

INSPECTION REPORT

**HILLHOUSE CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VC)
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Waltham Abbey

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 133254

Headteacher: Mrs S Batley

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock
21261

Dates of inspection: 14th – 17th October 2002

Inspection number: 249020

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Ninefields Estate Waltham Abbey Essex
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Steve Kipps
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21261	Pauline Silcock	Registered inspector	Mathematics Art and design History Music Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9079	Ann Moss	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
26232	Christopher Grove	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Geography Religious education Special educational needs	
11976	Heather Toynbee	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education Foundation Stage	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hillhouse Church of England Primary School opened in September 2001, catering for children aged 4 to 11 years. Currently, it is housed in two adjacent buildings, with a newly refurbished building able to accommodate all classes near completion. Although its total of 186 pupils breaks down into broadly equal numbers of boys and girls in most classes, there is a marked gender imbalance in Year 3. Children start school in the September before they will be five. Those not five until the summer term attend on a 'morning only' basis for their first term, becoming full-time in January. At present there are 13 part-time and 14 full-time children. The school assesses most children on entry as below average for their age in speaking and listening, reading, writing and number. Approximately 21 per cent of all pupils are eligible for free school meals. Almost all pupils are white British in origin. Around eight per cent are of minority ethnic origin. A small number have English as an additional language but they are all competent in English language skills. Approximately 25 per cent of pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs with almost 3 per cent having a Statement of special need. Needs relate to specific learning difficulties linked to reading and writing, speech and communication problems, behavioural and emotional difficulties and medical problems.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hillhouse is a very effective school. Frequently good or better teaching has a marked impact on pupils' enthusiasm with a consequent effect on standards in many subjects. The headteacher sets an excellent example in the ways she deals with members of the school community, from pupils and staff to parents and governors. The excellent team spirit amongst all staff and a shared determination to raise standards owes much to her leadership. She is very ably supported by a dedicated deputy, whose high standard of teaching is a model for colleagues. Governors, too, work hard on the school's behalf and are dedicated to raising standards further. The school gained a school achievement award from the Department for Education and Skills in recognition of good improvement in its first year. Its warm and welcoming ethos linked to Christian values and aims – that individuals matter and each can make a valuable contribution to school life – is extended to all. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The good or better quality of much teaching affects pupils' enjoyment of learning and their concentration in almost all lessons.
- Standards in English, mathematics and science are often better than expected because teachers set high expectations of work and behaviour and match tasks well to differing abilities.
- Provision for pupils' personal and social development, including their moral development, is very good. It is underpinned by the high priority placed on the care and welfare of pupils.
- Provision for special educational needs is very good, being catered for well in teachers' planning. This provision includes pupils found able and talented in some subjects.
- The very good teaching in the Reception class ensures all children make good progress and gain a solid foundation for future learning.
- Relationships at all levels between adults and adults and pupils are very good, contributing strongly to a positive ethos in and out of classrooms.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing.
- The management and development of subjects so that all curriculum leaders have an overview of classroom practices.
- Partnership with parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school is only at the start of its second year, there is no previous inspection report to set a baseline for improvement. Nevertheless, it is clear from talking to parents, members of staff and governors and looking at available documentation that improvements have been made. Work on establishing whole-school approaches has affected planning across the curriculum, achieving consistency in teaching and

learning practices. A priority on training in behaviour management for all staff has very effectively impinged on pupils' attitudes to learning and more generally has improved the school ethos. More recently, changes to staffing in the Reception class have noticeably improved provision and children's learning experiences. The well-established governing body is committed to its role in raising standards.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/A	N/A	D	C
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	E	C
Science	N/A	N/A	D	C

Key	
Well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
Below average	D
Well below average	E

The table shows that, in the first year of the school's statutory tests, pupils aged 11 gained below average results in science and English and well below average in mathematics compared with pupils in all schools. When comparisons are made with pupils in similar schools, results are average in all three subjects. It is clearly not possible to compare results over time and neither is it possible to draw inferences from results for only one year. In fact, targets for English and mathematics for 11 year olds in 2002 were met and those set for science exceeded. At this early point in the school year, inspection findings reveal pupils in Year 2 reach standards broadly expected for their age in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing, however, fall below expectation. In Year 6, inspection evidence finds pupils reach standards close to the average in English and mathematics. Standards in science as seen in workbooks are below average although these oldest pupils do well when engaged in investigative and experimental work and in discussions, reaching average standards overall. Many pupils are hampered by difficulties writing up their findings. Pupils across the school apply literacy and numeracy skills suitably to other subjects. Pupils' information and communication technology skills with regard to the use of computers are unsatisfactory in Year 2 and satisfactory overall by Year 6. There was insufficient evidence to form a judgement about standards in history or design and technology for these oldest pupils but Year 2 pupils reach satisfactory standards, relative to their age and abilities, in both subjects and in geography, physical education and religious education. In Year 6, standards in physical education are also found satisfactory. These oldest pupils reach good standards in geography and religious education. There was insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement about standards in music in Year 2 but indications are that they are at least in line with what can be expected at this age. Strengths are seen in pupils' music in Year 6 because of a teacher's subject expertise. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need, make good progress relative to their prior attainment across the age range. Children in the Reception class make good progress and most are judged likely to reach the early learning goals in all areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and look forward to their day.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are courteous to adults and to one another. They work co-operatively on tasks and share equipment willingly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils of all ages organise their work. They make excellent relationships with adults and one another.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Most pupils arrive promptly.

This is an area of considerable strength. Pupils arrive at school expecting to enjoy their day. They respond well to adults' generally high expectations of their work and behaviour. Children in Reception register

themselves and sit on the carpet keenly anticipating what is to come. In assemblies, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. All listen attentively and with respect to visitors.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is strong, with good teaching found in all classes and particular strengths in Reception and Years 3 to 6 where teaching is often very good. In Years 5 and 6 it is sometimes excellent. In the best lessons, teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour lead to high concentration. For instance, in a Year 5 literacy lesson pupils' diary writing went beyond a teacher's expectation, as they became engrossed in their work. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need frequently get good support both from class teachers and from support staff. For example, when a group of Year 6 pupils worked together on problems rotating shapes around a central axis, a classroom assistant's questions and judicious support made all the difference. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is very good. Pupils gain good speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. A significant number have problems setting down ideas in writing, though. For example, although Year 4 pupils imagined very well what it was like to be an evacuee during World War II, after watching a history video, many found it hard to formulate their ideas for a writing task.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils have good opportunities to develop practical, physical and creative interests and aptitudes in addition to basic skills in learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Across the age range, pupils are fully included in all activities planned in and out of classrooms.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. These pupils in fact have proficient English language skills. They have access to all aspects of the curriculum alongside their peers and participate fully in classroom and school events.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall with real strengths in moral and social education. These are closely linked to planning for personal, social and health education lessons and to religious education in highly effective ways.
How well the school cares for its pupils	To very good effect. Procedures for Child Protection and for ensuring the welfare of pupils are very good.

Equality of access to the curriculum for all pupils is excellent. It underpins planning across all areas in the Reception class and all National Curriculum subjects and religious education in Years 1 to 6. Unsatisfactory overall provision for information and communication technology affects pupils' progress adversely. Fully aware of this, the school makes dealing with it a high priority in school improvement planning. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, but does not reflect in any depth the diverse cultures, faiths and languages within the school or the wider society. The school admits that provision meant to extend pupils' activities beyond the classroom (such as clubs and sporting activities) is limited, making this, too, a priority. Nevertheless, the curriculum is considerably enhanced by visits to places of interest and by many visitors to the school. The school works hard to establish its satisfactory partnership with parents, recognising this remains an important area for further development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is an excellent leader, working in close partnership with her deputy. Rigorous monitoring gives them a very good overview of strengths in provision and where improvements can be made.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily, though governors demonstrate high levels of commitment and energy to school improvement, which augers well for future development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Rigorous monitoring of all aspects of the school's work is in place. Strengths and areas for development are known.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Spending is matched to priorities in school improvement planning with specific grants properly accounted for.

While curriculum leaders have good control over their subject areas most do not, yet, monitor teaching and learning practices. Sufficient staff meet curricular demands although the school has difficulty recruiting and retaining qualified teachers. Accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. The new building is attractive but presents practical problems (for example, the height of the one sink in the new classroom for Reception children is not 'child friendly'). In addition to improving information and communication technology facilities, the school sees the need for a library to be located in the refurbished building in line with its development planning. Principles of 'best value' are very well applied. The school monitors spending in light of these, keeping to guidelines. Governors have appointed a 'responsible officer' to monitor finances and keep them informed of these at governing body meetings.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and want to come. • Children make good progress because teaching is good; they enjoy lessons. • Children are well behaved. • Teachers know children well. They have high expectations of children's achievements. • The headteacher and teachers are easy to approach when there are concerns. • The school is well led and managed. There have been good improvements in a year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Range of club activities outside lessons. • Information about children's progress. • Homework provision.

Inspectors agree with positive comments from parents. Information for parents is judged satisfactory in the main, with good features (for example, details of what children will study during each half term). However, they agree with those parents who find annual reports on progress somewhat bland and uninformative, with language not always easily understood (for instance, related to the National Curriculum levels). They also agree, as noted above, that club activities outside lessons are limited. They do not agree that homework provision is unsatisfactory. It is set regularly in line with the school's policy, according to pupils' ages and capabilities in all year groups.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The full range of abilities is present when children start school in the Reception class. Through its own assessment procedures, the school assesses most as below expectation in communication, language and literature, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. They are mostly average in their social, emotional and personal development. Yet inspection evidence shows that many have already made good progress in their learning. This includes those children with special educational needs who are very well supported across the Foundation Stage in ways aimed well at helping them meet targets in line with their identified needs.
2. In class sessions, most Reception children eagerly contribute their ideas and speak up confidently so everyone can hear. They like listening to stories and acting out familiar ones in the role-play area such as "Goldilocks and the Three Bears". They realise that printed text gives information about pictures in books and goes from left to right. Most children recognise their names and read simple words in the 'big book' when their teacher reads to the class. They know letter sounds and names of letters of the alphabet. Mostly, they can count five fingers on one hand with adult help. They hold up the correct number of fingers when asked to show how many they need to make three and then hold up "two more". They know how to use the till in the class 'shop' and enjoy being 'shopper' and 'shop keeper' when the teacher asks for volunteers to count out money to buy goods or give change. They are acquiring good computer skills. At the start of a lesson, older children tell the teacher how to 'log on' to enter a program. They manipulate the mouse and drag items across the screen to put in the correct place. Their good physical skills allow them to use a wide range of tools for writing, painting and gluing and for taking wheeled toys around the outdoor playground. In the school hall, too, they show good control when moving in the larger space and balancing bean-bags on different body parts. Children mostly dress and undress themselves independently. They paint confidently and make collages and three-dimensional objects from a range of materials. They know how to play musical instruments and older children are acquiring good musical skills through their activities in the music room in the 'new' building. Children work together co-operatively and with very good social skills in many situations, as when they share toys in the sand tray. Children's good progress is owed to adults' very good interaction with them. By the end of the Reception year, nearly all are judged likely to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. Those not listed above are: creative and physical development. Pupils are well prepared for their work in Year 1.
3. In statutory tests in 2002 at the end of Year 2 (the first year for tests in the school), 83 per cent of seven-year-olds gained the expected Level 2 or above in reading, which is close to the national average (84 per cent). In writing and mathematics, 94 per cent achieved expected levels, which is better than national averages in these tests (86 and 90 per cent respectively). Teachers' assessments in science suggest pupils are working at a level significantly below the national average. However, detailed information about test results (for example, at the higher Level 3 and differences between boys' and girls' results) and teacher-assessment (including assessments of pupils' speaking and listening skills) is not currently available, so more detailed comparisons with results in all or similar schools are not possible.
4. Eleven-year-olds were broadly in line with the national average in the 2002 statutory tests in English at Level 4. Results at Level 5, however, are below average. In mathematics, the reverse of this picture is seen. Results at the higher level are in line with the national average but below it at Level 4. Results in science are well above expected levels but below the average at Level 5 when compared with the national picture. When pupils' scores for each test are added together and averaged for points score purposes, they reveal pupils below the national average in English and science and well below in mathematics. In English and especially mathematics, a small but significant number achieved below expectation and this had an adverse effect on overall scores. In science, the below average results at the higher level affected overall scores similarly, even though pupils did well at expected levels. Compared to similar schools' results, pupils were in line with their peers in all three subjects. It is noted that these are only one year's results and one cannot therefore draw firm conclusions from these or judge results over time. Results in terms of gender differences are not available. Statutory targets for English and mathematics for these oldest pupils were met in 2002 and those for science

exceeded. These results reflect strengths in science teaching and in the way pupils do practical work through investigative and experimental approaches, as seen during the inspection. Targets are based realistically on available assessment information and are adjusted to accord with this. For example, targets for English and mathematics for the current Year 6 are significantly lower than in the previous year, to take account of the fact that almost half the cohort has special educational needs.

