

INSPECTION REPORT

HARE STREET PRIMARY SCHOOL

Harlow

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 133255

Headteacher: Mr T Voss

Reporting inspector: Mrs P Silcock
21261

Dates of inspection: 11th – 14th November 2002

Inspection number: 249021

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

© Crown copyright 2002

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Little Grove Field Harlow Essex
Postcode:	CM19 4BU
Telephone number:	(01279) 868181
Fax number:	(01279) 868182
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Miss Y Durham
Date of previous inspection:	N/A

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21261	Pauline Silcock	Registered inspector	English History English as an additional language Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught?
9173	Sarah McDermott	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?
22577	Margaret Hart	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Music Special educational needs	
24019	Ken Parry	Team inspector	Mathematics Geography Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
11976	Heather Toynbee	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Art and design Design and technology	
16761	Melvyn Hemmings	Team inspector	Science Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

PPI Group Ltd
7 Hill Street
Bristol
BS1 5RW

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4 - 7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	8 - 11
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	11 - 13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13 - 15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16 - 17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17 - 18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18 - 20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20 - 21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22 - 26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27 - 41

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Hare Street Primary School caters for children from three to 11 years. At the time of the inspection, 410 children were on roll, including 51 attending part time in the Nursery. Children start in the Nursery either in the September or January of the school year in which they will be four. They transfer to the Reception class in the September or January of the school year in which they become five. On entry to Nursery, most children are well below average in speaking and listening, reading, writing and number skills compared to most three-year-olds. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls in the school with gender imbalances in some year groups. Most pupils are white British with ten per cent of minority ethnic origin. Approximately five per cent of the school population has English as an additional language and a few (less than one per cent) are at an early stage of acquiring English language skills. The main languages other than English are Urdu, Panjabi, French and Twi. The school gets support through Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant funding for beginner bilinguals¹. About 23 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Around 28 per cent are on the Code of Practice register of special educational need. Two per cent of these have a statement of special need. Needs identified vary from specific learning difficulties with reading and writing to communication problems and physical disabilities but a high proportion have emotional and behavioural difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Hare Street Primary is a good school. It is a secure learning environment where all pupils feel valued and cared for. The school has a welcoming, strongly inclusive ethos. Since its amalgamation almost two years ago, standards in English and mathematics have risen, especially for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Teaching is good overall, significantly affecting the good or better learning seen in many lessons. The headteacher is a very good leader, working in partnership with his deputy. Equality of opportunity for all is a high priority. Governors give good support. They are proud of what the school offers and determined to make sure improvements in school life continue. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Almost all pupils have very good attitudes to school because adults are pleased to see them each day.
- Teaching across the school is good with strengths in the Nursery.
- Adults' very good behaviour-management skills influence pupils' behaviour throughout the school and often help them progress in lessons.
- Adults consistently promote pupils' moral and social development to very good effect.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The headteacher and his deputy bring complementary skills to school management. They share a very clear vision for the school's future and are determined to succeed.
- All staff work hard to improve educational opportunities for pupils and are committed to taking the school forward.

What could be improved

- Standards across subjects, especially with regard to pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills.
- Attendance.
- Balance in curricular planning.
- The way pupils are withdrawn from lessons and assemblies.
- Communication across the school.
- Safety, with regard to the use of physical education equipment and access to the Internet.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

¹ It is recognised that pupils learning English as an additional language may be proficient in or have knowledge of more than one other language. Pupils may also have literacy skills in their home or community language/s. For ease of reference, these pupils will sometimes be referred to as bilingual pupils.

Since the school is new there are no issues from a previous inspection to address. However, considerable progress has been made since the amalgamation to make teaching approaches consistent. This has involved looking closely at curriculum planning, making sure teachers have formulated a lesson's purposes with teaching and what pupils are to learn made explicit. Consistency has also been achieved in the teaching of literacy and numeracy, with national strategies for these used across the school. Crucially, emphasis has also been placed on improving staff members' behaviour-management skills so that all use the same strategies. The management structure has been enlarged as a means of gaining wider representation amongst all staff. Making sure everyone feels properly informed of school matters is a particular challenge. While clear systems are in place for this, the school recognises that further improvement is needed here.

