned	115

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	31	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	35	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	46	5	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	45	12	1	0
The teaching is good.	58	41	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	39	9	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	31	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	29	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	45	50	4	1	1
The school is well led and managed.	56	43	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	48	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	39	32	23	3	4

## **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**

66. When children enter the school their skills are broadly in line with those expected nationally. Their skills are below expectations in speaking and listening and in their readiness to read but their number skills are good. A small number of children have weaknesses in their personal and social skills. All children make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage of learning, so that by the end of their time in the reception classes, the majority achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas of learning.
67. Children enter the “Early Years” class in the term after their fourth birthday and usually stay for two terms before moving into the reception class. During their time in the “Early Years” class the emphasis is on preparing the children for full time education. Successes are noted in developing personal and social skills by which children are soon able to go to the toilet, change into coats after only a short while in school. Although the development of language skills is lower than that of mathematical development on entry to this class, all pupils, including those with special needs and delayed speech acquisition, make good progress.
68. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Three quarters of lessons seen were satisfactory or good, with a quarter of lessons being very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The best teaching was seen in the class of the Foundation Stage co-ordinator. All practitioners have good knowledge and understanding of this particular age group. As a result of this and the very good planning, basic skills are taught well and children are very effectively managed. Good use is made of well-documented assessment material, in order to provide appropriate challenges for all children.
69. As a result of good and sometimes very good teaching, children enjoy their work, behave well and respond positively to their learning opportunities. There is an air of anticipation and sometimes excitement at the start of lessons. Children try hard to rise to the challenges set for them and match their teachers’ high expectations for them. Their regular good attitudes have a significant positive effect on the progress they make.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

70. By the time they move into year 1, children in this important area of development, will have made good and often very good progress towards achieving the Early Learning Goals. This is noted in their attitudes, self-care, behaviour and the way they deal with their classmates. High expectations shown by all practitioners encourage children to make choices of activities while working in both mixed gender and single sex groups. Without fuss, they wait their turn and offer help and support to friends.
71. The good progress children make in being able to sit and listen quietly, allows teachers and their support staff to embark on literacy and numeracy lessons, for very reasonable lengths of time, bearing in mind the age of the children. As a result, children are able to cover much groundwork in these areas of learning, showing the positive effect of improvements in personal and social development. All adults in the Foundation Stage contribute well to the success in this area of development.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

72. Any speech and language problems are spotted early in the “Early Years” class and through good use of assessment, good support systems are used in order to bring about improvements. Role-play is used extensively to support speaking and listening skills and although children can briefly answer direct questions, they find difficulty in entering into discussion. A significant number may not reach their goals in this particular area of communication, language and literacy.



73. The school makes early and very good use of a reading recovery programme, which not only has a very positive effect on children's rate of learning, but is also fun. Preparation for reading is a clear strength of work in the Foundation Stage. All children enjoy listening to stories and small groups and individual children were happy to share their thoughts on stories they had heard.
74. Although children know their letters and sounds, there are still problems in using these skills in preparation for writing. This is currently a whole school area for development. Children are encouraged to adopt a cursive style of handwriting as they practice letter formation. Although they do this well when directly supervised, when trying to write unaided, their handwriting is much less clear.

### **Mathematical development**

75. On entry to the "Early Years" class, children's level of ability in mathematics is higher than that of language development. The school uses this positive fact to promote further success in the subject. As a result, children make good progress in their number work in particular. By the time they leave the reception classes, all but one or two will have reached the learning goals for this area of the curriculum, with a small number already working at the lower levels of the National curriculum.
76. Children are seen demonstrating strong counting skills and having lots of practical opportunities to weigh, measure and look at shape. In spite of weaknesses in overall vocabulary, children acquire well the vocabulary of mathematics. In their work with the story of the Three Bears, they show clear understanding of "bigger, smaller, shorter and taller". Daily numeracy lessons follow the general design of national guidelines and are well planned to secure skills, knowledge and understanding of mathematical concepts. These are built systematically on what children have previously learned.
77. Teachers record what children can and cannot do very accurately and use this information well to target individuals and small groups so that they might make better progress. Some opportunities are taken to develop mathematical skills through other activities, but a small weakness is that this does not happen as much as it might. For instance, when free choice of activities was allowed, it was often difficult to see many which would support the development of mathematical knowledge, whilst it was easier to see other skills and understanding being developed. Activities in sand or water were not checked regularly enough in order to guide children in exploring mathematical ideas, such as measuring, filling or pouring from small to large containers or comparing sizes.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

78. Adults in the Foundation Stage work hard to teach children about the world around them and as a result, children make good progress in their learning. In spite of this, there will still be a minority of children who will not reach some of the learning goals.
79. Children are very adept at construction work. They join construction material together carefully and easily. They are good at modelling with recycled materials and use implements well when carrying out cookery work.
80. As many children have computers at home, their manipulative skills and understanding of procedures with class computers is good. They can click and drag items across the screen using the mouse for example. They do not panic when things appear out of their control, on screen, but instead retrace their steps and once again achieve control of the game or program they are using.
81. Aspects of science are very popular with the children, who enjoy all types of investigation. They carefully observe what happens as water is mixed with sand and are keen to follow the growth of

daffodils in the class. They have experimented with different forms of covering in an attempt to see how best to keep a baby warm.