5. At this early point in the school year, inspection findings show pupils in Year 2 reach standards broadly expected in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics and science. Standards in writing, however, fall below expectation. For example, most have difficulty transferring their oral knowledge about words such as 'and' and 'but' to connect sentences when writing in literacy lessons. Similarly, pupils have secure understanding of work in other subjects, when discussing historical and religious ideas, for example, but have great difficulty recording these. However, when work is strongly practical and well supported by interesting activities they reach a higher standard in written work (this was highlighted in their geography workbooks and in a geography lesson). Many Year 2 pupils read with reasonable fluency and good levels of understanding both for their own purposes (reading from storybooks for instance) and when doing lesson tasks. They can apply relevant strategies to unknown words, as when they 'sound out' an initial letter or guess using a picture clue. Pupils are developing good number skills. Those of average ability understand relevant number vocabulary (such as 'digit') and that the position of a number matters for its value. They explain, for example, what each digit is worth in two digit numbers such as 24. They have a good grasp of number operations of addition and subtraction and of properties of shape. More able pupils handle three and four digit numbers and transfer their knowledge of measuring in centimetres and millimetres to new work on capacity. Work in their exercise books shows Year 2 pupils have grasped principles about how sound travels, through their scientific investigations. However, they have difficulty writing up their work. Such difficulty does not really reflect what they have learned.
6. In Year 6, inspection evidence finds pupils reaching expected standards in all aspects of English (that is, speaking and listening, reading and writing) and in mathematics. Standards in science as seen in workbooks are below the national average at this point although these oldest pupils clearly do well in lessons when engaged in investigative and experimental work. When discussing this, they reveal understanding in line with expectations. They explain the purposes of experiments and any variables they are taking into account. They understand the need for 'fair testing' and can repeat tests to verify findings. Indeed, pupils often do better than expected in aspects of each of these three core subjects relative to their abilities because of the frequently very good or excellent teaching. This teaching ensures all pupils are well prepared for tasks with a good notion of what they are to do and expected outcomes. Difficulties in science for pupils with learning needs, when reading instructions and, especially, when writing, hinder progress but the school is working to overcome this. For example, in addition to such classes for numeracy, booster classes in literacy for older pupils are already being set up, expected to involve all those eligible, as was the case last year. In addition, a science club is to be reinstated. Previously, this was attended by pupils across Years 4, 5 and 6 and was very popular, with full attendance each week. Year 6 pupils are developing good number skills. They understand multiples in relation to the 2, 4 and 8 times tables and go beyond these when studying and answering questions about a grid of numbers on the board (for example, relating to the 12 times table). They understand relevant vocabulary for rotating shapes around a central axis and talk about outcomes knowledgeably. More able pupils use desk and lap top computers to access a program for such work after a brief discussion with a teacher.
7. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, make good progress and achieve in line with their prior attainment because of their good support especially (but not only) in literacy and numeracy lessons. At times, these pupils do better than expected. This was seen, for example, in practical science work and in music lessons in Year 6. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. A small number of bilingual pupils are fully integrated into all teaching and learning activities throughout the school and no differences in achievement were seen between these and their peers. The school's analysis of statutory test data for 2002 shows minority ethnic pupils, including those with languages other than English, achieved better than their peers overall.
8. Pupils across the school apply their literacy and numeracy skills appropriately to other subjects. For example, pupils use rulers to measure during design and technology lessons and a variety of scales in their science work. However, as outlined, there are particular difficulties in relation to the

application of writing skills. The school is well aware of these and school improvement planning highlights strategies to address weaknesses in addition to planned booster classes. For example, a greater stress on structured talk in all subjects to help pupils articulate their thinking and extend their ideas is seen as crucial to helping them with writing skills. This strategy is already proving effective and classroom talk is frequently stimulating and lively, well aimed at engaging pupils' interest and generating ideas for later written work. Pupils' information and communication technology skills with regard to computers are unsatisfactory in Year 2 and satisfactory overall by Year 6. Some good application of skills was seen in class lessons on occasion, showing a transfer of relevant learning from lessons in the computer suite. In the main, though, the subject is still developing, in large part because of circumstances outside the control of the school. It has encountered many problems, firstly in setting up machines in the 'old' building soon after amalgamation of the Infant and Junior schools and then in moving equipment within the year to the new computer suite. Improving provision in order to raise standards is rightly seen as a high priority.

9. From the limited range of work available at this point in the school year, pupils in Years 1 to 6 are judged satisfactory in art and design relative to their ages and abilities. However, standards in drawing and painting do not reach those expected by Year 6 since pupils have a limited understanding of drawing and how to mix and apply water-based paints. But they work hard to improve and already show a good knowledge of how to arrange elements for still life compositions, helped by working on these over a series of lessons and a close study of the work of famous artists. Pupils in Years 1 to 4 achieve satisfactorily in design and technology. No lessons or work for older pupils were seen so that a judgement on these is not made. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do satisfactory work in religious education and history. Good work is seen in religious education in Years 3 to 6 and in history in Years 3 and 4. As noted, younger pupils are held back by poor writing skills in these subjects, although Year 4 pupils' written work shows similar difficulties, affecting their overall achievement. No history lessons were observed in classes for older pupils and work was not available because of the way the subject is planned across each term. Achievement in geography, music and physical education relative to pupils' abilities is good. There are strengths in music in Years 3 to 6 especially amongst the oldest pupils. Here, a teacher's subject expertise gives a really sound framework to lessons. More generally, the frequently good or better teaching has a notable effect on pupils' progress in learning. At this very early point in the school year, such progress is discernible across subjects and is marked in many where standards of achievement are found good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils have very good attitudes to school and to their learning. These positive attitudes are due mainly to the consistently good management of pupils by all staff in pursuit of high standards of work and personal responsibility. The school works hard to instil such attitudes together with a love of learning into its pupils. Its work is reinforced by a very good ethos. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school and most certainly arrive on time each morning.
11. On arrival, pupils look forward to their day happily. The youngest children in the Reception class register themselves by selecting their name from a display and sticking it on a number line. They settle quickly to listen to their teacher and begin activities. Pupils of all ages are polite, cheerful and eager to learn. They have a positive approach and try hard to meet the generally high expectations of their teachers. For example, in a Year 5 literacy lesson, pupils became progressively more involved in tasks, showing a growing sense of achievement and delight at their success. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, proud to share their successes: this was seen in an assembly for Years 1 and 2 when certificates for good reading were awarded. The school's safe and welcoming atmosphere provides a secure learning environment, encouraging pupils to do their best. They respond well, with very good habits of working. Sustained concentration was seen in many lessons. In an assembly for Years 3 to 6, pupils listened well to a visitor and responded sensitively to the quiet, calm atmosphere he established.
12. Behaviour in and around school is very good and exemplary in assemblies. When there is a change of activities in lessons or pupils have to move from one building to the other, they move quickly and with a minimum of fuss, not wasting valuable time. This was observed, for instance, when Reception children walked from their classroom to the music room in the main school. Regarding Years 1 to 4, very good behaviour was evident during a 'wet' playtime when pupils co-operated in a variety of games and activities, supervised by support staff. The rewards and sanctions systems are well established

and consistently applied. There is an obvious absence of oppressive behaviour, including bullying and racism. Because of the school's caring, supportive ethos, pupils get on well together; there is positive racial harmony. There has been one, fixed-term exclusion in the past year. Inspectors found that the exclusion process has been used as a necessary strategy for the sake of the whole school community.

13. Pupils of all ages have very good relationships with each other and with adults. They appreciate adult support and are polite in their dealings with those who help them. They willingly co-operate in pairs or small groups on shared tasks. For example, in a Year 3 design and technology lesson, they shared equipment and helped one another readily, asking for equipment respectfully and politely. Pupils work well together, whatever their abilities, sharing knowledge and skills when working towards joint goals, ensuring learning is of good quality. They understand and follow common rules throughout the school, creating a happy, friendly atmosphere when they play. Those across the age-range having special educational needs are integrated fully into all aspects of classroom and school life. Teachers use personal, social and health education lessons effectively to help pupils understand themselves and the impact their actions can have on others. For example, during a Year 4 lesson, pupils were challenged to think through sensitive ideas about stealing, acquiring some important moral concepts.
14. Pupils' personal development is very good. In some lessons, such as history and religious education, pupils learn about different cultural and faith traditions and are taught to respect others' feelings, values and beliefs. They readily accept responsibility, doing tasks around the school. From the Reception class upwards, they enjoy taking registers to the school office and do so without fuss. They collect for charities and older pupils help look after younger ones at lunchtimes. For example, Year 6 pupils escort Reception children back to their classroom when they have finished eating in the dining room. Good team spirit was to the fore in a Year 6 games lesson when pupils cheered one another on very supportively. Class councils are being put in place and pupils are learning how to chair discussions and put forward the 'pros' and 'cons' of issues important to them, as seen in a very good Year 6 lesson. The school is committed to developing a school council from class councils by the start of next summer term. Pupils' high self-esteem is regarded as important and a system of rewards is aimed effectively at helping to promote this.
15. The latest information shows attendance levels are satisfactory, being broadly in line with the national average. The school is very aware of the importance of high levels of attendance to ensure uninterrupted access to the curriculum. It follows suitable procedures for registering pupils each day. This is done efficiently and registers are sent to the office promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. Teaching is good overall. No teaching was found less than satisfactory, with 37 per cent judged good, a further 33 per cent very good and six per cent excellent. There are strengths in the Reception year and in Years 3 to 6. But there is good teaching in all year groups, a major factor in pupils' generally positive attitudes to learning and striving to succeed.
17. In the Foundation Stage, teaching in the Reception class ranges from satisfactory to very good and is mostly very good. Children do well in Reception because of high quality teaching and good learning experiences. During their regular meetings, staff members talk about what children already know and use this knowledge to decide what should be taught next. Careful observations are made of individuals and progress and difficulties acted upon. The classroom is bright, colourful and full of interesting things to look at, touch and do. Exciting learning opportunities indoors and out enable children to acquire skills, knowledge and understanding through observation and exploration well suited to their age and abilities. Planning is based securely on the teacher's very good knowledge of the needs of these youngest children and how best to promote all aspects of their social, emotional and physical as well as academic development. There is a good balance between adult-led and child-led activities. Consistent emphasis is placed on children learning to become independent and take pride in their achievements, which all children appreciate.
18. In Years 1 and 2, teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is most frequently good. In Years 3 to 6, it ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is very good overall. Across classes, teachers work hard to make lessons interesting. At the start of lessons, they explain the content to be taught and check pupils' understanding of what is expected of them in set work. Frequently skilled questioning reminds pupils of previous learning and makes links with new learning. For example, in a

good numeracy lesson in Year 1, pupils recalled why they should put the letter 'p' after numbers when doing money sums, referring to menus and choosing food in the classroom 'café'. By the end of the discussion, their confident reading of menus allowed them to tackle new work where they had to calculate the total sums derived from different combinations of food and drink. Teachers match work well to differing abilities, showing a very good understanding of their pupils in so doing. For example, in an excellent Year 6 music lesson, the task was structured so that less able pupils and some of average ability could base their own compositions on patterns of notes provided by the teacher. More able pupils were soon devising their own patterns.

19. The best teaching maintains the good pace set at the start of a lesson and takes effective account of how well pupils can consolidate and extend their learning. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson comprising a set of mainly Year 2 pupils, a teacher's skilled assessing of where extra help was needed, as she worked around tables, ensured all pupils stayed on task. Her high quality interventions make the key difference to pupils reaching their learning objectives. In these lessons, teachers also adjust their practices to stress those principles crucially important to successful learning. For example, in an excellent Year 5 literacy lesson a teacher realised during her monitoring that pupils were so well involved, work emerging was better than she had hoped for. Consequently, she allowed pupils to keep writing to the end of the session, explaining that planned reading would be undertaken later in the day. Pupils were delighted to have this extra time. Where teaching is only satisfactory, teachers do not consistently build on skills being taught in beneficial ways. For example, in a Year 2 physical education lesson, pupils improved their travelling around the hall after watching good exemplars from amongst their peers, but opportunities to link these movements to later apparatus work were missed. Pupils did not extend their ideas as profitably as they might.
20. The teaching of physical education is hampered by pupils having to be moved from one building to another, when the hall is being used, with a consequent loss of lesson time. Similarly, having to take chairs to the computer suite mars the smooth progress of lessons and cuts available teaching and learning time. These problems are temporary in nature. But time issues also play a part in the setting of mathematics and literacy in Years 1 to 4. While teachers manage the movement of pupils efficiently, extra time has to be allowed for pupils to gather in their sets and delays in starting the following lesson sometimes occur. A Year 3 music lesson was shortened significantly when this happened.
21. The teaching of children with special educational needs is good and ensures that they make good progress, frequently achieving at least in line with their prior attainment. Support staff are very well deployed in lessons in support of individual pupils. Teachers make good use of pupils' individual education plans when setting tasks. They make sure pupils are included in all aspects of a lesson's content. For example, support staff are often observed checking pupils' understanding of points made in whole-class sessions. They encourage full participation helpful to pupils' academic and social learning. This was seen to good advantage in a religious education lesson in Year 5. Pupils identified as able and gifted in English and mathematics are also well catered for by setting in Years 1 to 4. Similarly, teachers cater well for these pupils in Years 5 and 6, where setting is not in place.
22. The teaching of basic skills in literacy is very good with very real strengths evident in Years 3 to 6. Teaching emphasises pupils' speaking and listening and writing skills in subjects across the curriculum in line with school improvement planning. The development of oracy skills is especially successful, as seen in discussions at the start and end of many lessons (for example, when pupils are asked to be precise in how they answer questions in mathematics). Teachers work hard to help pupils see how they can transfer their growing skills at expressing ideas through talk to their written work and it is noted that a significant number of pupils in some year groups have particularly poor skills in this (for example, Year 4). The teaching of basic numeracy is most frequently very good. Pupils build well on prior learning in mathematics to reinforce central concepts being taught. Opportunities to apply mathematical skills to other subjects are seized where possible, as seen in science lessons when work requires an ability to read scales of different kinds.
23. Teaching in information and communication technology is variable but is satisfactory overall, with some insecurity in some teachers' subject knowledge. The school is aware of this and plans are well in hand for further staff training. The teaching of science, art and design, history, physical education and religious education is good overall across Years 1 to 6. Very good teaching is seen in the main in geography and music in these year groups and in design and technology in classes for older pupils in

Years 3 to 6. No lessons in the latter subject were seen with younger pupils, so a judgement, here, is not made. Strengths in teaching show in Years 3 to 6 across subjects, which frequently accounts for pupils' good achievement relative to their ages and abilities.

24. Teachers set homework in line with the school policy. Reading is rightly prioritised across the age-range. Other homework tasks derive from lesson planning as appropriate and pupils are given good notice of tasks to be set. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given words to learn linked to their literacy learning as they become accustomed to classroom routines after the start of a new school year. Practice in mathematical skills is helped by pupils having to work on multiplication tables as they move through the school. Older pupils are given a wider range of homework tasks, linked to different subjects.