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	E	D
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	E	E
Science	N/A	N/A	E	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

In the latest statutory tests, standards reached by 11-year-olds were well below average compared to pupils in all schools. They were also well below the average compared with pupils in similar schools in mathematics and science and below average in English. Challenging targets set in English and mathematics were not met. Since only one set of test results is available for the table, it is not possible to draw conclusions from these. Indeed, trends are rising and the school was congratulated on this and received national recognition. Inspection evidence shows standards reached by pupils in Year 6 are below expectations for their age in all three subjects. More able pupils do well but pupils of average ability and, especially, those below average are hampered by poor literacy skills. Strategies for improving reading and spelling in Reception and Years 1 and 2 are helping improve literacy in classes for younger pupils. So, too, is additional learning support for groups in Years 3 and 4. But the impact of these will take time to 'feed through' the school. Inspection evidence reveals pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language frequently make good progress in their learning. They achieve at least satisfactorily relative to their age and different abilities in all subjects. Pupils in Year 2 succeed broadly in line with expectations in reading and writing in literacy lessons. However, they do not readily transfer these skills to other work and standards in mathematics and science are below those expected. Standards in information and communication technology are below expectations in both Years 2 and 6 although younger pupils do well in some aspects of the subject. In religious education, Year 2 pupils reach expected standards in the locally agreed syllabus according to work seen in lessons (although it is not clear from written work whether this is sustained) but Year 6 pupils do not reach anticipated levels overall. History is the same, with the younger pupils doing well orally and their older peers below expectation. Standards in geography in Years 2 and 6, too, are below those expected. There is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on standards in art and design in Year 2 but they are below expectations by Year 6. In music, Year 2 pupils do at least as well as expected in singing as do Year 6 pupils when playing untuned instruments. Overall, though, standards are below expectations for both ages. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach at least expected standards in design and technology with much work of good quality. They also reach average standards in physical education. By Year 6, pupils reach good standards in swimming. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in all areas of learning. However, many start from a low base in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical learning and most are not likely to reach the early learning goals in these areas by their transfer to Year 1. By Reception, children are more advanced in their personal, social and emotional development, in knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical and creative development and are set to achieve relevant goals in these areas by the end of the Reception Year.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. In the main, pupils of all ages enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are usually interested in lesson activities and almost all apply themselves willingly to tasks.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils make good relationships with one another and with adults. Their personal development is satisfactory overall.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory.

Although almost all pupils have very good attitudes to school, a few in some Year 3 to 6 classes find it hard to follow instructions, affecting the pace of lessons. In particular, the behaviour of a very few boys in Year 6 can disrupt lessons, in spite of teachers' best efforts. In Nursery and Reception classes children develop good independent learning skills. In other classes, pupils are over-reliant on adult help to tell them what to do. There is no unauthorised absence but a significant number of pupils are taken out of school for holidays in term time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is strong across the school. Most is good or better. A few lessons were judged unsatisfactory because teaching did not address a subject's content sufficiently. For example, in Years 4 and 5, pupils did not make enough progress in learning about religious education because some lessons were more concerned with literacy skills. More commonly, teachers plan so a sharp focus is kept on a lesson's main purpose. In the best lessons, teachers keep a brisk pace with considerable subject expertise. This was seen in an excellent literacy lesson in Year 6 when pupils were absorbed in a writing task by a teacher's ability to generate and hold their interest. Literacy and numeracy are well taught throughout the school, especially in Nursery and Reception classes. However, the poor literacy skills of many pupils affects learning in all subjects. Teachers plan well for pupils with special educational needs and for bilingual learners. Support staff are deployed to very good effect and contribute substantially to the learning of all such pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good in the Nursery and Reception classes. Good in Years 1 to 6. Stimulating activities engage pupils' interest and imaginations.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Tasks are matched well to pupils' needs in ways helping them learn alongside their peers. They receive very good quality support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The deputy head's expertise ensures pupils' needs are properly assessed, with a specialist teacher helping those at an early stage of English language acquisition each week. Teachers also plan well to meet their needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and	Good overall, with very good provision for moral and social development. All adults consistently help pupils tell right from wrong and take responsibility for their actions. Some very pleasing instances of spirituality were seen in

cultural, development	some assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	To good effect, with strengths in monitoring and promoting good behaviour and making sure oppressive behaviour is not a feature of school life.