82. Progress in learning about the past and about places beyond their immediate environment, is often slow. Children can discuss what they were like as babies and can compare what they can do now. However, they find it much harder to sequence time. They have good experience and knowledge about the layout of their classes and the school as a whole. They are taken on walks around the grounds and to the library or on a road safety walk, but their understanding of places further away, is not well formed.

### **Physical development**

83. In spite of there not being enough outside apparatus or large wheeled toys for children to use in climbing or in general play activities, their progress in physical development is good, with most children reaching the learning goals for this area of learning.
84. They have two lessons in the hall each week and get other opportunities to use playground and field as weather permits. Their experiences of simple gymnastics and dance are very positive and they develop a good sense of awareness of space around them. They show good control of their bodies and are able to move in time to music, remembering movements they had previously been taught.
85. They have good opportunities to use equipment, which enhances their fine hand skills. They spread butter and jam to make sandwiches, trace over and around objects and cut and join things together well.

### **Creative development**

86. Most children will reach the Early Learning Goals in creative development, because of the good emphasis given to imaginative play, the enjoyment of music and opportunities to use a variety of media for art.
87. Children were seen re-enacting scenes from Goldilocks, taking on their roles well and speaking and listening in character. They have regular music lessons, often in the hall, where they have the opportunity to use a wide range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments.
88. The stimulating environment and the opportune intervention of adults help children learn about using paint brushes, crayons and pencils, exploring shape, colour and manipulating materials. A small group of painters, creating a picture of a character from their work on "Goldilocks" use colour well, understanding how to mix some secondary colours and changing brushes, without being reminded, in order to paint finer lines on the faces of their chosen characters.
89. Children talk with pride about their work, which is displayed throughout the classes. Its presentation shows children that their work is recognised and gives good support to their self-esteem and progress.

### **ENGLISH**

90. Standards are in line with those expected nationally in Years 2 and 6. Results in the 2002 national tests show standards to be in line with the national average in writing and reading at the end of Year 2. When compared to pupils in similar schools, standards are in line with those expected in reading but below average in writing. Year 6 test results have improved over the past two years at a slightly better rate than they have nationally. Standards are in line in reading and speaking and listening but are below in writing. The school has begun to address a weakness in pupils' writing across Years 1 - 6. The standard of writing would further improve if pupils were allowed more opportunities to use their skills in other subjects of the curriculum.



91. When pupils enter the school they are not confident in using Standard English. Their vocabulary and range of experiences are limited. However, good teaching in Years 1 and 2 assists pupils to develop their spoken language and to extend their range of ideas through reading. They extend their vocabulary through word lists devised by the teachers. By Years 2 and 6, pupils' achievement is sound and they attain standards in speaking and listening, which are in line with those expected from pupils of a similar age.
92. Pupils are expected to answer in full sentences when they explain their ideas in Year 2. In Year 1 lower attaining pupils are helped to recount stories through drama activities. In Years 3 - 6 pupils have fewer opportunities for developing spoken language both in English and in other subjects of the curriculum, and this has an adverse impact on pupils' writing. Pupils are good and attentive listeners and respond well to their teachers, but more could be done to improve communication between pupils.
93. Pupils achieve well throughout the school in improving their reading. Pupils are interested in books from an early age and a specific structured programme helps pupils to gain confidence in years 1 and 2. In Year 6 pupils are confident readers able to accept the challenge of a wide range of texts. However, their knowledge of authors and their state preferences in reading indicate a limited range of reading experiences. Average and below average pupils have a good grasp of letter sounds in Years 1 and 2. By Year 2 pupils can locate information using an alphabetical index and can gain information from the simple textbook. More could be done to build upon these skills in Years 3-6. Higher attaining pupils, in those years, are confidence readers, but their choice of books and styles are limited. More could be done to extend the range and understanding of the pupils.
94. Pupils' attainments in writing are sound by Year 2, but by Year 6, they do not experience a sufficient range of activities to develop their skills fully. Writing in Years 1-2 is developed effectively. Pupils effectively learn their letter shapes from an early age and are encouraged to extend their story writing. In this, they begin to extend their ideas in recognisable sequences. Vocabulary becomes more imaginative as pupils extend their writing. In Years 3-6, whilst pupils write clearly and with few spelling mistakes, their vocabulary is limited and ideas are insufficiently developed through confident writing. Whilst pupils in these latter years encounter different forms of writing they have insufficient opportunities for practising and so developing their spoken and written language. Pupils with special educational needs develop their language skills well.
95. Standards of handwriting are good. Pupils practise handwriting from Year 1 and they quickly develop a clear, cursive handwriting style. However, pupils in Year 6 practise handwriting without any discernible improvement and this time could be better used. Spelling is good. Pupils have long lists of weekly spellings to learn and generally from Year 2 pupils are spelling common words without error. However, the imaginative use of words is not apparent in pupils writing as they move through Years 3 -6.
96. The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory overall. It is better in Year 1 and 2 where most of the teaching seen during the inspection was good and occasionally excellent. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach reading and writing. In Year 1 teaching is matched closely to the needs of individual pupils because the teacher has very good knowledge of the subject and knows the pupils well. Very effective use is made of learning support assistants to involve lower attaining pupils in practical activities to support their understanding of a story. In Year 3 pupils compare instructional texts and the lesson proceeds at a brisk pace to keep the interest of the pupils. In the final part of the lesson pupils are expected to explain their finding at length and to assess what they have learnt during the lesson. They are thus given some measure of independence which boosts their confidence in tackling the work projected for the next lesson. However, improvements could be made in developing speaking in Years 3 - 6. Whilst a large amount of the school day is given over to specific English development there are few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing and use their reading in other subjects of the curriculum,