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

25. Curricular provision throughout the school is good with particular strengths evident in the Foundation Stage.
26. Activities in the Reception class are based firmly on the national Foundation Stage guidance. A very stimulating, well-balanced and varied curriculum helps children learn with enjoyment. The class-teacher plans all experiences with great thought so as to meet all children's needs very effectively.
27. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught all National Curriculum subjects and religious education in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus, fully meeting statutory requirements. However, due to circumstances beyond the school's control, all aspects of the information and communication technology curriculum have not been introduced. Plans are in place for this to occur as soon as the computer suite is satisfactorily completed. With support from the latest national guidance, together with published schemes, the school has established a good curriculum both in quality and range, balanced over the school year. A whole-school approach ensures pupils build on their knowledge, skills and understanding year by year in each subject as they move through the school. A two-year rolling programme in science, religious education and other non-core subjects (such as design and technology and physical education) underpins lesson planning across two-year groups. For example pupils in Years 1 and 2 cover the same work, so that ideas are shared across classes and teachers new to the school are well supported. It also takes into account the proposal that, at a later date, the school will accommodate mixed age classes. Teachers exchange classes for particular lessons when their expertise in subject areas can be used to greater advantage. For example, the Year 6 and Year 5 teachers use their subject expertise in music and physical education respectively. Again, planning across year groups facilitates this arrangement.
28. The school has successfully implemented National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. In allocating time to these, English especially and mathematics are emphasised, addressing known weaknesses in speaking, listening and writing skills and in number. But pupils are also given good opportunities to develop practical, physical and creative interests and aptitudes during other lesson times. Care is taken to allocate time to non-core subjects in ways both meeting curricular demands and enabling pupils to study units of work in depth, either half-termly (as in history) or throughout the school year (as in music). Currently, pupils in Years 1 to 4 are set by ability across classes for literacy and numeracy. This policy is aimed at rectifying imbalances in class size in these year groups with a view to restricting the ability range in each set, taking good account of pupils identified as able and talented in English and mathematics. While teachers match curricular demands very well to pupils' abilities and ensure pupils learn at their own pace, the school is aware of some difficulties attached to such organisation. For example, time is lost when pupils move from one classroom to another even though this movement is well managed. At times, too, a lack of additional support staff in a lesson can place additional burdens on a class teacher (seen for example in a mathematics set).
29. Pupils' numeracy skills are used well in other subjects, especially science. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils measure force in Newtons correctly. A transfer of pupils' growing literacy skills to other subjects is not so successful. For example, in Year 4, progress in recording history and religious education work is hampered because a significant number of pupils find it hard to write down their ideas, even though they can explain these very articulately. The use of information technology, both to display data graphically and for writing, is underdeveloped too, although good instances in the use

of such technology were seen in Year 6 literacy and numeracy lessons. Currently, computers are little used for research.

30. Overall, the provision for extra-curricular activities is good. The curriculum is greatly enriched by visits to places of interest such as a museum at Saffron Walden and a local gunpowder mill. A strength is the number of visitors who are invited in to school to share expertise with pupils, considerably widening pupils' experience in an enjoyable way. These visitors include a theatre group stimulating pupils' interest in science and people who bring in Victorian clothes for children to wear for history studies (for example, the community policeman dresses up as a Victorian 'Bobby'). Residents who have lived in the neighbourhood for a long time are welcomed to share memories and some bring in artefacts to illustrate their talks, aiding classroom work. Members of a Christian organisation regularly contribute to assemblies. Provision for lunchtime and after-school clubs is unsatisfactory, although the school is working to redress this situation, hoping to widen the clubs' scope in terms of the age ranges and interests catered for. Currently, there are after-school sporting activities in football and netball for pupils in Year 4 and above and booster classes are already helping with Year 5 and 6 pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.
31. The school is excellent at including all pupils in its curricular planning and is firmly committed to giving all full and equal access to classroom events and school life. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, including those with Statements of special need. Teachers work closely with the learning support assistants who know and understand pupils in their charge very well. Planning takes very good account of needs identified in pupils' individual education plans. However, in science, while such pupils participate in investigative and experimental work alongside their peers, they clearly find writing up their findings laborious. Resultant written work does not always do justice to their achievements during the main body of the lesson.
32. Across the school, there is very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Related issues have a high profile in the curriculum and the school's aims are clearly outlined in its policy for this aspect of school life. This aspect now includes a section on citizenship. Sex and health education, the dangers of drug misuse and the need to "keep safe" are taught both within the science curriculum and in personal, social and health education lessons. Assemblies, individual opportunities and class discussion sessions are extremely effective in focusing on personal and social issues such as "what is stealing?" and "understanding the feelings of others". Also, the school makes good use of outside agencies, for example the school nurse, the community policeman, members of local church groups and the local authority 'Healthy Schools' initiative. The excellent warm and constructive relationships that prevail in all classes make an extremely strong contribution to these aspects of pupils' education.
33. The school has established good links with the wider community, particularly with the church based on the same site. While awaiting the advent of the newly appointed vicar, church members take a weekly assembly which pupils clearly enjoy. Senior citizens are invited to special events such as Christmas performances and the school choir visits local residential homes to sing carols. The local community policeman is a regular visitor. He talks to parents at the school gate, highlighting the school's safety precautions with regard to access. He deals with incidents outside school potentially having an effect upon pupils' happiness and learning. As well as helping to give explicit sex education in Year 6, the school nurse demonstrates other aspects of her work, such as showing pupils how to bath a baby. Links with faiths other than Christian are minimal. There are no synagogues or mosques in the immediate locality and the school feels the cost of visiting these elsewhere is prohibitive. It is aware of the need to redress this omission.
34. The school has good relationships with partner institutions. It has constructive links with the local secondary school to which most pupils transfer at the end of Year 6. Procedures smooth the transition helpfully. There are especially close links for pupils with special educational needs, involving discussions between relevant teachers in each school and the transfer of related information. There are sporting links with other primary schools in the area and liaison with regard to an annual music festival. Students from the local further education college and secondary school are welcomed on work experience. There is useful liaison with two local playgroups operating on the school site.
35. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. Strengths are evident in provision for moral and social development. Provision is underpinned to very good effect by

the implementation of relevant policies, which make school aims and values and the actions to be taken to achieve these explicit. Parents are pleased at the values and attitudes fostered by the school.

36. Provision for spiritual development is good. A calm, peaceful atmosphere pervades school assemblies. Pupils listen attentively, reflecting on the week's theme (for example, 'Peace'). At an assembly for Years 3 to 6, pupils listened to a Bible story in reverent silence. Likewise, in an assembly for Years 1 and 2, a similar atmosphere developed as pupils listened to Year 5 singing a 'Peace' song in Hebrew, which they all then began to learn. The quality of singing reflected and benefited from a calm atmosphere. Adults are strong role models. They respect individual children and one another, showing their respect routinely during a day's work. At times, a working ethos in classrooms buzzes with enjoyment and purposeful application as pupils apply themselves in an atmosphere of mutual support. This was seen, for example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson when pupils became absorbed in problems of rotating shapes around vertical and horizontal axes. Religious education lessons give pupils contexts for relating Bible stories to daily life. They also feed into personal, social and health education lessons, as when pupils talk about pressures they feel and how these affect their lives.
37. The school's provision for moral development is very good, and is closely related to that for pupils' social development. Throughout the school, adults take a consistent approach, whether in or out of classrooms, which is a great strength. Skilled behaviour management, especially where teaching is strong, helps foster positive learning in lessons. As with spiritual development, very effective underpinning for moral education is provided by work in personal, social and health education and religious education lessons, where all pupils frequently show good understanding of moral situations. For example, recognising 'right' from 'wrong' intentions and behaviour in Bible stories or 'everyday life' situations is stressed. Pupils come to grasp their moral responsibility for actions they take. Responsibility with regard to respecting others' feelings is seen as key to such teaching. A very good example of pupils' understanding, here, was seen when older pupils played a football match against another school and willingly gave way to each other, so that everyone participated and could take pride in their team, although not all were equally skilled.
38. The school's provision for social development is very good. Relationships of care and interest in individuals which teachers offer afford a very good basis for pupils' social development. Teachers consciously use group work across the curriculum to promote co-operation and support principles linked to considering others' viewpoints. For example, Year 1 pupils investigated 'sound', in groups, judiciously helped by supporting adults. Pupils in Year 6 showed intense interest in discovering how a forum for discussion is set up and how views can be voiced and recorded through a chairperson and note taker, in a class council session. Older pupils gain positive social experiences when acting as lunchtime monitors. More generally, pupils show social insight during an assembly, when they see how both parties may have some responsibility for a 'quarrel' role-played by two visitors. On another occasion, Year 1 and 2 pupils revealed good social awareness when they received reading certificates and proudly reported they had collected enough stickers for a gold or silver medal. When Harvest Festival is celebrated, pupils raise funds, collecting for the Tear Fund. They learn about others in the wider world who need help.
39. The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Planning takes account of widening pupils' understanding of different cultural traditions in such subjects as art and design, through the study of work by famous artists. Images used, though, are mainly from Western traditions. In literacy, Year 5 pupils read the diary of a Bosnian girl affected by civil war in Yugoslavia. Pupils' cultural awareness is extended by music played as they come to and leave assemblies and by the choice of songs taught in music lessons (such as the Hebrew song mentioned above). As also noted, the school arranges good visits to places of interest and visitors to school broaden pupils' horizons. However, the diversity of cultures and faiths within the school and the wider community beyond its gates is not fully reflected in curriculum planning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. This is an area of strength. The school demonstrates very high levels of care for all its pupils. Each is valued for personal qualities brought to the daily life of the school. Great care is taken when children start in the Reception class to ensure they quickly learn and understand classroom and school routines. During the inspection, these youngest children were seen to be confident about what was

expected of them and well adapted to school life.

41. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good, as are those for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Policies clearly and fully explain the school's aims and values and involve all members of its community. Senior managers see it as of prime importance that all teaching and support staff share a knowledge of guidance given in school policies and that such guidance is followed consistently through the school in adults' behaviour towards children. Consequently, teaching and support staff contribute significantly to the caring atmosphere in classrooms and around the school more generally. Good behaviour is encouraged in ways that make sense to pupils. Playtimes and lunchtimes are well supervised. The school is accessible for those of its members who have mobility problems.
42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Files with relevant information on each child are readily accessible to teachers and other staff planning lessons and monitoring progress. In addition to gathering such information through formal means (for example, tests or structured observations), pupils are monitored informally in ways helpful to future planning. Teachers take very good account of differing learning needs when planning tasks and deciding how to group pupils. The programme for personal, social and health education is structured so as to support personal development highly effectively. As part of its provision in this area, the school is working towards an award through the local education authority's 'Healthy Schools' initiative. Staff members know pupils well and respond sympathetically to each child, taking good account of personal circumstances that may affect learning. There is a strong emphasis on raising all pupils' self-esteem in ways helping pupils deal confidently with each other and with adults. Teachers give good praise and encouragement, and achievements, large and small, are all celebrated. This gives pupils confidence, encouraging them to achieve more. Marking throughout Years 1 to 6 is frequently of good or better quality, especially in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Teachers make pertinent comments about what pupils have done well and how they might improve. In some classes, pupils are learning how to structure a dialogue with their teacher in response, for instance, to questions. At times, too, pupils make efforts to improve their work by following suggestions.
43. The school has good procedures for monitoring children's academic performance, and these are being extended further as a priority. The early identification of pupils' needs occurs through records based on careful observation and a systematic monitoring of children's progress from entry to Reception. Initially, a schedule devised by the school is used to assess each child's competence in, for example, communication, language and literature and personal and social development. Subsequently, information is added regularly to these records as structured observations are built into each day so that every child is observed across all areas of learning over a specified period. Good records of children and their responses to classroom activities are emerging from this process. Allied to such procedures, the school makes good use of the local education authority's assessment package to 'track' progress over time in terms of formal assessment and test information (for example, baseline assessment at the end of the Foundation Stage and statutory tests at seven and eleven). It continues to refine its use of this system in light of information gained. For example, it analyses trends for particular year groups in English and mathematics and can select aspects of these subjects (such as trends in writing) for closer study. It can look at individual pupil performance compared with that of a year group. It can compare the performance of different groups, as when it looks at how well minority ethnic pupils achieve compared to their peers. To date, of course, information is limited because the school has limited test information to draw on.
44. Teachers make good quality ongoing assessments of pupils' progress during lessons as well as through marking. Information is well used to adjust planning in the light of learning needs. Teachers work together usefully to assess standards agreed against National Curriculum levels, for example in English. Individual targets are set throughout Years 1 to 6 in English, mathematics and science and in some non-core subjects based on information gathered. Targets are clear and are most frequently expressed in language pupils understand. They are pasted in the front of pupils' exercise books so they can be easily referred to and adjusted as necessary.
45. Setting in English and mathematics across Years 1 to 4 was agreed after careful consideration of the academic, social and emotional needs of pupils affected. In this, senior managers show a very good grasp of issues relevant to pupils' development, including relationships they make, and how good quality assessment information is crucial in such decision-making. Managers' concern is for the care

and welfare of pupils and what best meets their needs. Optional national tests are used across the school in Years 3 to 5 to help assess progress over time and to aid the setting of statutory targets in English and mathematics. These are realistically based on information gathered. Homework clubs and booster classes are important to the school's provision for Years 5 and 6 to support academic success, though these were not fully in place at the time of the inspection.

46. The school makes very good provision for pupils with identified learning needs or with statutory statements of special need. The special educational needs register is fully inclusive, listing able and talented pupils (for example, in English and mathematics) as well as those with learning difficulties. Teachers hold copies of all individual educational plans and use targets to inform planning to very good effect. Good quality support for all pupils so identified helps them progress well towards personal learning targets. Systems for reviewing these pupils' progress are securely in place and carried out each term. The school has good links with the local education authority's support services as well as with other welfare agencies, to support its work with pupils on the register of special needs.
47. There are very good procedures for child protection, with the deputy headteacher the designated person in charge. The school is seeking to appoint a governor to monitor this area of its work. There are no children currently at the school who are being 'looked after' by the local authority. Staff training enables them to keep up to date with first aid matters. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and regular risk assessments.
48. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are good. Any unexplained absences or lateness is followed up diligently. Attendance figures are entered and checked regularly and the school works closely with the Education Welfare Office. Parents are discouraged from taking their children out of school in term time for holidays and parents state they are well informed about such matters.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school works hard at fostering good relationships with parents. Parents have very positive views of the school's work and warmly praise what it achieves. At the meeting prior to inspection, they said they believed the school had made great strides forward since it opened just over a year ago. They value its caring attitudes and are happy at their children's good progress. They believe teachers know children well as individuals and that secure personal relationships between children and adults help pupils succeed. Almost all the parents who completed the questionnaire stated that their children like school and those seen during the inspection said their children are eager to come. They say that the school expects their children to work hard and do their best and is helping them to become mature and responsible.
50. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents with children having special educational needs expressed high levels of satisfaction with the care their children receive. There was general agreement that the school identifies individuals' learning needs quickly and acts promptly to address these, in so far as it can. Parents are fully involved alongside their children when statements of special educational need and individual education plans are reviewed each term. They speak highly of shared practices whereby children themselves speak about how they see their learning.
51. Some parents are unhappy about the limited range of after-school clubs available to pupils. Although the inspection team judges provision for extra-curricular activities to be good overall (taking into account lunchtime and after school clubs, visits to places of interest and visitors to school) it agrees that opportunities for pupils to attend club activities are restricted. Older pupils benefit, for example, from a popular football club run by the caretaker, and homework clubs are again starting up for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The school is fully aware of deficiencies in this part of its work. It wanted to improve provision by reinstating clubs available to pupils before it moved to a new building at the start of this school year. It recognises, however, heavy demands made on teachers by out-of-school activities and a need to involve parents more in its affairs by, for example, encouraging parental help in setting up clubs.
52. A minority of parents do not feel well informed about how their children are getting on and feel that the school does not work closely with them. The inspection team finds that the school does its best to work with parents. It also judges that the quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory

overall with some good features. Parents appreciate regular parent/teacher consultation evenings held throughout the year and the helpful information they receive about the curriculum and topics their children will study. They have signed a home/school agreement and parents at the meeting prior to inspection thought these helpful. There are regular newsletters with useful information about school life and parents speak very highly of the good informal links with the headteacher and staff (for example, when they bring their children to school or collect them). They like the headteacher's 'open door' policy and know they can see her at any time to discuss a child. They see such links as a two-way process whereby teachers will contact parents as necessary, ensuring pupils' interests are to the fore. The school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents are informative and written in an accessible way. They meet statutory requirements. Reports on pupils' progress issued in the Summer term are satisfactory. At the meeting prior to inspection there was general agreement that these are not sufficiently personalised. At times, parents find it hard to understand the language used and also find the grades given (in relation to National Curriculum levels, for example) hard to grasp. Inspectors agree with these parents' views although it is also noted that parents at the meeting agreed that teachers keep parents really well-informed of pupils' progress throughout the year. Consequently, the reports hold 'no surprises' for those parents who take advantage of the ready availability of staff.