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. Strengths in Nursery and Reception classes include very good breadth, balance and relevance in curricular provision. That for pupils in Years 1 to 6 has good breadth and relevance but lacks balance. For example, time allocated to English and mathematics is very generous but that given to other subjects is somewhat limited, making it hard for teachers to plan so that relevant skills, knowledge and understanding are developed over time. Provision for clubs out of school hours and for visits to places of interest and for visitors to school to enrich classroom learning, is very good. The school provides all its pupils with very good levels of care. All are included fully in classroom and school life. The school's policy on race equality is unequivocal. It informs the school's approaches on such matters to very good effect.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Senior managers know how well the school is doing because of good systems for checking its performance. The headteacher and deputy head, especially, have a good overview of teaching and learning.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily. Through a thorough self-review, governors have identified how they can further improve their contribution to the school's management.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. All members of staff and governors take part in reviewing progress in fulfilling priorities of development planning and help decide future needs.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific funds are allocated for their designated purposes and support teaching and learning well.

Sufficient staff meets curricular demands with good levels of support staff. Accommodation is good. However, the school is still housed in two buildings and ongoing building works exacerbates problems arising from its being managed as a single institution, which the headteacher and deputy work very hard to overcome. Best value principles are applied to good effect with comparisons sought when making purchases, for example.

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 coming to school. As a result of good teaching children make good progress. Provision in Nursery and Reception classes is very good. The school has high expectations of children. Parents feel able to talk to the headteacher and class teachers if they have concerns. Children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Behaviour. Homework. Information about children's progress. Partnership with parents. Activities outside lessons.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments. They also agree that the behaviour of a few pupils gives cause for concern at times, but behaviour is judged usually to be good because of adults' behaviour-management skills. Provision for activities outside lessons is very good, with a wide range of clubs available. The school works hard at its partnership with parents but rightly identifies the need for further improvement. Information to parents is often very good but inspectors agree that reports on pupils' progress could be written in more user-friendly language. They find homework provision good, although it is recognised there have been problems recently because of instability in staffing and teacher illness.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. On entry to the Nursery, pupils' standards in all areas are below those expected for their age. In the areas of communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world standards are well below those generally found in three-year-olds. Other areas are: personal, social and emotional development; and creative and physical development. Although children make good progress in the Nursery because of frequently very good teaching and a stimulating curriculum, their attainment on reaching Reception is still generally below that expected when assessed against criteria for the early learning goals. However, children continue to do well during their second year in school and, by the time they start Year 1 their physical and creative skills are broadly as expected and their knowledge and understanding of the world are secure. They have good personal and social skills, but for a significant number their communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills are still not as well developed as those of most other children at this age so that standards fall below expected levels. Children with special educational needs make good progress in line with their prior attainment because of good quality support in both classes. Similarly, children with English as an additional language make good progress, succeeding on a par with their peers because of such support.
2. Detailed information for the latest statutory test results (2002) for seven and 11-year-olds is not available, although broad comparisons can be made against all and similar schools' results when average points scores are calculated (that is, when scores in each test are added together and averaged out). Caution is needed in looking at these of course as they represent only one complete academic year since the school was amalgamated and useful comparisons are therefore hard to make. Trends show improvements in results over two years (that is, taking into account the results of tests taken soon after the school's amalgamation), especially for seven-year-olds. In fact, the school was congratulated for much improved results in the 2001 tests, receiving a national certificate celebrating its progress. In the 2002 tests, the youngest pupils reached below average results in reading compared to pupils in all schools and well below the results in writing and mathematics. For this same purpose, compared to results in similar schools, pupils achieved broadly in line with their peers in mathematics, above their peers' results in reading and well above in writing. Teachers assessed pupils as performing broadly in line with national expectations in science and in speaking and listening.
3. Inspection evidence shows standards of pupils in Year 2 are about average for reading and writing at this early point of the school year and within the context of literacy learning, both with regard to work in lessons and in written work. This is rather better than suggested by test results. Standards are owed in part to frequently good or better teaching but also to the strategies for improving literacy that the school is pursuing. In mathematics and science, standards fall below average because pupils do not, yet, transfer necessary literacy skills sufficiently well to these subjects. For example, they cannot easily read instructions or record their findings in written form. In lessons, though, pupils sometimes show a sound grasp of content taught, especially in science. They are then seen to perform satisfactorily even though they do not find it easy to express ideas fluently. Indeed in all subjects, pupils find it hard to explain their thinking, although they frequently benefit from tightly structured lessons where the content being taught is focused and teachers question and probe pupils' understanding with considerable skill. Pupils frequently make good gains in learning because of good practical activities, which catch and hold their interest.
4. In the 2002 statutory test results for 11-year-olds, pupils were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science according to average points scores. Compared with similar schools' results, pupils were below average in English and well below average in mathematics and science. Inspection findings show standards are below those expected at this age in all three subjects. However, the picture is somewhat more complex. Above average pupils do well in all aspects of their learning and pupils of average ability often achieve well orally but are let down by poor literacy skills. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6 affects standards overall. Moreover, a significant number (representing more than a quarter of the cohort and