especially in years 3-6. Pupils have few opportunities to redraft their written work, especially in Year 6. Setting arrangements and extra writing workshops are used to extend the skills of more able pupils in Years 5 and 6. However, more could be done from Year 3 to plan appropriate class-work which provides sufficient challenge for these more able pupils.

97. Pupils are well behaved throughout the school because of the high expectations of the teachers and because teachers manage their pupils well. Relationship between pupils and their teachers and between pupils are group and these contribute to the positive and friendly atmospheres in the classrooms.
98. Teachers follow the National Literacy Strategy and effectively use the three-part lesson structure to engage and motivate their pupils. The Strategy is supplemented by extra lessons in reading, handwriting and spelling. Extended writing is also added in Years 1 and 2. Effective use is made of learning support assistants to support average attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. Teachers assess their pupils effectively and use this information to set pupils targets to assist in improving their work. Pupils can use information and communication technology effectively to word process and to search for information on the Internet. However, a more structured use of these skills, which would allow pupils to recognise their skills and build upon their previous learning, could assist pupils in improving their writing.
99. The leadership of English is satisfactory. There are joint co-ordinators, one in Years 1-2 and the other in Years 3-6. In Years 1-2, the co-ordination is good. In years 3-6 the co-ordinator is new in post and has yet to make a full impact. However, both work closely together and have introduced strategies to improve the quality of pupils' writing.

## **MATHEMATICS**

100. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the standards attained by pupils are above the national average. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls throughout the school.
101. Pupils of all ages and abilities make good overall progress thanks to the good, and sometimes very good, level of teaching that they experience in the classroom. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. This good level of progress is chiefly owing to the high level of support they receive in the classrooms and the way in which classes in Years 2 to 6 are set for mathematics. The school ensures that the work given to pupils is suitable and matches their individual abilities.
102. By the end of Year 2, pupils work confidently with numbers up to one hundred and in some cases up to one thousand. They know the two, five and ten times tables. They are good at mental arithmetic. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and pupils are quickly and accurately answering questions on number bonds to twenty, with higher-attaining pupils working with multiples of ten, up to one hundred. Pupils understand simple addition and subtraction and teachers reinforce the pupils' understanding by asking them to work on problems involving coins. Through good and detailed planning, teachers ensure that pupils understand simple fractions, can measure in centimetres and recognise the major two and three-dimensional shapes. The majority of pupils understand units of time from seconds right through to years, and use other standard measures for length, weight and capacity.
103. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils have a good grasp of addition, multiplication, subtraction and division. With careful questioning, that includes all levels of ability, teachers assess pupils' understanding and plan future lessons based on this information. The mental opening starter sessions are lively and challenging and develop the ability of pupils to use mental processes when solving problems. Pupils can accurately record subtraction sums involving three digit numbers using the expanded method. Some higher-attaining pupils are subtracting using the standard contracted method and involving four digit numbers. They have a clear understanding of equivalent fractions and how to change fractions into decimals. In work on shape, space and measures, pupils understand ideas such as perimeter and area and the relationship between them for regular quadrilaterals. They describe triangles using the appropriate vocabulary such as equilateral and scalene and measure angles to the nearest degree. In data handling, pupils are proficient in collecting and recording data, sometimes in the form of tally

charts, and presenting results as graphs. They also know how to use spreadsheets on the computer to enter and interpret data.

104. The teaching of mathematics is good overall. Throughout the school, the majority of teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and high expectations. In the majority of lessons observed, pupils reach the objectives set through a combination of well structured activities that are matched to their abilities, a high level of effective support from learning support assistants and their own enthusiasm for the subject. There is a tendency to over-use worksheets, some of which do not give pupils enough practice in setting out work for themselves.
105. Homework is set on a fairly regular basis and the majority of pupils complete the work. The quality of marking is variable and often there are not sufficient comments to enable pupils to understand what they have to do to make progress. All teachers follow the recommended structure of the National Numeracy Strategy, which they use effectively, and there is a good coverage of all the National Curriculum attainment targets. The school uses a variety of nationally recognised tests to assess pupils' attainment throughout the school. There is detailed analysis of the results, which helps staff decide sets for the teaching of mathematics from Year 2 to Year 6.
106. The co-ordinator for mathematics is very keen to build on the successes already achieved and is always seeking ways to raise standards through such activities as Springboard and booster classes. She is able to support staff through lesson observations and informal meetings. Through the careful use of the budget for mathematics she has built up good quality resources, which are readily available to teachers and greatly enhance the teaching of mathematics throughout the school.