53. Parents' involvement in the work of the school is satisfactory. The school is trying very hard to engage more parents actively in its work and the headteacher sees this as a priority. Many parents are happy to go on study-visits to places of interest with their children's class and there is a high attendance at school events. Some parents help in the Reception class regularly and a few help in other classes, with reading and in art and design lessons for example. There is currently no Parents' Association, although the school is seeking to address this. Parent governors make a valued contribution to school life and are highly committed to helping the school move forward in its determination to raise standards.
54. A few parents expressed dissatisfaction with the amount of homework set for their children. Inspectors judge that the quality of homework given across the school is good. It is in line with school policy on these matters and is well aimed at supporting classroom learning. Induction procedures for children entering the Reception class are good. Parents are pleased at how their children settle in and enjoy school. They also like the way pupils are expected to work hard. They appreciate the care taken during Year 6 to prepare children for transfer to secondary school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The leadership and management of the school are very good, with considerable strengths in both. The headteacher has excellent leadership qualities. In the relatively brief period since the amalgamation of the former Infant and Junior schools, she has inspired staff at all levels to develop a shared framework which consistently informs school policies and practices and is beneficial to pupils' learning. She has been more than ably supported by a dedicated deputy. A striking feature of the school is the excellent team spirit amongst all staff. Teachers, support staff in and out of classrooms and administrative staff, are professionally committed to school improvement and the raising of standards. Governors, too, work hard on the school's behalf. They are proud of achievements to date and determined to do their best. They speak highly of the headteacher's effect on the school since taking up her post. The school's ethos is warmly welcoming, its values and beliefs, linked to its Christian principles, thoroughly embedded in its practices. They enshrine a care for others and respect for the contribution each makes to the life of all members of the school community, child and adult. The school received an award from the Department for Education and Skills for school improvement during its first year.
56. The headteacher and her deputy work in close partnership, with a very good grasp of strengths in provision and needed improvements. They keep up-to-date with classroom teaching and learning practices through regular monitoring - especially the headteacher. In addition to structured classroom observations, she is 'out and about' the buildings during each school day. Teachers new to the school are given very good support both through induction involving mentoring and by working with colleagues who share with them school expectations (as in shared lesson planning outlined earlier). Currently, an overseas trained member of staff new to the school teaches a class. This works effectively because of her evident teaching skills and because the school ensures training requirements are met (for example, in line with National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies) and gives ongoing support. The teacher in question speaks highly of this. Similarly, other teachers get training

in recent developments in national strategies, after time away from teaching. Deficiencies relating to information and communication technology are well catalogued and feature highly in current school improvement planning. The latter encompasses the development of all subject co-ordinators' understanding of their roles, including observing in classrooms to see better how to raise standards further. To date, such monitoring is only integral to the role of the mathematics co-ordinator. All co-ordinators, though, take responsibility for budget management and for overseeing planning in their subject, in line with curricular demands and with the school's approach to class teachers' self-evaluation of the work covered each half term.

57. A major aspect of the headteacher's work, together with her deputy, has to do with evaluating school performance in light of decisions made and adjusting these where necessary. As outlined above, a first priority was to establish whole-school approaches in all areas affecting the school and this has, largely, happened. It is evident, for example, that work on behaviour management has been highly effective. Consequently, while continuing to promote staff members' professional development in relation to teaching and learning and sorting out practical difficulties that have arisen (as with information and communication technology and aspects of the new accommodation), priorities have shifted. They are centred now, for instance, on developing partnership with parents further, helping governors understand better their role as 'critical friends' and attracting and retaining full-time teaching staff. School evaluation and improvement planning is shared with staff members. The headteacher is highly committed to professional development for all who need it. Performance management is securely in place with targets set for teaching and non-teaching staff. For example, seven classroom assistants are training in information and communication technology at a business centre in a local secondary school, to raise standards in this subject.
58. The headteacher is also committed to supporting governors in their work. Almost all took up their posts either on the opening of the new school or since then, so there is very little long-term experience of governorship in the make-up of the governing body. Committees are in place and governors are anxious to fulfil their individual responsibilities regarding curriculum subjects as well as in aspects of school life such as provision for special educational needs. Parent governors who work in school (for example, as classroom assistants) clearly have a very good knowledge and understanding of school events. Others are committed to visiting school as often as is feasible or to making sure they take part in school matters as necessary. For example, the Chair of governors has given considerable personal time to meetings clarifying school finances concerning facilities in the refurbished ('new') school building. All governors have a good insight into what being a 'critical friend' means and speak warmly of how the headteacher helps them with this. They are well informed of school matters through documentation as well as through other contacts they may have. The Chair 'pops' in to school regularly at the end of his working day to keep in touch with what is going on and is knowledgeable about staff and their daily concerns. Currently, the governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily and the high levels of commitment evident when talking to governors augers well for the future.
59. Provision for special educational needs is very well managed. It is an additional area of work for the headteacher since no other staff member could be identified to take on responsibility for its co-ordination. However, a learning support assistant with a real aptitude for this aspect of school provision has taken on the role of special needs' administrator. She works closely with the headteacher, receiving training through this means, with a view to taking on the role of co-ordinator more fully as her skills develop. This arrangement works very well and, in fact, the assistant is studying for additional qualifications with a view to becoming a qualified teacher. She has a very good grasp of special needs provision and the systems and procedures used across classes. Two governors working together to monitor provision have a keen interest in this.
60. Financial management is very good. The headteacher works productively with her senior administrative officer on budgetary issues. The governing body finance committee is suitably involved. Governors have appointed a 'responsible officer' to oversee finances and keep them informed through regular reports at meetings. The officer is well qualified for this responsibility and conducts 'spot checks' on different aspects of financial management. Grants are deployed very well for their specified purpose as are additional monies (such as that for booster classes for older pupils). Spending is matched well to the priorities of school improvement planning. The school buys in support from the local education authority service, which usefully oversees its financial planning. This has been particularly important during the school's first year, when a very complex budget situation

arose because of the closing down of the two 'old' school accounts and the opening up of the new one. Through no fault of the school, this has taken a considerable time to sort out, the actual monies for this financial year finalised only as the inspection was due to start. The school had been prudent in planning spending to fit with a sum known to be available from the start of the financial year so currently has a larger under-spend than its planning allowed for. However, it does not get extra funds as a 'new' school since it is officially 'refurbished' and must therefore budget for items it might otherwise have expected not to have to pay for. For example, when the 'new' building is finally completed, two classrooms have to be fully equipped and outdoor play provision for children in the Reception class improved. Seating for the computer suite is being sorted out and this is likely to be expensive. In addition, making sure information and communication technology resources are fully operational, as the school expects, will entail considerable expenditure, as will the planned equipping of the school library.

61. 'Best value' principles are very well applied. In addition to measures taken by the governing body (outlined above) a number of strategies are securely in place. For example, subject co-ordinators seek best value when ordering curriculum resources in line with budget allocations. The senior administration officer monitors budget information that makes comparisons with other schools' spending so senior managers' decisions are properly informed and systems required of the school do rigorously check financial matters against 'best value' principles. A 'falling roll' situation is projected over the next few years, with fewer pupils likely to take up places and this has implications for future school budgets, which has to be taken into account. The school presently operates a 'stand still' budget.
62. The day-to-day running of the school is very good. Office staff knows pupils well and warmly welcome parents and visitors to the school. New technology very effectively supports and improves its work. For example, the school is working on making assessment information fully accessible to teachers through computer links.
63. Staff levels are adequate for curricular demands. The school has difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified teaching staff, as noted. Job-shares occur in two classes. This works well because of senior managers' commitment and time given to it and, not least, the commitment of the teachers involved. Support staff are well qualified and generally sufficient.
64. Accommodation is good although it currently presents problems because of being divided between two buildings, which clearly makes extra work for the management, administration and cleaning of the school. The refurbished building is attractive and will be more than adequate when it is complete. However, some features are not well thought out in terms of pupils' learning (for example, the height of the one sink in the classroom to be used by Reception children) or resource-management (for example, storage provision). A generous field area in addition to hard surfaces enhances provision for physical education. Resources are sufficient in most subjects in that co-ordinators make sure they match curricular demands as these arise during each year. Resources for information and communication technology and in the school library are, as discussed and acknowledged by the school, inadequate. In fact, a priority in school improvement planning is to make sure resources for all subjects are sufficient and are of good quality. The school faced a considerable challenge in relation to curricular resources on its amalgamation.
65. In view of the excellent leadership of the school and the way its very good management has inspired whole-school policies and practices, the way teaching and learning fulfils the high expectations of pupils' achievements and the way the school's ethos includes all learners, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that:
 - (i) standards in writing in subjects across the curriculum are raised;
(paragraphs 4, 5, 7, 8, 21, 28, 30, 87, 90, 104, 105, 131, 155)
 - (ii) the management and development of subjects is organised so that all subject co-ordinators

monitor classroom teaching and learning to raise standards further;

(paragraphs 8, 18, 28, 55, 94, 96, 104, 109, 110, 115, 116, 122, 128, 132, 133, 135, 138, 147, 153, 155, 160)

(iii) the partnership with parents is developed so they:

- are better informed about their children's progress;
- understand how to be more involved in the school's daily life.

(paragraphs 51, 56)

It is acknowledged that the school is well informed about the issues raised and has pinpointed them for action in its improvement planning.

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important¹ weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in an action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs: 7, 19, 22, 26, 27, 28, 29, 32, 38, 44, 50, 53, 63, 66, 83, 95, 96, 98, 101, 137, 140, 141).

- As a matter of urgency, provision for information and communication technology should continue to be improved in line with actions already taken.
- A school library is set up and equipped, also as a matter of urgency.
- Provision for Reception children is improved so that the quality of indoor and outdoor activities is consistent with the best seen, when the move to the refurbished building is complete.
- Setting arrangements for literacy and numeracy in Years 1 to 4 should be reviewed.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development should be improved, so that the diversity within the school and wider community is reflected more obviously in curriculum planning.
- Provision for extending pupils' learning opportunities by, for example, extending club activities is undertaken.

¹ It is recognised that issues relating to the provision of information and communication technology are not, in fact, unimportant but action to remedy deficiencies is already being taken as a matter of high priority, in school improvement planning. Provision of a school library is similarly identified as important.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

51

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

37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	17	19	12	0	0	0
Percentage	6	33	37	24	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

179

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

37

Special educational needs

YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

5

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

44

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

14

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving

9

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
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	6	12	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	9	11	11
	Total	15	17	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83	94	94
	National	84	86	90

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	5
	Girls	9	10	7
	Total	15	16	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83	89	67
	National	85	89	89

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	20	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	11
	Girls	15	14	18
	Total	24	22	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	75	66	91
	National	75	73	86

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	9	9
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	18	22	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	56	69	69
	National	73	74	82

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

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
162	1	0
2	0	0
4	0	0
3	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
2	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
3	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)	8.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.1
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	205

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	346,779
Total expenditure	268,134
Expenditure per pupil	1,170
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	74,149

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
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.

NB: the number of teachers appointed during the last two years reflects the fact that the school opened as a new school after the amalgamation.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	148
Number of questionnaires returned	29

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	34	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	45	7	0	7
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	48	0	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	48	17	3	3
The teaching is good.	38	62	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	45	21	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	31	7	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	52	45	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	21	41	28	10	0
The school is well led and managed.	31	62	0	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	66	7	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	34	17	10	21

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

67. The Reception class is still in the old, infant, building. Since the new Reception class teacher took up her post at the beginning of the year, provision for this age group has greatly improved and is now judged good with some very good features. However, some aspects of the learning environment, including an old stained carpet and almost non-existent playground markings, are poor. The Reception class will be moving into a refurbished classroom in the new school building in the near future. The teacher's expert and experienced leadership of an effective team of support staff, her major reorganisation of indoor and outdoor learning areas and her introduction of appropriate planning, all support a highly stimulating, wide-ranging curriculum suited to children of this age.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. This area of learning is promoted exceptionally well because children learn within an atmosphere of trust, responsibility and high expectations. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers and other adults in Reception set children excellent examples of how to work with others. Children become familiar with working as part of a group or class. Each day starts with each child having responsibility for their own self-registration – taking their name off a display and sticking it onto a numbered board. Daily sessions, during which children choose from a selection of activities, give them responsibility and develop skills of independence. Children have the freedom to explore around the room, to make models using glue or fill different containers in the sand tray. This develops their curiosity and leads them to ask why things are as they are. They interact well in role-play situations when using the shop or constructing a “house” on the playground. They do this best when an adult is present, intervening and making suggestions as appropriate.

69. The great majority concentrates and behaves exceptionally well. They sit on the carpet around their teacher or another adult for extended periods, listening to stories, singing songs and learning literacy and numeracy skills as a class. One child who finds this difficult is very well supported by a learning assistant. He is making good progress towards his targets while taking small steps towards increasing his concentration span. Children were keen to share their reading books with an inspector. They did so with aplomb, even though at an early stage in the acquisition of actual reading skills.

70. Recently, the range and quality of resources has been increased and provision is now satisfactory. All resources are well labelled and this means that children can use them easily. They take great care with everything provided and quickly and correctly return resources to their appropriate boxes after each session. Displays on the classroom walls celebrate children's work and are personalised with photographs of the children themselves, with captions explaining what they are doing. Children are constantly praised by adults for their good behaviour, attitudes and work. They spontaneously gave one child a “well done” clap for singing on his own. Even at this early point in the school year, this supportive environment makes children confident and secure learners who enjoy coming to school, wanting to find out more about their world. Almost all are set to achieve the early learning goals in this area of learning by the time end of their Reception year.