including some with particular learning needs) started at the school since its amalgamation, and this, too, affects overall standards. Pupils frequently do better in lessons than written work suggests because, as with younger pupils, teachers are adept at keeping pupils' attention on concepts to be taught through skilled questioning. These pupils also benefit, like their younger peers, from the practical activities teachers organise in many lessons.

5. The school analyses all test information and is doing so with increasing sophistication. It knows that pupils of minority ethnic origin (including pupils with English as an additional language) do better on average than their peers. It can compare boys' and girls' results to assess gender differences and it can look at specific aspects of a subject to see where weaknesses lie. To address literacy weaknesses, it participates in an early reading research programme for all pupils in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2, which is having a marked effect on pupils' reading and spelling. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 who gained Level 2B in reading in statutory tests at seven are given extra support to boost their performance. In addition, teaching across subjects focuses closely on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills in ways meant to improve writing. The school knows it must concentrate on the latter so all pupils more readily apply literacy skills learned to other subjects. It sets statutory targets in English and mathematics realistically in line with formal assessment information gathered from many sources. Targets are consistently challenging and the school did not meet those set in 2002. Again, a high proportion of the Year 6 cohort was identified as having special educational needs and entered the school after its amalgamation, not long before moving on to secondary education.
6. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well and make good progress because of the school's very good provision and inclusive ethos. Similarly, the needs of bilingual pupils are well catered for. These pupils progress well and frequently succeed at least in line with their peers. No significant differences are found in the performance of boys and girls across the school.
7. More able pupils and those of average ability in Year 2 read confidently at a level well matched to their abilities. They can work out unfamiliar words using many strategies (such as using picture clues) and can correct themselves if something does not make sense. They can write simple sentences using full stops and capital letters, showing they understand how to sequence ideas sensibly. Spelling is mostly correct and handwriting mostly neat although below average pupils struggle with this. In fact, these latter pupils manage well with tasks set because of good support, which helps them concentrate. Most pupils in Year 2 know the value of each digit in numbers such as 48 and can detect patterns in odd and even numbers. Pupils carry out scientific investigations with adult help and are beginning to grasp how water changes some materials when mixed with them. By Year 6, above average pupils are learning good writing skills. Interest for a reader is stimulated by these pupils' choice of vocabulary and the way plots are developed. Work is varied and pupils can match content to purpose well (as when they write factual accounts, retell a story or write a letter). They punctuate, using speech marks for example, with understanding. Below average pupils read books geared to their ability with reasonable fluency and can explain a story's main events. Their writing shows a grasp of a lesson's content, but pupils have difficulties expressing ideas and extending these to any length. Most of these oldest pupils know place value in numbers of at least three digits (such as 829) and are beginning to use decimal notation, fractions and percentages. Many lack confidence with written methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, however and this hampers progress. Neither can these pupils interpret scientific information gained through practical activities or see the significance of patterns they may observe. Consequently, most do not understand the need for a fair test or carry one out independently of a teacher.
8. As noted, pupils of all ages find it hard to apply literacy skills to other subjects, although more able pupils manage well at times (as seen, for example, in some history work). Most commonly, pupils have difficulties because they do not find it easy to understand and use subject specific language. For example, in a Year 6 geography lesson, pupils learned about rivers and the water cycle and the effect humans have had on the natural environment. They did not readily recall key geographical terms introduced in previous work. Some teachers also tend to praise pupils' efforts at written work indiscriminately when it is not tied to literacy learning, even when it is unsatisfactory. This is seen in science, for example. Pupils can apply numeracy skills to other subjects, as when Year 4 pupils learned to read the scale on a forcemeter in science and Year 6 pupils made charts to show results of experiments on water temperature. Pupils in a Year 6 class have downloaded pictures from the Internet for their design and technology work and have also used a CD-ROM for geography.