## **SCIENCE**

107. The test results of Year 6 pupils in 2002 were in line with those achieved nationally and those achieved in similar schools. Current pupils are achieving levels which indicate that they make sound progress as they advance through the school. In 2002, assessments of pupils' achievements at the end of Year 2 were in line with those expected nationally and the levels achieved in similar schools. Inspection evidence confirms the levels achieved in Year 6 but indicates that pupils' knowledge and skills are rising in Year 2. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress overall and more able pupils achieve appropriately higher standards.
108. In Year 1, pupils describe the different qualities of materials and are learning why they are used for different purposes. They have a good range of approaches to sorting materials and use a satisfactory vocabulary such as "smooth", "shiny" and "rough". Pupils learn to use different senses to assess the materials they handle and enjoy practical activities to extend their learning. These skills are well developed in Year 2 where pupils were examining forces. They were challenged to explain what a range of objects on the carpet had in common. Pupils were quick to appreciate that the objects could be moved by pulling and pushing them. They applied this learning to using push buttons on a recording machine. More able pupils observed that a ball was kept on the ground by gravity. A pupil commented that one could not push a statue over which was anchored to the ground and that walls could not be pushed or pulled! In Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of healthy foods and keep a diary of their eating habits. They know that some materials can be changed like water into ice and have conducted investigations in which they have measured time and quantities well.
109. By Year 6, pupils have a clear understanding of life and living forces. They know which conditions encourage plants to grow, identify different insects and understand that micro-organisms can cause food to decay. They have a satisfactory understanding of what constitutes a fair test although pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to design and organise their own experiments. In a practical activity investigating buoyancy, Year 6 pupils weighed different items in water and in the air. They appreciated that some articles weighed significantly less in water

and some tried to explain this using terms such as “upthrust”. More observant pupils wanted to experiment with articles of different shapes but did not have the time to do so. Pupils in Year 3 carried out a good investigation into which materials are opaque, translucent and transparent by observing the shadows thrown by holding them against a torch. They used vocabulary well to record and classify their results. Year 4 pupils examined which materials conducted electricity and were highly involved in identifying which metals were conductors and which were not. In previous work, pupils had observed the different qualities of stone and building materials and searched for them around the school. Good marking of their work helped them to understand how to raise their attainment.

110. The quality of teaching overall is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 - 6. Teachers make good use of a recently introduced commercial scheme to plan their activities and are placing a much greater emphasis on investigational work. This is helping pupils to gain a better understanding of concepts and generally engages their interest well. Teachers in Year 2 selected a good range of objects for pupils to consider and ran discussion sessions very well. Teachers encouraged pupils to comment very effectively and questioned them closely to develop their ideas and thinking. However, in Year 6 investigations, some of the materials provided did not help pupils pursue the desired objectives which meant that learning was not so successful. Teachers identify vocabulary in their planning but do not always present it clearly enough nor insist that pupils learn and use key words in their spoken answers. Good use is made of their mathematical skills to measure time and distances and quantities. Pupils record their experiments regularly but teachers do not insist that handwriting and presentation are of a high enough standard. Marking in Year 4 is good with clear indications of how pupils can improve their work, but this is not a consistent practice in all classes.
111. Assessment in the subject is being developed to ensure that the pace of work and tasks are appropriate to pupils’ abilities. However, while teachers keep comprehensive records of the work covered, they do not always concentrate sufficiently on assessing the skills which pupils acquire. The co-ordinator maintains an effective monitoring role but does not have enough non-contact time to closely observe the work covered in all classes. The co-ordinator is conscious of the need to evaluate how the new scheme of work is being implemented. However, she does not have the chance to influence planning prior to lessons with the effect that some tasks are not refined to engage pupils in really successful learning. Resources are good and information and communication technology is used well to help pupils present their findings in graphs and tables.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

112. Standards at the end of Year 2 and 6 are as expected for pupils in these age groups. They make satisfactory progress in their learning. Where the direct teaching of skills is carried out, they make much better progress. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their peers. Pupils are developing a satisfactory range of skills in drawing, painting and collage, although no judgement could be made on their work in sculpture and modelling which they undertake later in the school year.
113. Work on display and in sketch books in Years 1 and 2, show that pupils have had good opportunities to use pencil drawing techniques. Examples of good use of shading and precise use of pencil skills are noted in Year 1 drawings of bears. In Year 2 there are examples of pupils mixing primary colours to make the desired secondary colours. They are beginning to appreciate the work of a famous artist such as Lowry, as they produce pictures in his style.
114. In Years 3 And 4 pupils make use of crayons and pastels, colouring plants, flowers, fruit and vegetables. Pupils in Year 4 have some knowledge of the proportions of both the human body and face, which they try to use when drawing portraits of friends.
115. In Year 5 pupils have linked their pencil sketches with their work on Tudor England. Sketches of Henry the Eighth and his wives are well conceived while other work on Islamic prayer mats, shows good links to work in religious education. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils are given the

opportunity to make sketches of Tudor artefacts, using charcoal. They begin to represent the main features of artefacts such as quills and jars with increasing accuracy and are well-guided by their teacher.