Communication, language and literacy

71. Very good teaching of communication, language and literacy means that children achieve well, many from a low starting point and almost all should attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. In class sessions, many contribute their ideas eagerly and do so in a big enough voice to be heard by everyone. While some still give single word answers, many use more detail in their descriptions and explanations. Children use appropriate language in their role-play and other activities, for instance when being characters from the story of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears”. While enjoying a story, the listening skills of children are good. They listen to what other children have to say and when given instructions usually carry these out correctly. The teacher and other adults enlarge the children's vocabulary through planned, impromptu introductions of new words.

72. A good balance is kept between teaching the formal techniques of writing and spelling and learning

these through play. Children are helped to become “emergent” writers. They read back what they have “written” and an adult then writes their comments in a more conventional form. Many can, at least to some extent, write their own names and some are beginning to form recognisable letters when writing. Through focused class and group sessions, they are introduced in a fun, but more formal, way to the sounds made by letters. When completing a jigsaw in which objects were given labels, one little girl was looking for the “d” which would complete the word “doll”. The teacher uses many opportunities to consolidate their understanding of letter sounds, for instance giving instructions such as “children with their names beginning with “m” can now

73. The children are already confident “readers”. They take home simple books to share with their parents. They hold these books correctly and turn the pages carefully, showing interest in the illustrations and the story line. Some know the story off by heart and can talk about what happens next and why they like a particular character.

Mathematical development

74. Children make good progress in their mathematical development because of very good teaching. The majority should attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Activities are planned with great care, based on what children already know, understand and can do. Very good planning means that teaching develops children’s skills systematically over time and work is appropriately suited to those who learn at different rates.
75. There are many things around the classrooms to help with mathematics work, including number lines and activities involving counting and pattern making. Opportunities are arranged to use money in the shop and children practise filling different containers inside sand and water trays. They sing well-known number songs, such as one about speckled frogs, and this helps consolidate what they have learned in more formal work. Most count up to at least ten. In one very good lesson, children started to show an interest in, and understanding of, simple addition and subtraction, although some were a long way out in their answers. They are introduced to a good range of mathematical words through their work in other areas. For example, they use ‘big’ and ‘little’ when describing the beds and chairs in the story of “Goldilocks and the Three Bears”.
76. Many know the names of shapes such as a ‘rectangle’, ‘circle’, ‘square’ and ‘triangle’. They can relate these shapes to objects around them. For example, one child described a rectangle as the “shape of a door” with “long and short sides” and another thought that a circle was “like a wheel”. However, several found a triangle difficult to draw.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. This area of learning is taught very well because children’s work is based on learning through first-hand experience. New experiences are made more meaningful and children make good progress in adding to their knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, in their study of the past and how things have changed, they look carefully at old teddy bears lent to their classroom by people connected to the school. They discuss the differences between these toys and their own. They listened closely to an elderly visitor who told them what her childhood was like and how times have changed. Photographs of themselves as babies help them see how children gradually develop into adults. They are encouraged to feel and examine a wide range of natural objects on the class nature table, perhaps using a magnifying glass. “I can see more clearly ‘cos it’s got glass” said one. “They feel soft” said another about some feathers. A more able pupil was able to explain that a leaf turned red because “it’s autumn now”. All could identify and name a shell, feathers and a “conker”. However, one was not so sure where bark came from and thought it might be made of rock. Descriptive comments such as describing a leaf as “a butterfly thing” contribute to the children’s use of literacy skills.
78. The student from a local college currently working in the Reception area has been reading to the children a book about exotic fruits grown in other parts of the world. Through tasting a wide range of such fruits, including pineapple and mango, the children’s knowledge about these widens considerably. At the same time, they are learning something about the differences between their own and a ‘non-western’ country.

79. Individual children show reasonable persistence when making models out of a collection of cardboard boxes, tubes, paper and fabric. They use glue carefully to stick these materials together to make models. Some make “shakers” and are pleased with their results. They enjoy using bought construction equipment and can talk about their models. A group building a “house” in the playground first laid down carpet tiles and then used plastic bricks to make the walls. When some mud appeared on the carpet tiles, one boy rushed off to get a toy vacuum cleaner.
80. Children use a computer in the Reception classroom to work on programs related to their other work. In addition, the class has limited access to the computer suite. This gives the class teacher opportunities to teach the oldest, full-time, pupils in a more formal way. Her very good explanations in such lessons lead children to a good understanding of the functions of the mouse and keyboard and how to “log on” to a program. The teacher uses a good range of subject-specific words, such as icon and children gradually build up a computer vocabulary. The program is a familiar one that pupils have already used. This enables them to try out their newly acquired skills confidently, finish a set task and successfully print out their work at the end of a lesson. A majority of children is set to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Physical development

81. Children achieve well in this aspect where they have ample opportunities to improve their skills in handling scissors, pencils, paintbrushes and other tools. The majority is judged set to achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching is very good and planning ensures that physical needs are well met. The outdoor learning area is used imaginatively for both physical and language development. Children enjoy “driving” around in colourful wheeled vehicles they fill up with pretend petrol at the play garage.
82. In their physical education lessons in the school hall, children dress and undress without very much adult support. Unfortunately, some come to school wearing earrings and, for safety reasons, they are not allowed to take part in such lessons. The support teacher works with these children in the hall on some other work so that they use time gainfully. Children move around the hall balancing beanbags on different parts of their body – at the back of their necks for example. They listen well to the teacher’s instructions and are confident and enthusiastic participants. Their self-belief is constantly reinforced by the teacher praising their efforts. All have a good awareness of space and avoid bumping into others when running around the playground and hall.
83. Children show good co-operation when working with a large colourful parachute. They have learned to lift and lower this in unison to gain a desirable height and enjoy running under the fabric from one place to another. Great fun is had, and energy expended, in bouncing a ball in the middle of the parachute. After this, the children quickly quieten down and lie on the floor before tip-toeing out of the hall “as quietly as mice”.

Creative development

84. Children show good imagination in their work and play. Their models are unique because, although they are given ideas of what to do and how to do it, they usually choose which materials to use and how to join them together. Generally, role-play areas stimulate lively talk in make-believe situations. For example, children enjoy playing out the story of “The Three Bears” whilst wearing furry ears and capes made for this situation. The “home corner” is less stimulating and needs some refurbishment, such as a wider range of clean, well displayed, dressing up clothes. Improvements are planned when the class moves to the new school building.
85. In their classroom, pupils enthusiastically sing well-known songs together, adding appropriate actions. There are musical instruments on display with which they can experiment. In very good lessons in the music room, the older children extend these classroom activities really well. They are able to choose from a greater range of instruments and use these sensibly and with suitable dexterity. Their behaviour is very good in such situations. For example, children stop playing when asked to listen to their teacher. The class works well collaboratively – some pupils singing and some playing instruments – and good progress is made by all in this aspect of their creative development.

86. Painting is one of the activities available during each day. Children are beginning to mix colours, paint patterns and try to make pictures of what they see. They use plasticine to make models and paper-plate collages to produce representations of their faces. In most cases, their drawing skills are still underdeveloped.
87. Overall, the teaching in this aspect is never less than good and is sometimes very good. Generally, children make good progress in their creative development. However, this progress is sometimes slowed because adults do not intervene enough with ideas and suggestions, which would move children forward. Almost all children should attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year.

ENGLISH

88. Inspection findings reveal that the oldest pupils in Year 6 reach satisfactory standards broadly in line with national expectations, in all aspects of English (that is, speaking and listening, reading and writing). Pupils in Year 2 also reach standards broadly in line with expectations for their age in speaking and listening and in reading. Standards in writing, however, fall below these expectations. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, make good progress and achieve in line with their prior attainment because of the good quality support they receive. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well relative to their abilities, with very good achievement seen across Years 3 to 6. No significant differences were found between boys and girls.
89. Speaking and listening skills are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Pupils are most frequently very willing to discuss work in hand with their teachers and other adults who support them. However, despite their evident involvement, many pupils in classes across the age-range are too easily content with short, or even one-word answers to given questions. Very good listening and speaking activities nonetheless arise when teachers create a challenging and stimulating learning ethos at the pupils' level, which is also work-focused. So, pupils in a Year 5 drama session, working in groups, present an imaginary situation to the whole class, centred on constructing stories using sets of objects. Through sensitive interventions by a teacher, they start to realise how Standard English is appropriate in some contexts. They are thus helped to acquire more formal language matched to tasks. Other good opportunities for focused talk occur through the use of 'response partners' whereby pupils exchange ideas in pairs or in threes as a prelude to whole-class work. Such good practice is seen in subjects across the curriculum, as when pupils in mathematics lessons are asked to 'brainstorm' ideas during oral work and then explain these so that everyone understands the points being made.
90. Standards in reading are satisfactory by Year 2. More able pupils and those of average ability read confidently and correct themselves independently. Less able pupils are more hesitant and make more errors, often waiting for adult help when they encounter difficulties. Nevertheless, all pupils try hard to apply their knowledge of letter sounds and names to read unfamiliar words. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 read confidently, correcting themselves as necessary. Although less able pupils in these classes are, again, more hesitant readers, they can self-correct when they see something does not make sense. Teachers match books well to pupils' ages and differing abilities. By Year 6, pupils are reading suitably demanding material. These oldest pupils frequently reach good standards in reading. The more able read well and very confidently, showing fluency and good expression. They can set the context of the story in light of previous events and show a good understanding of characters and their motivation. Pupils of lower ability tackle less demanding content with similar fluency and expression and show a good capacity to correct mistakes. All these older pupils have a secure grasp of how to use tables of contents and the indices of factual books. Some also know how to use information technology to find books on a particular topic. Across the age and ability range, pupils talk about stories they read with interest and understanding. They clearly enjoy the activity. Many pupils are well supported by parents and read regularly at home.
91. By Year 2, standards in writing are unsatisfactory overall at this point in the school year. In developing their handwriting skills, pupils of all abilities in Years 1 and 2 apply themselves with concentration and reach reasonable standards for the most part. They are beginning to see how writing can be for different purposes - for instance to make up stories and record facts. In Year 1, pupils learn how writing instructions in a correct sequence can be important. The more able succeed at ordering steps in making a sandwich. Year 2 pupils practise recording facts when they sequence

the main stages of a cyclone disaster in a geography lesson. However, generally poor recording skills hamper progress at times, resulting in standards below those expected for this age. For example, most Year 2 pupils show good knowledge and understanding when pinpointing words such as 'and' and 'but' to connect ideas in sentences, talking about this usage with their teacher, but cannot complete the same work as a written exercise. In a religious education lesson, too, these pupils grasp what is taught, but poor writing skills result in inadequate recording of their understanding at even a simple level.

92. Standards of writing are satisfactory overall by Year 6. For the most part, pupils manage cursive handwriting which is sometimes well formed and is at least acceptable and improves over time. Very good preparatory work by teachers (including well thought out speaking and listening activities) structures writing usefully and results in good quality work. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn about important aspects of the writing process, for instance how to make preliminary notes and use these for later work. Consequently, they acquire good skills in writing for a range of purposes (for example, diary writing and summaries as well as story writing and description). In Year 6, pupils learn how to consider the layout and content of an information leaflet about their school. In a short space of time, more able pupils produce a well-designed leaflet, including good quality content. Furthermore, more able pupils and some of average ability have a sense of style when they write. All pupils with learning difficulties often do much better than expected because of teachers' effective preparation and able support from teaching assistants.
93. Throughout the age range, pupils behave well and are willing to learn from their literacy lessons. Indeed, at times the behaviour and attitudes of older pupils in Years 5 and 6 is exemplary. They know they must listen to their teacher or other adults who work with them as well as to each other during speaking and listening activities and do so often without any need to be reminded. Thus, when Year 6 pupils experience their first class council, excellent behaviour and attitudes are to the fore. At times, though, younger pupils find it hard to focus on what their teachers say during whole-class work. This is especially notable in Year 1 where - at this early point in the school year - the youngest pupils do not have the necessary skills for such work. Consequently, teachers deploy a greater range of strategies to gain and sustain pupils' attention, showing good awareness of the difficulties encountered and how to resolve these.
94. Teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. Good planning for all ability levels across classes together with imaginative approaches to the subject result in practice that is at least sound with excellent or very good teaching in Years 5 and 6. Consistently good practice is also seen in target-setting for all pupils, where targets are written in the front cover of exercise books. Teachers' marking of written work is very good. The best marking sets not only a positive tone but also aims to develop pupils' writing skills, helping to raise standards. In some instances, it is beginning to lead to a written interchange between teacher and pupils about improving written work.
95. The best lessons have tight organisation, good pace, and the effective management of pupils' time. For example, in a very good Year 6 lesson on report writing, pupils were given clear time limits for tasks and usefully reminded of these. Where teaching is less effective, it is sometimes because the purpose of the work is not shared with pupils, or because there is a lack of sufficient pace to maintain interest. In a Year 1 lesson on letter sounds and names, for example, insufficient stress was given to explaining the work in hand and it was uncertain as to how well pupils understood what had to be completed or how this was to be done when they settled to tasks. Elsewhere, work on letter sounds at the start of a lesson in a literacy set, with mainly Year 2 pupils was carried out at a good pace, using routines which pupils know and to which they responded well so that previous learning was built on successfully.
96. As noted earlier, the school has setting arrangements for the teaching of literacy across Years 1 to 4. These are carefully thought out but quite complex in practice. For example, most Year 2 pupils (assessed as average) are joined by the most able from Year 1 and some with learning difficulties from Year 3. Teachers' organisational skills and teaching abilities are generally effective in these situations, but the benefits to pupils in terms of standards reached are not clear. Planning for lessons across the age range ensures literacy skills are built on successfully in all subjects, especially with regard to developing pupils' speaking and listening skills. This was evident in many lessons, as when a Year 1 teacher helped pupils to recall previous learning in art and design, and explored their understanding of

work on autumn leaves.

97. The co-ordinator is well-experienced and highly committed. She is a very good leader and manager of her subject. The policy is a useful document in terms of general aims and philosophy although insufficient attention is paid to the development of language skills, and to the role of information and communication technology. During the inspection, there was only very limited evidence that teachers use information and communication technology in literacy lessons, although some good practice was observed. Action planning is good and rightly addresses the development of pupils' language skills. Such planning could usefully place greater emphasis on raising standards in Years 1 and 2. Currently, the co-ordinator's monitoring activities do not include observing teaching and learning in classrooms although the school has plans for this. Resources are adequate but temporary library facilities are inadequate because material is inaccessible. The school rightly prioritises library provisions in its improvement planning and the schools' library service will help with the new library when it is finally organised in the new building. A review will involve the overhaul of all book resources - for example, information books to support subjects across the curriculum as well as fiction material.
98. A booster club linked to literacy learning is now in place for volunteer participants in Years 5 and 6 and more formally organised booster classes in reading and writing are being set up for Year 6, in line with previous provision. This successfully raised standards in statutory tests last year.