Elsewhere and more generally, pupils use computers to word-process final drafts of their writing. The application of information and communication technology to subjects across the curriculum is still developing, however, as the school acknowledges.

9. Progress in pupils' acquisition of information and communication technology skills has been hampered by technical difficulties the school has experienced and which are not, yet, completed resolved. Consequently, by Year 6, standards fall below expectation. Year 2 pupils also succeed at below expected levels although they are close to reaching these in some aspects of the subject. Standards in religious education are in line with those for the locally agreed syllabus for pupils in Year 2 according to work seen in lessons (although there is insufficient written work to judge whether these are maintained) but Year 6 pupils do not reach levels expected overall. History shows the same picture with regard to National Curriculum criteria for standards at seven and 11 years, with the younger pupils performing well orally. Standards in geography in Years 2 and 6 are below those expected. There is insufficient evidence to make a firm judgement on art and design in Year 2 although standards are generally below expectations throughout the school and by the time pupils reach Year 6. In music, Year 2 pupils reach standards at least in line with what can be expected in singing and Year 6 pupils do similarly well when performing on untuned instruments. Overall, though, standards are below those to be expected at both ages. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 reach standards at least in line with expectations in design and technology with strengths seen in much of the work done. They also reach average standards in physical education. By Year 6, pupils reach good standards in swimming with most being able to swim at least the expected 25 metres.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, have very good attitudes to school. They look forward to what the day has to offer and enjoy school because staff members are pleased to see them each morning. The youngest in the Nursery eagerly settle to their morning and afternoon routines. In both Nursery and Reception classes, they engage in self-chosen tasks or teacher-directed activities with lively interest. Older pupils enjoy the good range of activities in which they are frequently involved. Many speak enthusiastically about after-school clubs and there are waiting lists for basketball, netball and drama. Year 2 pupils particularly enjoy the weekend camp in the summer term. Most pupils are keen to work and make good progress. They want to acquire new knowledge. This was seen in a Year 6 design and technology lesson where pupils were thoroughly absorbed in finding out about levers and pivots and putting their knowledge into practice. The attitudes of younger pupils in Nursery and Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 are especially good. For example, Reception children's interest was quickly raised when a classroom assistant made porridge with them. They learned much about the cooking process as well as adding to their understanding of the story of 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' that underpinned the activity. In a Year 2 physical education lesson, pupils collaborated extremely well to devise a group dance for Santa's workshop. Learning progressed at a brisk pace and pupils took great pride in the finished routine. Pupils with special educational needs work confidently because of the way all are cared for and made to feel valued. Their peers are considerate towards them and offer friendship readily.
11. The behaviour of pupils throughout the school is good overall. There are strengths especially in Nursery and Reception classes but also in Years 1 and 2 where behaviour is at least good and frequently better. More generally, pupils have responded well to strategies introduced (when the infant and junior schools were amalgamated) to ensure that standards of behaviour are similar across the school. Most behave appropriately in lessons although there is still some disruption by older pupils, especially (although not solely) in Years 5 and 6. The challenging behaviour of a small number is such that a disproportionate amount of time is spent in dealing with it rather than on a lesson's content. It is to teachers' credit at such times that order is kept and progress maintained, if more slowly than planned. This problem is not widespread and both adults and pupils report that behaviour is much improved in Years 3 to 6 since the amalgamation. Indeed, as recorded, most is judged good. In a good Year 6 music lesson for instance, pupils were inspired by a teacher's enthusiasm and co-operated sensibly to fit words of a song to its rhythm. In the main, pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions on others is good. They realise that misbehaviour affects everyone since it is unpleasant for their peers and leads to disruptions in learning. In assemblies, pupils' behaviour is at times exemplary. This was seen in an assembly for younger pupils taken by the deputy head and when the vicar of a local church led an assembly for Years 3 to 6. In the dining halls, pupils are