116. Close observational drawing is a feature of work on display in Year 6. They have drawn natural objects such as flowers, pieces of wood, stones and shells. Whilst this work is of a good standard, pupils' work on three-dimensional activities were not available for judgement.
117. Limited observations of teaching do not allow a detailed judgement to be made. However, the art co-ordinator is aware that there is a need to develop teachers' own skills, particularly in three-dimensional work, so that they might be more confident in teaching the skills, knowledge and understanding required. A new scheme of work is being generated, but it is not yet fully in place. As a result the systematic development of skills, for example, is not safeguarded. She has not yet had opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning in classes, although she has monitored planning in the subject. Teaching makes satisfactory use of information and communication technology. Resources are sound overall, but there are insufficient quality art materials from around the world to adequately support pupils' multi-cultural development.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

118. Standards across the school are in line with those expected nationally and pupils make satisfactory progress. Pupils in Year 1 have a clear understanding of how a small range of puppets can be designed and made. They were seen designing faces for glove puppets. They sketched their initial designs putting labels on particular features, which required different materials. They noted how these would be joined to the base material and cut this material carefully, before joining. Templates were used in the making process, which did restrict the pupils' opportunities to draw and cut outlines, which they themselves had planned. Good opportunities are given for pupils to discuss and describe their work to their classmates, thus helping to improve their speaking and listening skills.
119. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils were seen practising bread-making skills, using malleable materials such as salt dough and plasticine, before attempting to use their new skills on bread itself. They received good instruction on the development of skills of plaiting, knotting and joining and having practiced the skills particular to their designs, they would be ready for using the real material the following week.
120. Work on display in Year 4 shows that pupils have been given good opportunities to look closely at the designing and making of chairs. They had opportunities to look at photographs and paintings of chairs and noted styles and materials. They then made good quality sketches of a chair for a special person. They noted specific design features and materials they would use, on their labelled sketches. Using recycled and new materials, pupils built chairs to their designs. They had good opportunities to evaluate their designs both during making and after completion, noting the parts they liked best and what elements they might have improved upon.
121. In a Year 6 lesson, having previously examined a range of packaging materials, the pupils were beginning to design a box to hold chocolates. They made good use of a "design planner" which helped focus their attention on the audience they were aiming at for their finished box. By the end of the lesson most pupils had produced good working designs, with some having made sketches from different angles to show small differences in their designs.
122. Teaching was good in all three lessons observed. Work had been carefully planned and resourced, so that all materials were readily available. Teachers engendered good discussion within the class, by careful well-informed questioning. Basic skills were being practised and perfected and pupils had a clear picture of the links between designing and making. As a result of the well-informed teaching, pupils made good progress in the lessons observed. This was well supported by their good attitudes and behaviour, which supported their learning well. Pupils with special educational needs were not given different to tasks to complete, but instead received occasional direct support, as a result of which they too made good progress in their learning.

123. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator is aware that the current schemes of work do not yet provide a blueprint for the development of skills, knowledge and understanding across the school. At the same time, it is recognised that some teachers are not clear enough about the standards of work produced and how these can be compared with the demands of the National Curriculum.

## GEOGRAPHY

124. The standard of pupils' work is broadly as expected nationally when they reach Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and the small number of pupils from the travelling community and those at the early stages of English language acquisition make satisfactory progress overall as they move up from Year 1 to Year 6.
125. Pupils now in Year 2 demonstrate awareness of localities beyond their own such as Lulworth Cove, Horndon-on the Hill and the Isle of Coll in Scotland. From studies about another, imaginary island in Scotland, pupils gain an understanding of physical features such as rivers and mountains and the effect of physical features on the lives of people who live there, as well as their dependence for some aspects of life on relationships with the mainland. At this point, in Year 2, pupils have mapping skills expected at this age. For example, on a map of Horndon-on-the-Hill they use a key to identify features such as the church, pub, bus stop and footpath. They can use a plan of the school to locate classes and to plot a route from the head teacher's office to their own classroom. Pupils use simple co-ordinates on a grid to identify specific locations and physical features and are starting to employ appropriate geographical language.
126. By Year 6, skills in using maps have developed satisfactorily and are as expected at this age. For example, in calculating three different routes from home to school pupils use 4 figure grid references on a map of the local area. Pupils' understanding of similarities and differences between their own area of Laindon and in other locations such as the Isle of Wight is developing appropriately and is well supported by the use of field trips and a residential visit. Pupils use sources of information such as books, photographs and the Internet satisfactorily. They have the expected understanding of how location affects the way people live and an adequate understanding of how people can either help or damage the environment and of natural disasters such as flooding. However, pupils do not sufficiently ask geographical questions or follow their own lines of enquiry in any depth.
127. Only one lesson was observed in Years 1 and 2. Consequently it is not possible to make a firm judgement about the quality of teaching. However, pupils demonstrated good levels of concentration and responded well to the teacher's good management and organisation. The wider evidence from an examination of pupils' work and from talking to staff and pupils indicates that pupils make good progress over time in Years 1 to 2 and especially in Year 2. The small number of lessons observed in Years 3 to 6 and the wider evidence of pupils' work indicates that teaching is satisfactory overall. Some good features of teaching that have a positive effect on pupils' achievement are evident throughout both key stages. These include good preparation of resources, which are used well and captivate pupils' interest. Good use is made of the school buildings and grounds as well as field trips to bring learning to life.
128. Some good use is made of new technology, for example the Internet, for research such as that seen in Year 6, where pupils had found out about bush fires in Australia. However, not enough regular use is made of computers in this way for pupils to ask geographical questions and to follow their own lines of enquiry.
129. A weakness in teaching, particularly in Years 3 to 6, is the minimal variation of tasks to meet pupils' differing needs, particularly to provide challenge for those who are capable of higher attainment. Many of the work sheets used require writing tasks at a level, which is too low especially for higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6. However, they do sometimes give support to lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs so that they develop their understanding of geography at the same rate as other pupils. While most teachers mark pupils' work regularly, the quality is inconsistent. It is good where targets are set and useful comments are made to improve work. However, comments are often restricted to giving praise.
130. The overall leadership and management of geography are good. Since amalgamation, the co-ordinator has concentrated on revising the policy and on producing a scheme of work based on national guidance, making use of a published scheme to support specific units of work. She has also put together a new system for checking pupils' attainment and progress. Through her