MATHEMATICS

99. At this early point in the school year, standards for Years 2 and 6 are judged average relative to national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational need and having Statements of special need, achieve well according to their abilities. A scrutiny of pupils' work across Years 1 to 6 shows their progress since the beginning of term. Teaching is well aimed at building successively on pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in meaningful ways for pupils, taking good account of learning needs. This includes Years 1 to 4 where, as said, pupils are setted according to ability. At times, though, there are difficulties in managing these arrangements. No differences in achievement were found between boys and girls.
100. In a set of average and below average Year 1 pupils, all distinguish six claps when a teacher claps quite a complex rhythm as a brisk start to a numeracy lesson. Most go on to show secure grasp of two-digit numbers and the correct ordering of digits in numbers such as 12 and 14. In recalling previous work, they hold up eight fingers to show 8p spent in the class 'café' and know they have to hold up two more to make 10p for tea and a piece of toast. They realise the letter 'p' after a number means 'pence'. Pupils take longer to think about adding four to 10 but three or four more able pupils can explain how to do this by 'counting on', holding the bigger number "in my head". Through such careful steps and repetition, the teacher builds on prior learning, so pupils see how to record items of food chosen from the café menu. Two of the least able, however, find it hard to complete a task when a supporting adult goes elsewhere. They cannot easily match numbers to a number line and count out pennies sequentially, although one explains what she has to do confidently enough. In a set of mainly average Year 3 pupils and some less able from Year 4, a small number of very able Year 2 pupils reveal a better than expected grasp of three and four digit numbers when measuring capacity. After a whole-class discussion, they transfer known facts about measuring in metres, centimetres and millimetres fairly well to the new work. For example, a boy explains he has to decide whether a soft-drinks can holds 30, 300 or 3000 millilitres. He guesses 30ml and explains 3000ml are "not very likely because it's such a lot". Discussion shows he has grasped the link between a litre and 1000 millilitres. After some thought, he decides the can holds 300ml, this being the most sensible estimate since 30ml would be a tiny amount (and he demonstrates with his fingers after considering a centimetre ruler).
101. In a whole-class 'quick' revision on multiplication, Year 5 pupils help a teacher draw a matrix on the board to show the 2, 4 and 8 times tables, in response to questions. They soon begin to see patterns emerging and can double and halve numbers and give correct answers when asked, for example, "8 x 8 – can you use the grid we have completed so far to work it out?" They enjoy the challenge of finding multiples and going beyond what they can see, as in this example, and when the teacher's questions refer to the 12 times table. Pupils know mathematical vocabulary about shape. They quickly identify terms associated with rectangles (such as 'straight sides' and 'right angles') and know a square is a special rectangle. Collectively, they can recall that opposite sides are parallel and parallel lines never

meet. They settle briskly to comparing the properties of squares and rectangles for recording work. In Year 6, pupils respond really well to challenges about rotating shapes around a centre point. They watch a video clip and then the class teacher's reinforcement of this through a demonstration with interest, recalling relevant vocabulary when 'brainstorming' with a partner (such as 'quarter turn' and 'symmetry'). They thoroughly enjoy experimenting with rotating shapes through the four quadrants they rule out in their work-books. A group of more able girls work efficiently on desk top or lap top computers with good understanding. Most pupils know they need to take account of the centre point for moving a shape through 360 degrees and drawing round the resultant outline in each quadrant. While some know this they obviously find it hard to achieve and do not connect their difficulties with the shape they have chosen, which they persist in using. Lower ability pupils are skilfully helped to complete their work by a support assistant.

102. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent and is mainly good. Planning is based on the National Numeracy Strategy and is adjusted to take account of the school's own needs, as seen in the setting of pupils up to Year 4. Teachers' skills in meeting pupils' learning needs and in maintaining a good pace in lessons are not in question but setting arrangements do create additional burdens at times. For example, in a mainly Year 3 set, there was no extra support in the lesson seen, which meant the teacher could not monitor sufficiently closely how pupils tackled tasks. While it is clear that the ability range is carefully worked out for each set, it is not obvious what benefits actually ensue since the range is still wide. This was evident, too, in a mainly Year 2 set when very good teaching skills meant a teacher met her planned lesson objectives successfully but had to work extremely hard to 'keep all the plates spinning' across the ability groups. Where teaching is particularly strong, as in an excellent Year 6 lesson, pupils 'buzz' with a desire to get on with tasks and solve problems. Concentration levels are correspondingly high. Where additional support is available, teachers deploy this very well for those pupils with learning needs.
103. Pupils have good opportunities to apply their literacy skills. They consistently explain their thinking in some detail so that their reasoning is shared with others. They read mathematical problems with good understanding, reinforcing the relevant vocabulary and the framing of mathematical questions. They also have good opportunities to apply their numeracy skills to other subjects. For example, they use different kinds of scales in science lessons. Work is most frequently set out in a neat and orderly manner. Information and communication technology skills are suitably used at times (as seen in Year 5 and Year 6 lessons). Teachers' marking is often very good. It helps pupils to recognise what they have done well and how they can improve. In particular, teachers stress the importance of careful presentation and why it matters that pupils show how problems are worked out. There is good encouragement for pupils to 'jot down' working out for 'four rules' purposes, when solving division problems for example. Targets are pasted in to the front of all pupils' work-books for easy reference and these are matched very well to individual needs and adjusted as necessary.
104. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. She leads and manages the subject well. She has a good understanding of work across the school through her monitoring of teachers' planning and of classroom teaching and learning practices as well as through sampling pupils' work. Her own classroom practice is an excellent example to colleagues. She is confident about leading staff In-service sessions to disseminate up-to-date information gained through her own training. She makes plain where improvements can be made to raise standards. Planning to this end is based soundly on information gathered through monitoring activities and analysis of statutory test results in Years 2 and 6 as well as optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. She liaises closely with senior managers for action planning and for setting statutory targets. She sees after school 'booster' activities as crucial to raising standards and is committed to supporting pupils through these.

SCIENCE

105. Standards in Year 2 are average for this age when compared to national expectations. In Years 3 to 5 pupils also achieve in line with what is expected, given the criteria set for National Curriculum levels of attainment. At this point in the school year, standards reached by Year 6 are judged below expectations overall. However, pupils demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of scientific processes orally. The problem for these oldest pupils lies in difficulties they have recording their results in writing. As the need for written work grows, it increasingly becomes a hindrance to standards achieved. With the present very good teaching alongside booster classes for improving literacy skills and additional "reader" support set to be available for national tests in future, it is very

likely that standards will rise to average in Year 6 by the end of the academic year. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, achieve at least in line with their prior attainment because of the good support they receive. No difference in achievement was observed between boys and girls.

106. Pupils throughout Years 1 to 6 make good progress in science, particularly in how to set up and carry out investigations. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, make similarly good progress, helped by classroom and support assistants in many lessons. They usually manage the same practical work as the rest of the class and achieve at least in line with their prior attainment. However, when expected to record their findings, their written work does not do justice to ideas expressed orally.
107. The teaching of science is good throughout the school. It is especially strong in Year 6. Teachers prepare lessons thoroughly, organising them carefully with good resources. They manage pupils very well using consistent strategies to promote very good behaviour. This is important in science since some pupils are easily distracted and many need the stimulus of interesting work and firm guidance to help them concentrate. The best lessons have all these characteristics and a lively pace. Teachers introduce pupils to many scientific words, teaching a subject vocabulary as an integral part of lessons. For example, the names for different switches are used in both the Year 3 and Year 4 lessons on electrical circuits. In Year 6, pupils use words such as “saturated”, “displaced” and “absorbed” correctly when working on ‘air in soil’ experiments.
108. Teachers recap and consolidate work so that most pupils understand and remember what they have learned. Pupils make good progress through the school as they build successively on concepts taught. Teachers rightly stress the importance of working and thinking in a scientific way, including the need to set up a fair test. In Year 6, a teacher demonstrated this especially well in an experiment showing how much air is in different soils. She suggested that pupils repeat the tests in order to validate their results. In the same lesson, the health hazards of working with soil were raised and pupils were instructed to wash their hands afterwards. Teachers mark pupils’ written work carefully, not only giving praise but also pointing out where improvements can be made.
109. Pupils enjoy science, particularly its practical dimension. They work well together in pairs and in groups sharing equipment and waiting their turn to “have a go”. If they need to borrow something from another table (for example a stronger forcemeter), they ask for it politely. In a good Year 1 lesson, pupils worked sensibly in three groups across a large area of the building because they needed space for investigating sound. Pupils’ work shows many good links with mathematics through, for example, the use of measuring cylinders and reading off findings on a forcemeter. In Year 1, pupils measure their distance away from a sound with metre sticks and draw block graphs to show their results. Design and technology and science are strongly linked through pupils’ work on electricity, as when Years 3 and 4 design circuits with good understanding because of investigative work carried out in science.
110. There is a very enthusiastic co-ordinator. A carefully planned scheme of work, based on national guidelines and incorporating published schemes, is in place. This ensures consistency in coverage and approaches that build pupils’ skills, knowledge and understanding systematically. During the inspection week, all classes focused on investigative and experimental work. Yet the scheme of work shows that all aspects of the subject are covered over time. Resources are only just sufficient at the moment and the school is aware that more need to be acquired to support fully the needs of the new curriculum. The co-ordinator has begun to monitor and evaluate pupils’ learning through a scrutiny of planning and samples of work. In the light of this monitoring, changes to long-term planning are deemed necessary. Year 4 pupils who are assessed as needing extra help in science are invited to attend “booster” classes after school, aimed principally at older pupils. Last year there was a good take-up of places and pupils kept coming to these sessions with a beneficial impact on results in statutory tests for those in Year 6.

ART AND DESIGN

111. Only one lesson for younger pupils was seen (in Year 1) while three were seen in Years 3 to 6. A scrutiny of available work on display was also undertaken and a discussion held with the subject co-ordinator. Judgements are based on this evidence. Since there was no work and no lessons seen for

Year 2, because art and design is time-tabled to take place over the next half-term, a judgement of standards at this age is not made. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the demands made on them related to assembling interesting arrangements for drawing and painting 'still life' compositions. They are also becoming familiar with famous artists' work. But standards of drawing and in applying paint to relevant tasks are generally below what can be expected for this age.

112. In Year 1, most pupils want to listen to a teacher and watch as she demonstrates the next step in working on the theme of 'autumn leaves'. Some find it hard to concentrate because the group is large and many are still learning conventions about sitting for such purposes. Nevertheless, they disperse eagerly to tables to take up the task in hand. When asked, pupils explain they have to work co-operatively on a pattern of the leaves put on their table and then use this pattern to improve drawings they started in an earlier lesson. Almost all, though, much prefer to pick up a leaf to draw from it directly! By the end of the lesson some pleasing work starts to emerge. For example, about a third of the pupils have managed to improve their drawings by looking carefully at how leaves differ from one another in shape, pattern and size. Others have begun to experiment with placing layers of tissue paper together to make different colours. It is evident that pupils found the tasks set very demanding. Paintings and pastel work of flowers displayed on the classroom wall are lively and immediate in their impact, showing a bold use of colour and confident brushwork. These are much closer to standards expected of these youngest pupils, especially at this point in the school year.
113. Pupils in Year 4 enjoy experimenting with charcoal and chalk to produce an 'angry' face from studying their reflection in a mirror. They notice how this expression can change the shape of features. They 'smudge' the media for effect and some achieve different tones by blending chalk and charcoal together. They are keen to share ideas and show their work, although one or two make little progress because they are hesitant about the activity and find it hard to become involved in spite of a sense of fun generated by the teacher. In Year 5, pupils work on a 'still life' theme similar to that undertaken by their older peers in Year 6. They set about agreeing amicably on group compositions from a choice of objects, showing they have a good grasp of why height, colour, tone and texture for the drawing, painting and pastel work they will do, are important. Standards in this vary and are better where pastels have been experimented with. For example, two girls worked with oil pastels on their composition and managed a pleasing pattern and texture, reflecting, among other things, the pheasant feathers they studied and the pattern on a piece of fabric used for background. In Year 6, pupils make a good start with drawing their compositions but painting is mainly confined to 'colouring' in outlines drawn in ways that show a limited ability to mix and apply water-based colours. One group, though, applies an attractive wash of blue and yellow to a large sheet of paper boldly, reporting that these represent a "sea and sand scape" on which to place shells they intend to draw. However, they do not fully understand how to let colours dry before proceeding and subsequent work merges into the background in ways they cannot control. The teacher rightly sees this as an important teaching and learning point to be discussed at the end of the lesson.
114. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is mainly good. Teachers plan lessons carefully and organise access to resources so that pupils have some choice in their use, quite effectively. They aim to involve pupils through first-hand experience as much as possible. For example, Year 1 pupils had gathered their autumn leaves on a walk in the school grounds and pupils in Years 5 and 6 had a wide range of objects that interested them to create their compositions. Most Year 4 pupils loved studying their own faces and trying out effects with media they used. Whole-class discussion is sharply focused on a lesson's purpose and teachers make sure pupils understand how learning is built on over time. This is especially true for older pupils who have a good ability to review what is done in this way. For example, both Year 5 and Year 6 teachers make their lessons a 'summing up' of the half-term series. This was reflected very well in the confident way pupils worked at making a composition that pleased all members of a group and took account of the elements they had learned about (such as height and texture for added interest). Similarly, teachers commonly allow time to review work before lessons end. They show pupils how to be critical in ways helpful to each other, as when there is a discussion about what has worked well in the use of oil pastels.
115. Because of the very recent move to the new building, pupils' work was limited to what has been done this term. Although lessons seen concentrated mainly on a use of drawing and painting media, planning shows all elements of the curriculum are taught over the two-year planning cycle adopted by the school. In addition, samples of work in Year 3 illustrate approaches to elements involving the use of textiles exploring pattern, texture and colour. Pupils have looked carefully at small pictures of

different landscapes and created their own versions with wool on a fabric background, working in a scale to match photographs they study. These are very effective. Year 1 pupils have used a computer program to draw simple line patterns filled in with 'blocks' of colour. Pupils are beginning to experiment with the use of a digital camera to create images and develop their ideas, as in the 'still life' work done by older pupils. Links with other subjects are made where practicable. For example, a close study of leaves in Year 1 ties in well with seasonal change looked at in science and environmental studies.