sensible and orderly. In each building, they understand routines. They are sociable and put things away before going out to play. In the playgrounds, some boys can be boisterous, but on the whole pupils make good use of their time in the fresh air. They interact positively with the adults who look after them. Pupils behave well on outings. For example, a Year 3 class went on a visit to the Harlow museum. Pupils were very well behaved and were excellent ambassadors for their school.

12. Relationships across the school are good. All pupils get on well together and no instances of bullying or harassment were seen during the inspection. Pupils collaborate in class to good effect, whether grouped with their friends or not. For example, in a Year 2 literacy lesson, they paired up with partners to work out how to follow instructions for board games before explaining these to someone else. In the playground, it was lovely to see girls and boys in Reception and Year 1 and 2 classes organising a vet's surgery in the wooden shed very well together. Pupils include their peers with physical disabilities as a matter of course in work and play. Invariably, someone is keen to help push a wheelchair or assist with difficult straps. Most get on really well with adults. They enjoy sharing personal 'news' and look to adults for special support. This was seen, for example, in Years 3 and 4 when groups worked with a classroom assistant on literacy-linked activities outside their classrooms. On occasion, though, some older pupils are impolite and answer back when spoken to by an adult, however reasonably this is done. For example, in a Year 6 history lesson one or two pupils called out inappropriately when teachers shared the task of explaining the work to be done and persisted in this behaviour until they realised it was unproductive. Pupils show satisfactory levels of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. They are receptive when learning is linked to personal experience. For example, in personal, social and health education lessons they attend to the views and feelings of their peers, identifying with how someone might feel and react.
13. Pupils' capacity to take initiative and personal responsibility is satisfactory, although it is better than this in Nursery and Reception classes. Here, children are given good opportunities to develop independent learning skills. For example, they find their names to self-register at the start of sessions. They plan what they will do and talk about what they are going to learn. This good practice does not extend sufficiently to other classes where pupils more commonly depend on adults to do things for them. Pupils are not generally adept at taking the initiative and improving their work without reminders from adults. Many wait to be told what to do and do not take responsibility for their own learning.
14. Attendance is unsatisfactory. The latest figures for the last academic year show it is below the national average. It is, however, creditable that there is no unauthorised absence. Most pupils arrive on time in the morning but a significant number slips into class late. This is disruptive for both the other pupils and the teacher and detracts from a smooth and calm start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15. Teaching is good overall. It is judged at least satisfactory in 96 per cent of all lessons, good in 44 per cent, very good in a further 21 per cent and excellent in one per cent. In a small number of lessons (representing four per cent), teaching is unsatisfactory. Teaching has been strengthened by teachers being able to change year groups both within and across phases (for example, from the Reception class in the Foundation Stage to Year 1, from Year 2 to 6 or within Years 3 to 6). As well as enriching teachers' professional development by widening their experiences of different age groups, this arrangement helps develop a whole-school ethos.
16. Teaching is good in Nursery and Reception classes, with strengths in the Nursery owed to the well-established partnership of class teacher and nursery nurse who share common views on how to satisfy young children's needs and promote successful learning. They collaborate in all aspects of daily planning aimed at giving children a positive start to their schooling. Good teaching in the Reception class means gains in learning are built on successfully. Since the Reception teacher took up her post at the start of the term, liaison between the two classes has benefited all children. Consistent planning across classes keeps teachers well informed about what is happening in each. Teachers plan their work in the light of observations of what individual children can do and where they need help. Ongoing assessments using information gained in lessons are of very good quality. Teaching assistants in both year groups have an important role. They are generally well deployed to help individuals or groups reach planned goals (as when an assistant in the Reception class makes porridge with a group in connection with a story). At times, though, assistants are not as engaged in