monitoring of pupils' work and observation of lessons, she knows that the most important areas are for development are the need to improve the range of opportunities for writing and further use of ICT. However, the action to deal with these issues is in the early stage of implementation and has not yet had time to have an impact on standards or the quality of teaching and learning.

## **HISTORY**

131. The standard of pupils' work is broadly in line with that expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 6. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, the small number of pupils with English as an additional language and those from the travelling community, make satisfactory progress over time.
132. Pupils now in Year 2, achieve well. They have the expected knowledge and understanding of significant events and people from the past. For example, they are familiar with some of the main facts in the history of Florence Nightingale and are aware of the influences her work had on nursing and hospitals. By sequencing a set of pictures of events in her life and by writing a diary as an eyewitness to the Great Fire of London, pupils are showing an increasing sense of chronology. They use books, photocopied sheets, artefacts and other sources to answer and ask questions about the past.
133. Pupils in Year 6 have the expected factual knowledge of different periods in history, such as the Roman, Tudor and Victorian periods. They know, for example, that Henry VIII had six wives. Most are aware of the break with Rome and the consequences for this country. Pupils know significant facts about Queen Victoria and the period of her reign. They recognise that life was different for the rich and poor in Victorian times. They know, for example, that there was high infant mortality, and that the poor lived in overcrowded conditions with poor sanitation. Pupils' understanding of what it was like to live in a particular period is demonstrated through written work such as an account of an imaginary interview with a 12-year-old factory girl. Pupils have the expected knowledge of changes that took place during specific periods in history and the reasons for them. For example, by using primary sources such as censuses, they recognise that people moved from rural to urban areas for work as a consequence of the industrial revolution. Pupils' understanding of the differences in the way that facets of the past can be presented and interpreted is less secure. Pupils do not sufficiently pose historical questions or follow their own lines of enquiry, as they should.
134. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The wider evidence from an examination of pupils' work indicates that learning is good in Year 2. Work reflects good levels of challenge for the higher attaining pupils. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop writing skills through longer pieces of writing such as diaries from the point of view of people from the past.
135. Where teaching is good or very good, as seen in Year 4 lessons, learning moves forward at a good pace because the activities are timed and expectations of what the pupils can do are high. Work, which involves using historical sources such as pictures and artefacts to find clues about the past, is well matched to the differing needs and aptitudes of the pupils with suitable challenge at all levels. Consequently, pupils are well motivated, keen to learn and are well focused on their tasks and their skills in historical enquiry are well developed.
136. In Year 6 classes, teaching is satisfactory. Although teachers provide relevant resources and question pupils appropriately, management of behaviour in both classes is weak. As a result, the pace of learning is slowed down and pupils do not make as much progress as they should.
137. There is some use of computers and other new technology across the school to support pupils' learning in history. However, not enough use is made of computers in classrooms for pupils to draft and present their work or to undertake research. While books are used in some lessons to provide information, there is an over reliance on photocopied materials from the published scheme

and there is some use of rather poorly photocopied pictures of artefacts. Although the school has identified work in history as having potential to develop pupils' writing skills, the rigid use of the published scheme of work sometimes limits opportunities for this. Most teachers

mark pupils' books regularly but there is an inconsistency in the use of comments to tell pupils how they might improve their work. Much work, especially in Year 1 and in Years 3 to 6, is simply ticked with an occasional comment or praise.