116. The co-ordination of the subject is shared and co-ordinators are at an early stage of developing their joint role. It is evident this is being done competently, with good levels of subject understanding. To date, main concerns have had to do with ensuring curriculum requirements are mapped out to meet the latest national guidance and auditing resources so that identified 'gaps' are rectified in light of demands. Until the new building is complete, storing and organising resources to make them easily accessible stays a problem. Currently, teachers are in the process of evaluating curriculum planning, making adjustments where topic themes in other subjects (for example, history) can be exploited so that pupils learn and apply art and design skills purposefully. The co-ordinators monitor such adjustments to ensure subject demands are met. Although they do not yet monitor classroom teaching and learning practices, they do gain a useful overview of learning outcomes through looking at displays of pupils' work and talking to colleagues.
117. In some classrooms, running water is not available although sinks outside some rooms are close by. The room planned as a dedicated art and music room is seen as overcoming this problem but it was not used for art purposes during the inspection week. Because of its dual function, there are obviously time-tabling implications for each subject. Like all other classrooms, too, it is almost fully carpeted, a feature which is not helpful in relation to art and design lessons in view of the potential 'messiness' of many activities, most especially with regard to the use of clay. This was pointed out during an initial visit to the school as a problem to be overcome because no one wants to be responsible for spoiling classroom environments and making these difficult to keep clean. On the other hand, the prime importance of enabling pupils to experience the full range of media for art and design purposes is recognised.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

118. Because of time-tabling arrangements, only two lessons (one in Year 3 and one in Year 4) were observed and pupils' work on display was scrutinised in Year 2. The subject is taught in half-termly blocks in some year groups. It was not taught in Years 5 and 6 during the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to make an overall judgement about standards reached by Year 6 or the quality of teaching. Standards reached by pupils in Year 2 are judged satisfactory.
119. Evidence from discussions with staff and from looking at long-term planning shows that pupils throughout the school have a good breadth of experience in design and technology. They work in a range of different media and have systematically challenging opportunities to improve their basic skills. There are good links with other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 constructed paper gas masks for history when studying World War II. Similarly, their work on electrical circuits is closely allied to science.
120. In Year 2, pupils join together reclaimed materials to make different vehicles from their own plans. They learn about wheels and axles and how these make vehicles move. A wide range of resources used included cotton reels, cardboard boxes and wooden wheels. One pupil was eager to show his model to an inspector. He explained that he had cut flaps in the roof of his bus to let the air in and had used folded paper to make stairs for his passengers to climb to the upper deck.
121. Teaching in the two lessons observed was very good. In line with curriculum organisation whereby themes are covered over two year groups, Years 3 and 4 class teachers plan together for lessons which pupils find exciting and worthwhile. For example, they build on pupils' earlier knowledge of simple electrical circuits. Good progress in learning about how more complex circuits are used in alarm systems occurs. Very good questioning by the teachers elicits many sensible answers about where such warning devices are needed. One pupil suggested a push switch under the driver's seat of a car so that when someone sat down it would set off an alarm. A very extensive range of switches is introduced to pupils, each example correctly named, and a clear explanation is given about their

operational differences.

122. Although pupils are eager to carry out investigative work this can be detrimental to the design element of the subject, which tends to be rushed. Pupils obviously want to get started on making circuits for themselves. Some are quickly successful. Others persevere at a task and eventually get an appropriate result with the bulb lighting up, the buzzer going or the switch working correctly. Class teachers and support assistants give effective ongoing help to those who need it so that less able pupils also make good progress. Class discussions at the end of lessons pull together evidence of the pupils' successes and failures. Teachers emphasise the need to test components to make sure all are working correctly. Pupils are shown how to draw circuits in their books using conventional symbols for items such as batteries, bulbs and switches, so that they can record their work in ways linked clearly to scientific methodology. Across the age range, pupils apply literacy skills appropriately by labelling the different parts of their diagrams correctly.
123. The subject co-ordinator is enthusiastic and plans to use good facilities in the new building to improve learning in food technology. Evaluation of curricular provision is being carried out as teachers work through the first two years of their planning so that alterations can be made where necessary. Resources are being gathered to meet the needs of the new scheme of work. No use of information and communication technology was observed and this aspect of work is not, yet, developed.

GEOGRAPHY

124. Because of the way time-tabling is organised, only two lessons were observed, one in Year 2 and one in Year 6. A scrutiny of available written work by pupils was undertaken and a discussion with the co-ordinator held. On the basis of evidence gathered, standards achieved are judged satisfactory by Year 2 and good by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, make progress like their peers because of the way lessons are structured and through extra support from adults. Consequently, they achieve at least in line with their prior attainment.
125. In Year 2, pupils study aspects of their local area. Having visited part of the locality, they use maps to consider safe road-crossing points and possible improvements for pedestrians. The involvement of the local community police constable in a lesson observed enhanced pupils' learning to very good effect. Pupils listened keenly to him and showed a good grasp of considerations involved when answering his questions. In their exercise books, they have recorded the best ways to cross a road and have worked on a traffic survey. They know how to make a block graph. Handwriting is frequently good so that work is neatly presented. Most pupils are also beginning to write at some length and to record information in different ways (for example, in prose and with bullet points).
126. In Year 6, pupils reach good standards overall. When they first discuss aspects of the rainforest with their teacher, not all their thoughts are well developed before they speak. But pupils are evidently thinking for themselves and show their greater understanding as the lesson proceeds. They work with their 'response partners' with real co-operation to recall important information about rainforest conditions. They then apply themselves willingly when asked to work individually on listing essential clothes and equipment for a journey through the forest and to justify their choices. All pupils are successful in this task, not least the more able who fashion well-reasoned justifications in a short period. Other work in their exercise books underlines good standards achieved, including diagrams and maps. Many are particularly successful in showing what they know and understand when talking about work in hand. More able pupils use well-controlled descriptive language when writing and some lower ability pupils write quite extensively.
127. Pupils are very attentive and well behaved. Year 2 pupils visibly enjoy the contact with the visiting police constable, which spurs on their learning. In Year 6, talking to their teacher and discussing information with a 'response partner' aids their thinking about conditions in the rain forest and fosters concentration on the tasks set with a consequent impact on the quality of learning.
128. In the two lessons seen, teaching was very good. Planning is at least good and at times very good. Teachers are well organised. This was very evident in the preparation of pupils for the community policeman's visit in Year 2. The best teaching emphasises the development of thinking and reasoning skills and helps children to link new knowledge to their experiences, as when Year 6 pupils discuss life in the rainforest. In the lessons seen, teachers give pupils good opportunities to use classroom

computers - for example, to develop word-processing skills for written tasks. As outlined above, good links are made with other subjects such as mathematics and literacy, so pupils have opportunities to further their numeracy and literacy skills in ways that have meaning for them.

129. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has evident enthusiasm for, and interest in, geography. To date, her role involves monitoring how schemes of work are taught throughout Years 1 to 6, reviewing subject content, auditing resources and acting as budget-holder. However, it does not yet include the scrutiny of pupils' work or the monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms. In their joint planning, it is evident that teachers take good account of pupils' different ages and abilities across the two year groups where similar content is taught, as when teachers in Years 1 and 2 plan work on the immediate locality, for example. Resources are adequate for Years 3 to 6 but limited for younger pupils in Years 1 and 2. The school is aware of deficiencies and the co-ordinator monitors resources needed for the topics planned each term and ensures these meet immediate curricular demands.

HISTORY

130. Lessons were observed in Years 2, 3 and 4 and a scrutiny of available work undertaken. No work or lessons were seen in Years 5 and 6 because history is not time-tabled until the next half-term but a discussion was held with a small group of Year 6 pupils about their work for the previous year. On this basis, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about standards in Year 6 but standards are found broadly in line with expectations for Year 2 at this early point in the school year. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, make progress at least in line with their peers and achieve well relative to their abilities.
131. In Year 2, pupils talk about 'old' and 'new' toys when they look at examples of 'Happy Family' playing cards. They realise the quality of the colour in one set means these are probably the oldest. For example, they talk about them being 'yellowy' and "old looking". More able pupils see that the language on these cards is different to language now in common use and quote examples such as "Master Rolls the baker's son". Quite a few admit they have never played 'Happy Families' and see it as 'old fashioned', naming other card games they are familiar with. Pupils remember a recent visit to a toy museum in some detail. They thoroughly enjoyed, and obviously gained, much from it. They take pleasure in pointing to photographs of themselves at the museum on the classroom wall. One boy talks very articulately about a spinning top they were allowed to play with and explains how it worked. A significant number find it hard to extend ideas beyond a simple phrase or, in some cases, a 'yes' or 'no' response to direct questions, although they talk purposefully amongst themselves and to their teacher. About half manage to write simple sentences about something that is 'old' or 'new' and why they think this. Others prefer to draw examples illustrating their ideas.
132. In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn about World War II and its impact on evacuees. In both classes, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of work covered because they find its presentation and resources used stimulating and lively. For example, in Year 3, pupils watch an extract from a video with interest and can empathise with children of around their age who had to leave home and go and live in a strange environment. In Year 4, pupils discuss their ideas imaginatively in pairs or small groups, deciding what questions to ask one of the participants in the video. Now an elderly man, he lives not far from the school and pupils are quite thrilled at sending questions to him in a letter. More able pupils understand they should concentrate on questions they have thought of in addition to those generated on a board during class discussion. Others find it hard to think up their own, although they are very curious about many aspects of evacuees' experiences. Orally, pupils across the ability range reflect a very good grasp of topics they study but this does not affect what most achieve on paper. Pupils are enthusiastic about a visit to the local Royal Gunpowder Mill in connection with classroom work. Photographs show pupils enjoying marching as home guards under tuition from a sergeant, commenting that "He taught us to form ranks and stand to attention". They are seen listening attentively to the 'air raid warden' and local 'bobby', suitably dressed in the style of the 1940s.
133. Teaching is good overall. Planning incorporates first-hand sources as much as possible, so that pupils develop their understanding by really engaging their imaginations. It also stresses talk as a general medium for learning, with whole-class sessions well conducted, enabling pupils to share their thinking fruitfully. This was seen in Year 3, for example, after pupils had watched the video on evacuees. Pupils are given suitable opportunities to apply their literacy skills. For example, in Year 4

they jot down ideas for questions on personal 'white boards' and write captions for the photographs taken at the gunpowder mill. Mathematical skills are used in setting historical periods in their context on time-lines. Older pupils are insecure about historical time, though, as evident in a discussion with a small group from Year 6. These pupils explained they studied 'The Tudors' in Year 5 and could recall quite a lot of work and activities undertaken. They were reasonably accurate in placing the Tudor period as being "about 400 years ago" but then guessed this was "just before Queen Victoria", whom they knew belonged to the 19th century.

134. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory overall. The curriculum is mapped out suitably to give proper coverage of National Curriculum requirements, taking account of the latest national guidance. The co-ordinator manages the budget and has audited resources. These are added to so that curricular demands are met in line with planning for each term. As discussed above, visits to places of interest considerably enhance provision and visitors to school enliven work to the benefit of pupils' learning whenever feasible. Currently, the co-ordinator does not sample pupils' work to gain an overview of standards achieved or monitor classroom teaching and learning practices. No use of information and communication technology was seen. This is clearly an aspect of the curriculum still being developed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

135. Time-tabling arrangements during the inspection week meant not all classes could be seen working in the computer suite. A few instances of pupils using computers in other subjects in their classrooms were noted. Lessons in information and communication technology were observed in Years 1, 2, 3 and 5 and displays of samples of available work across the age range were scrutinised. The co-ordinator was interviewed and relevant subject documents reviewed together with resources in terms of machines and software. On the basis of evidence, standards currently achieved are judged to fall below national expectations by Year 2 though they are satisfactory by Year 6. All pupils with special educational need make progress similar to their peers and achieve at least in line with their prior attainment.
136. All pupils in Year 1 know how to switch on a computer and log on initially. Many can also enter the program they are to use, although around a third of the class need adult help with this. They have learned how to 'drag' using the mouse, as when they 'drag' colours across a screen to fill a space. They control the mouse to draw a line to their own design, using the whole screen space. About half the class can confidently identify icons and click on the correct one to give instructions. Most can print out their work without adult support. It is clear from the lesson objectives set that Year 2 pupils are inexperienced in basic aspects of the keyboard. For instance, they are still learning the use of the space bar and the shift key to write a capital letter. In a literacy set, a Year 2 pupil assigned to the classroom computer needed to be able to place missing words in a sentence but could not apply the 'cut and paste' routine without adult intervention.
137. Pupils' greater experience in computer use is evident in Years 3 to 6 and is well reflected in standards achieved and the complexity of operations they can control, both in the computer suite and classroom. For example, when Year 5 pupils (working on a graphics program to model a classroom layout in the computer suite) find they cannot print off their design because of a troublesome printer, they are able to save their product to their assigned space on the appropriate server. In a mathematics lesson in the Year 6 classroom, more able pupils show secure knowledge of how to use the mouse to select the correct menu for work on rotating shapes. They succeed in selecting items that can be rotated around vertical and horizontal axes from the centre point of rotation. Once set to work by a teacher, these pupils not only work independently but also explain tasks correctly.
138. In the computer suite, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory, but are generally not as good as is most frequently seen in classrooms. In part, this is owed to excitement at using a facility that is still a novelty. In part, too, it is because of the present condition of equipment and the circumstances in the suite. Pupils, who may exhibit an excited 'buzz' in their classroom, become rather more distracted and noisy in a different context. For example, teachers sometimes have to arrange for pupils to bring classroom chairs with them because of a lack of permanent furniture in the suite. This can make for an uneven start to lessons, so that attention has to be refocused before teachers can concentrate on what is to be taught. Also, given the limited number of workstations in the suite, inevitably pupils often have to share machines with others. This situation is exacerbated when (as often happens) some machines are out of commission. Mostly, pupils work in pairs but some groups

of three become necessary when machines are out of use. Consequently, pupils across the age range sometimes find it hard to be actively involved when they are not themselves controlling a computer. This was particularly (and not surprisingly in view of their age), most evident in Year 1.

139. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is very variable. A positive example was where a Year 3 teacher prepared carefully how the terms 'text', 'graphics' and 'font' were to be introduced and subsequently explained these in ways supporting a task most effectively. Elsewhere, mismatches occurred between lesson purposes and explanations of these, as when Year 2 pupils learned about the 'shift' and 'return' keys but actually stayed unclear about the use of the latter. That it might not always be necessary was not explored. In this lesson, the teacher made good use of projection equipment to give a very clear demonstration of how to move the cursor in such a way as to allow deletion and replacement of a letter in a sentence. In other lessons, where equipment was not visible to a whole class, work was hampered because pupils could not always follow what was being said. On occasion, a lack of challenge in tasks led to reduced interest and motivation. This was seen, for example, when pupils in Year 1 practised skills for a paint program they had already learned. While initial enjoyment fostered enthusiasm, this soon waned as pupils quickly decided their designs were finished and printed out work similar to that already on display.
140. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is also variable. Good knowledge and familiarity with a program allows flexible direction and rapid intervention. A good instance was seen in a Year 5 lesson in the computer suite where a teacher monitoring pupils' progress in designing a classroom, using a graphics program noticed the first pupil to use the rotation facility and drew the attention of other pupils to this.
141. The co-ordinator is experienced and determined and has a very good overview of the present position of the subject within the school. She is a good leader. The school is well aware of developments still needed in information and communication technology, such as further improvement to facilities in the computer suite, staff development in the subject and its application. Software requires supplementing across subjects alongside an audit of pupils' skills. A clear understanding of the school's circumstances is found in the policy document, which includes much good detail but which does not consider e-mail and Internet use, nor issues of internet access with attendant concerns for child protection and need for parental consent. A very good short-term action plan for the present year brings together the various developmental issues in a way that is both thorough and practical. An audit, which had also been undertaken, shows what resources the school needs for National Curriculum requirements to be fully met. The school is working on the problem of seating in the computer suite and is actively seeking solutions that will make sure pupils across the age-range (including children in the Reception Year) can be safely seated in ways that mean they can access machines and keyboards comfortably.
142. The computer suite is not at present fully functional since not all terminals are in working order. Printing facilities, similarly, do not function properly. This creates high levels of frustration for teachers and pupils and hampers the school's ability to meet all curricular demands. For example, in one lesson observed only 11 of the 15 available machines were found to be working when the class was grouped, although a previous check had shown they could all be used. Following the re-location of the school to the new building, server arrangements need to be rationalised and Internet links re-established. Furthermore, current server capacity is inadequate as well as poorly located. These problems are not of the school's making and it is working hard to find permanent solutions that will mean the subject can move forward in line with planning. Further consideration could usefully be given to issues of the layout and use of the computer suite in order to permit easy whole-class demonstration of techniques and thus to facilitate more efficient use of time and resources for teaching and learning.

MUSIC

143. Because of weekly time-tabling, lessons were not seen in Year 2 although they were observed in all other classes. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, however, were heard learning a new song in an assembly and a discussion was held with the co-ordinator. There is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on standards by Year 2 but indications are that these are likely to be at least satisfactory, based on work seen in other year groups. Standards by Year 6 are already broadly in line with what is expected for this age regarding composing and knowledge and understanding of the subject at this

point in the school year. Singing across the age range is good. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, make good progress and achieve in line with their peers.

144. In Year 1, pupils listen attentively as the teacher tells them they will be learning a new song and so will need to talk about some of the words so everyone understands. They enjoy listening to the song on a CD player. A girl says "I like that one" and a lot of pupils want to join in talking about the content. All respond very well as the teacher begins to sing the refrain unaccompanied, beating time with two fingers on the palm of her hand. This good strategy interests pupils and everyone soon copies her actions. They pick up the words quickly, line-by-line, repeating after the teacher, and becoming increasingly good at keeping time. Everyone is keen to beat time with an instrument for the 'next step' in the lesson. They watch intently as the teacher strikes a tambour, explaining the sound is better if you 'tap' rather than "bash" a triangle. They also know how to hold a triangle so it swings gently to release the sound. Initially, singers join in reluctantly because they want a go in the class 'orchestra'. On realising they will get a turn if everyone co-operates, they then follow the teacher's lead and begin practising the song with instrumental accompaniment. They achieve a very pleasing result.
145. Year 3 pupils are not clear about the term "waltz" when a teacher asks them at the start of a lesson if they can say what it means. On listening to an example on the CD player, they describe the song they hear as "peaceful" and "gentle". They realise it is a song about shadows changing as the sun goes down. Pupils follow the words under the notation in their music books quite well for a first effort and sing tunefully. By the end of the lesson, those chosen to take turns in playing instruments in a small group can more-or-less maintain a beat of three to accompany the singers. Singing is of good quality and pupils recognise how their posture affects the sound they make and strive hard to stand up straight, like the teacher. Pupils in Year 4 pick out a horn in an orchestral piece and know this is a brass instrument. About half the class can hold up a finger correctly to indicate when the main theme occurs again and more join in as the piece continues. In group work, when asked to devise a 'musical sandwich' with a strong pattern, some pupils find it hard to co-operate because they want to experiment on the instruments without regard to the task. They concentrate better as they realise they will be asked to demonstrate, since everyone wants a chance to perform.
146. By Year 6, pupils show a good knowledge of pitch when the teacher plays simple patterns consisting of three notes on chime bars. They have good listening skills. Soon, they are matching what she plays to one of the eight patterns they see fixed to the board, and calling out the pattern's number. Learning is effectively consolidated when pupils demonstrate on a keyboard or set of chime bars on their table while the rest of the class again listens and guesses which sheet is being used. Later, they move on to composing their own sequences of notes over eight bars and rehearse these for playing back to the class. Two girls make very effective use of a syncopated rhythm on their keyboard to accompany their own composition. Two boys experiment on the piano and later explain how they have achieved a sustained effect by holding down a pedal. The teacher helpfully adds that this makes the notes resonate. When evaluating their learning at the end of the lesson, some pupils realise they would have made more progress if they had "concentrated harder and stopped messing about!" and others that work could have been given added interest by, for example, "a change of speed". The teacher praises these observations and takes the opportunity to reinforce correct usage of "tempo".
147. Teaching is at least good and is better than this where particular subject expertise is evident, as in Years 5 and 6 where the same teacher takes each class. A strength in teaching is the way almost all teachers take their own class, imparting a sense of fun and enjoyment in a range of musical activities. Planning is well based on commercial schemes teachers find helpful and takes good account of all elements of the required curriculum over time. Teachers consistently make sure pupils appreciate a lesson's content and know the reasons for any instructions given. For example, all teachers stress the importance of holding and striking instruments correctly in ways outlined above. In Year 3, an excellent explanation of why it is important to sit or stand correctly when singing was given in ways that helped pupils become confident when talking about the diaphragm and take pride in singing well. Year 1 pupils' learning was usefully extended when they were intrigued by the teacher's use of the term "orchestra" and her subsequent explanation. They then all wanted to be members of the class 'orchestra'. Teachers match tasks to pupils different abilities well. This was seen to advantage in Year 6 where less confident pupils based their ideas for composition on the teacher's examples and

more able pupils experimented with their own ideas imaginatively (as seen with the use of a backing accompaniment on the keyboard). Teachers have good behaviour management skills for promoting successful learning and co-operative practices in all lessons with regard, for instance, to the playing of instruments and how these are to be shared. While lessons are necessarily noisy at times (such as when everyone is composing) teachers' good management skills ensure such noise does not distract from a lesson's main purpose and its pace is maintained.

148. The co-ordinator has excellent subject knowledge, which gives solid support to planning for curricula throughout the school. She has made sure there are sufficient instruments for whole-class work complemented by a good selection of keyboard instruments. She sees extending the range and improving the quality of such provision as ongoing matters, as finances allow. Although she does not monitor teaching and learning in classrooms, she does keep herself well-informed of what is going on by talking to teachers, monitoring their planning and evaluations of learning outcomes and by seizing opportunities to work with pupils in assemblies. For example, she very quickly taught a simple Hebrew song to Years 1 and 2, amply demonstrating her confident, subject-based skills. She looks forward to reforming the school choir and to working on whole-school productions planned for later in the year. The school is also committed to participating in two community events and the co-ordinator is enthusiastic about helping with a production of "Joseph and the Technicolour Dreamcoat" to be performed with other schools in the nearby Abbey Church. The subject contributes very positively to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

149. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards broadly in line with those expected in lessons seen. These were gymnastics lessons in Years 1, 2 and 3 and games-skills lessons in Years 5 and 6. Across the age range, pupils achieve well relative to their abilities. All pupils are equally able to take part in lessons, but no physically disabled pupils were observed during the inspection. Progress in lessons is generally good, including for those pupils with special educational needs. These pupils frequently reach similar standards to their peers.
150. Planning shows an appropriate range of activities matched to curricular requirements, including dance, games, gymnastic and athletic activities and swimming. Older pupils have opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities in the course of the school year. At the end of the summer term, pupils in Year 6 walk to the local council pool for swimming. The cost of hiring a coach for younger pupils prohibits visits at an earlier age. Because the hall in the new building is not yet ready for use, indoor lessons take place in the hall in the remaining old building a few minutes away. This means that pupils have to put on outdoor clothing in their classrooms and then change in the old building, reversing this process at the end of lessons with a consequent loss of time. Almost all pupils change appropriately for their physical education lessons and work in the hall in bare feet. All teachers wear suitable clothing, taking a businesslike approach to lessons. In most lessons, good attention is drawn to the effect of exercise on the body. There are suitable warm-up activities at the beginning of each session and at the end the pupils are encouraged to cool down slowly and calmly.
151. Pupils are lively and keen to learn. In a gymnastics lesson, Year 2 pupils respond well to their teacher's directions and suitably meet her instructions. They are careful not to bump into each other and use space well. Pupils, who for a variety of reasons do not take part in a lesson, are employed usefully as "spotters" of good practice. The teacher uses exemplars to good effect and pupils demonstrate their movements well, while the rest watch carefully before trying again. This leads to all improving their performance. Pupils put out equipment very carefully with due regard for the safety of others. Similar lessons were observed in Year 1 and Year 3. Good lively teaching made learning fun in these and very good behaviour was maintained throughout.
152. Teaching is good overall. In Year 5, notably strong teaching ensures pupils practise their throwing, bowling and hitting techniques even when confined to the hall because of poor weather. Consequently, pupils make good improvements to games' skills. Very good lesson management, with good touches of humour, keeps a lively class on task. Pupils respond quickly to their teacher's instructions and use equipment sensibly in a confined space. With the same teacher, Year 6 pupils practise their hockey skills outside. The participants are very enthusiastic and at times rather noisy but well controlled. Pupils make good progress in learning how to hold a hockey stick and to dribble and pass with precision.

153. The football team is coached by the caretaker, who has taken relevant courses. Pupils take part in inter-school sporting events and are cheered on by friends and parents as well as by members of staff and other pupils. A netball club which meets after school is open to all pupils in Year 5 and Year 6, whatever their aptitude.
154. Extensive grounds and a full-size netball court enhance physical education. A teacher newly appointed to the school co-ordinates the subject though, at this early time in the term, she has not yet had time to take up her responsibilities fully.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

155. Because of time-tabling arrangements across the week, only three lessons were observed in Years 1, 4 and 5 respectively. A discussion was held with the co-ordinator and pupils' written work scrutinised. On the basis of evidence gathered, standards are judged satisfactorily in line with the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and good in relation to these requirements in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a Statement of special need, make good progress and generally achieve in line with their prior attainment.
156. In Year 1, pupils talk with their teacher about different ways of belonging (such as belonging to their families and to organisations such as school clubs). This leads to a consideration of the idea of being cared for, which in turn introduces the concept of the love of God. Pupils listen intently to their teacher's reading of a story and eagerly answer her questions. In their exercise books, Year 2 pupils have written on this same theme linked to membership of their families and religious allegiance, using Islam as an illustration. Written work is very limited, although it is evident that most pupils grasp essential ideas at a simple level. However, more able pupils write much less than they produce for their geography work for instance, perhaps showing the demanding nature of the abstract concepts taught in religious education but also suggesting that more might be expected of pupils in terms of the range and depth of tasks set.
157. In Year 4, pupils listen closely to a Bible story about Abraham. Through a teacher's skilled questioning, they begin to extend responses, eventually explaining the sequence of events and their understanding of the moral implications of these. By the end of the whole-class session, pupils had a good knowledge of Abraham's journey to the Promised Land. Even so, they find it difficult to record their responses to short questions legibly and meaningfully. They cannot all read back what they have written. In lessons with a strong emotional content, pupils do especially well and produce work of greater depth. In Year 5, for example, they make very presentable posters advertising 'Child Line', in a short time, because their interest is roused, and relevance of the subject matter is apparent to them. These older pupils also write about a range of subjects in their exercise books in ways revealing understanding of and interest in what they do. For instance, they write about agreed behaviour rules in class, recall the story of Zacchaeus and describe their conceptions of the nature of love, and their work on the Good Samaritan. In many cases, pupils write at reasonable length.
158. Pupils generally show positive attitudes in lessons and behave well, participating with evident enjoyment when they listen to Bible stories or discuss moral issues connected with their own lives. Assemblies teach important matters relating to religious education, with content thoughtfully matched to the week's theme through choice of stories and the way moral dilemmas are presented. Pupils appreciate the atmosphere created by the adults (members of staff and visitors) who present assemblies. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 listen well as they consider the issue of 'peace' when a visitor sets a context for this they can relate to (for example, linked to history work on World War II) before reading a Bible story. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 spontaneously applaud their older peers who perform an Israeli song for them about peace.
159. Teachers' planning is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and very good across Years 3 to 6. It consistently includes the setting of clear objectives, appropriate to pupils' age, interests and abilities across the two year groups planned for. In the best lessons, a teacher's 'presence', including effective use of voice and a warm manner, is key to involving pupils. This was seen in Year 4, when a teacher engaged pupils in content they found quite demanding. These lessons are also characterised by teachers' breadth of vocabulary, which serves to stimulate an adventurous use of words by pupils. In the Year 5 lesson about 'Child Line', for instance, pupils responded empathetically to children

experiencing 'desperation', as when they described them as feeling 'broken-hearted' and 'unloved'.

160. As a Church of England foundation, the school has strong links with the local church and indeed is the venue at weekends for all church functions. The former vicar was very prominent in the school, but during a current interregnum three church members take it in turns to take assembly in school each week. In its practice, the school makes firm links between religious education and other areas of the curriculum such as personal, social, health and citizenship education and draws on these well to support its teaching of religious, moral and social issues. It is seeking to redress imbalances in its teaching about major religions other than Christianity through extending its range of visits and visitors who come into school. It acknowledges that, at present, such teaching is limited to second-hand sources, such as books and video material.
161. The co-ordinator gives satisfactory leadership. The role encompasses monitoring the implementation of the schemes of work in all classes, reviewing the subject content and acting as budget-holder. However, it does not yet include scrutiny of pupils' work or the monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms. Teachers use material drawn appropriately from the locally Agreed Syllabus as the basis for their joint planning across year groups. Resources adequately support curricular demands.