138. The overall leadership and management of history are satisfactory. Since amalgamation, the co-ordinator has concentrated on revising the policy and introducing a published scheme of work to ensure coverage of the National Curriculum requirements and to build up a bank of resources to support the scheme. However, she has not had the opportunity to check standards of work across the school or to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons. This is a weaker aspect of the role. There is good enrichment of the history curriculum through the use of visits in every year group.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

139. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with national expectations. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.
140. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop their knowledge of the various parts of a computer system. Teachers reinforce this knowledge by clearly labelling each part of a computer system in classrooms. Pupils know how to use the computer keyboard satisfactorily. The majority have satisfactory mouse control. They use their word processing skills to write text and art programs, such as 'colour magic' to design and create items, such as Christmas cards. Teachers ensure that pupils make sound progress in literacy as they follow up text reading, by asking pupils to write their own stories based on books read in literacy lessons. In Year 2, pupils demonstrate more advanced computing skills as they investigate websites, to find out specific information about people in history such as Florence Nightingale. Pupils understand how to save and print out their findings.
141. Pupils make sound progress with the acquisition of information and communication technology skills in Years 3 to 6. They enter text accurately, combining it with graphics. Teachers encourage pupils to select and use appropriate font size, colour and layout for given tasks, for example when creating posters for sports day. Pupils understand how to enter and compare data. For example, in Year 6, pupils use 'Excel' to complete a spreadsheet on the formula for finding the link between perimeter and area of rectangles. Teachers have ensured that the majority of pupils are confident in logging on and off, loading and selecting programs, and saving and retrieving work, through regular practice. Some aspects of information and communication technology, concerning control mechanisms has yet to be fully developed.
142. Although only a few lessons were observed during the week, evidence suggests that teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers are responding well to training opportunities and good use is made of the time classes spend in the computer suites. There are difficulties when some stations are not working and some members of staff cannot bring them back into use. During the inspection little use was made of the computers in classrooms.
143. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily across the curriculum. Use of the Internet and CD ROM's is effective in developing pupils' learning. Good use of pupils' word processing skills is used to enhance work in literacy. Charts, graphs and bar charts enhance pupils' work in numeracy and science. In Year 2 science, pupils produce graphs showing their hair colour, size of feet and area of hands as they consider differences in people. In Year 6 pupils use the Internet to access information on such topics as bushfires in Australia in geography, Victorian children at work in history and preparing keys for the study of Crustacea in science.

144. Pupils have very positive attitudes to the subject. The majority settle well to their work and readily help each other when experiencing difficulty. Pupils enjoy the tasks set them and handle equipment with extreme care.
145. There have been significant improvements in provision for the subject as the previous Infant and Junior schools have merged. Grant funding, for example through the National Grid for Learning and the New Opportunities Fund, has been well used to upgrade resources and to improve teaching skills. There are now two computer suites each of which can accommodate a class, working two to a computer. Teachers have received training so that they are now more competent to teach the required curriculum. Training is ongoing to ensure that the school keeps up with continuous developments such as the use of the inter-active white board. These initiatives are helping to raise provision and standards further throughout the school
146. The curriculum for information and communication technology is based on national guidelines, which help to ensure continuity and progression in learning. An extremely effective and enthusiastic co-ordinator manages information and communication technology. He has a good vision for the development of the subject. He supports colleagues very well with their planning and recording of pupils' achievements.

## **MUSIC**

147. By the end of Year 6 and Year 2, pupils' attainment is in line with expectations and they gain a number of positive experiences as they move through the school. Their progress, including those pupils with special educational needs, is satisfactory. Pupils take part in a programme of music that is built around a good policy and scheme of work, which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum.
148. There were not enough lessons observed to judge teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 but it is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Pupils' understanding is quite well developed through the introduction of subject terminology, such as in-canon, timbre, texture and dynamics. In the one Year 2 lesson seen, good use was made of instruments to keep a steady pulse as pupils successfully chanted a rap. Across the school, pupils develop an awareness of rhythm and dynamics by following a variety of rhythms clapped by the teacher and they accurately copy them. They understand how a composer uses pitch and tempo to indicate mood as they study the operetta Hansel and Gretel. Teachers make good use of CD's and illustrations, such as a stage set, to enhance the pupils' learning of the link between songs being learned and the actors who would sing these songs in a staged production. Pupils effectively discover how lyrics can be used to tell a story. Literacy skills are satisfactorily promoted through the emphasis that is placed on the learning of words of a range of songs and on teaching the correct technical vocabulary. Musical composition features strongly in both Years 1 and 2 and Years 3 to 6. Younger pupils are successfully taught how to use two symbols to record their clapping patterns. Older pupils use a computer program to successfully write music in shorthand.
149. Pupils' singing is reasonably tuneful, although not all pupils join in enthusiastically. Many pupils join the school choirs and develop their awareness of audience by performances both in school and to wider audiences outside. The junior choir sing with great enthusiasm. They rehearse regularly to ensure tuneful singing and clarity of words. They sing well in two parts. One teacher has encouraged a number of Year 3 pupils to join a recorder group, which meets before school starts. These pupils understand simple musical notation and, in the majority of cases, play tunes well by reading the score.
150. Teachers encourage pupils listen to music and express their feelings to what they have heard in art and writing. In Year 2 classes, for example, pupils listen to 'Fossils' from Carnival of the Animals by Saint-Saens and one pupil wrote, "this music made me think of someone tiptoeing through a door, very secretly". Other pupils produce good paintings after listening to The Fantasy Overture by Tchaikovsky.

151. Music is presently co-ordinated by the headteacher. A new member of staff, who is a music specialist, will take over this role shortly.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

152. Standards are as expected nationally in Year 2 and Year 6. All groups of pupils in Years 1 to 6 make satisfactory progress as they move up through the school.
153. At this point in Year 2, pupils are able to reproduce actions and control their body movements in response to the rhythm of different kinds of music, from marches to modern popular dance. Similarly in gymnastics pupils are developing appropriate control of movements on two feet and in using hands and feet. Skills in balancing, jumping, rolling are as expected for their ages and they make good use of these movements in moving along, over, under and off high and low apparatus. Pupils work well with a partner copying movements and taking turns to be the leader.
154. Most pupils in Year 6 have the expected confidence and skills in control of movement, such as when moving along, balancing and jumping on mats or on high and low apparatus. They satisfactorily create a sequence of activities based on such movements and including balancing and travelling. Pupils successfully work in small groups to produce a performance. They are able to give comments and ideas for improvement when evaluating each other's work. For example, they make evaluative observations on the shape, height and landing of each other's jumps. Pupils know the importance of warming up at the start of a lesson and cooling down at the end, and understand the effect of exercise on the body.
155. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching and learning in lessons seen during the inspection varied from very good to satisfactory. Teachers generally give clear instructions and pace activities well so that pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise new skills. A very good Year 6 lesson, taught by the co-ordinator, was planned well and thoroughly organised to help pupils use and further develop skills learned in previous lessons. The teacher gave pupils good opportunities to practise and improve their performance and to evaluate their work constructively. Most teachers successfully demonstrate skills and make effective use of pupils' work as examples.
156. In another good lesson in Year 2, well-established routines and high expectations of good behaviour ensured that pupils remained quiet and sat attentively while taking turns to put out apparatus. Pupils' self-esteem was raised through praise and from the real success they experienced. In a good dance lesson in Year 3, pupils clearly enjoyed dancing a reel, demonstrating good levels of physical effort and responding well to effective teaching.
157. Occasionally there are missed opportunities for pupils to evaluate their performance and that of others. Teachers are mindful of health and safety issues. They pay good attention to safety and ensure that they and their pupils are suitably dressed with appropriate clothing. Hazards are identified, for example, the position of the piano, and pupils are also reminded of safe ways to carry apparatus.
158. The leadership and management of physical education are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and leads by good example, having considerable expertise, which is shared with the pupils he teaches, mainly in Year 6. He checks teachers' plans to ensure that the curriculum requirements are met. However, he has not had the opportunity to evaluate standards across the school and there is no formal, planned checking of teaching and learning, such as through lesson observations. This is a weaker aspect of the role.
159. Accommodation for physical education is good. There are two halls, the one for Years 3 to Year 6 has been enlarged, and there are extensive playing fields. Although one hall was out of use during building works, these good facilities are now having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
160. A particular strength in physical education provision is the extensive involvement of staff and large numbers of pupils in activities additional to lessons. These include football, netball and rugby clubs in the winter and swimming, cricket, athletics and country dancing in the summer. Pupils

also benefit from good links with local sporting associations who are involved in coaching in rugby and cricket.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

161. The standards of attainment are in line with those expected of pupils of a similar age at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, as matched against the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils learn about religion and they learn effectively through religion. This contributes to the good relationships fostered within the school and thus the teaching of the subject makes a good contribution to the development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural learning in the school.
162. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. In Year 1 pupils begin to encounter secular and religious stories. They begin to recognise the symbolism, of giving, in certain religious practices. In Year 2 pupils explore the Hindu stories. In Year 3 pupils recount the story of "The Good Samaritan" and relate this to the larger theme of "Who is My Neighbour?". In doing this they relate the Biblical story to their own experience by suggesting ways in which help can be given to individuals in the classroom. In Year 4 pupils explore the significance of food in Judaism. In Year 5, they recognise some of the artefacts connected to the Sikh wedding ceremony. In Year 6, they have some knowledge of the significant books of Christianity, Sikhism, Islam and Judaism. As pupils progress through, they acquire knowledge about the major world religions. However, the breadth and understanding apparent in teaching in Years 1 - 4 could be better developed to engender deeper understanding of their own beliefs and the beliefs of others.
163. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and this helps to create positive and friendly classrooms in which pupils learn effectively. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are challenged to relate complicated ideas to their own lives. They are given opportunities to share their experiences with others when considering the "gifts" they would give to a new born baby. In Year 3 pupils reflect upon Christian stories. However in Years 5 and 6 pupils tend to recount facts about other religions. In Years 3-6 there is insufficient planning to meet the learning needs of all pupils, especially the most and least able. Books and other resources are insufficient to provide challenge for the most able pupils. There are too few opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their ideas and the ideas of others. The opportunities for pupils to explore their ideas through extended pieces of writing are limited. The use of information and communication technology is limited.
164. Leadership and management of the subject by the headteacher is satisfactory. This ensures that the requirements of the agreed syllabus are met. However, the achievement of pupils could be improved with more effective medium-term planning in Years 3 to 6, and with more careful monitoring of those standards set.