whole-class activities as they might be. This was seen, for example, during an otherwise good lesson in the Reception class during a literacy session when their participation was limited. Adults in both classes have very good relationships with children. They manage behaviour skilfully so that a positive learning ethos prevails, with children getting along harmoniously with one another and with adults.

17. Teaching in Years 1 and 2 ranges from very good to unsatisfactory and is good overall. In Years 3 to 6, it ranges from excellent to unsatisfactory but is mainly good. Teachers across classes most often plan lessons well so pupils work practically in ways that interest them and aid progress. In the few unsatisfactory lessons, teaching and learning objectives were insufficiently focused on the subject taught so that progress in pupils' grasp of key concepts was hindered. This was seen, for example, in a physical education lesson in Year 2 and in religious education lessons in Years 4 and 5. In all classes, teachers use very good skills to manage pupils' behaviour, even where demands made on them are great, as, on occasion, with some boys in Year 6. Such skills underpin good relationships most often found between pupils and between pupils and adults, which bolster positive learning in most lessons.
18. In the best lessons, teachers apply good subject knowledge and plan effectively to build on prior learning. For example, in a very good Year 3 design and technology lesson a teacher established its purpose by recapping previous work. Teaching points were reinforced when key words associated with levers were listed on a board. The lesson went smoothly because resources were well organised and a teaching assistant knew precisely what to do with a group needing help. In such lessons, while a teacher keeps attention on the main purpose, learning often becomes fun so it is a happy event. For example, in a very good Year 2 music lesson, pupils made discernible progress in learning how to repeat a rhythm accurately as they practised clapping games in the introduction. At times, too, teachers present hard ideas imaginatively, as when a Year 6 teacher demonstrated the water cycle in a very good geography lesson; water evaporated, condensed and fell as rain. Not only did he hold attention throughout he made crucial content real. Where teaching is satisfactory, a lesson's pace slows at times. Activities can last too long and pupils become restless. This was seen in a Year 5 science lesson when pupils spent too long on a practical study of whether the sun really does pass across the sky producing daylight on Earth followed by darkness. Adults helped pupils effectively (as when a classroom assistant intervened to keep a group's interest) but pupils could usefully have recorded the task at an earlier point. Lack of pace also affected learning in a Year 1 mathematics lesson when pupils worked on number games in the hall. A few wanted to work only with a friend, restricting progress. Opportunities to reinforce important teaching points were also missed when pupils did not show one another number lines they had made by physically ordering themselves according to number cards they held.
19. All teachers plan well for pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need. They make good use of additional staff and resources. They identify needs early and write good individual education plans. There is very good teamwork between teachers and learning-support assistants (that is, those designated to work with pupils on the Code of Practice register of special needs), who are professional and committed. Teachers also plan well for bilingual pupils. A limited amount of specialist teaching supports pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition to very good effect, from the Nursery upwards. Pupils get practical weekly help in the context of ongoing classroom work. Liaison between a specialist teacher and class-teaching colleagues makes sure that the former knows a lesson's purpose and shares pupils' learning outcomes at the end. Teachers throughout Years 1 to 6 often deploy teaching assistants (that is, those who work more generally with pupils) well. In many lessons, all support staff understand work being done and actively ensure pupils participate fully. Good support by classroom assistants was consistently seen, too, in the early reading research sessions in Years 1 and 2 and in the additional learning support times given to groups in Years 3 and 4.
20. English and mathematics are well taught in Years 1 to 6. The teaching of basic literacy and numeracy skills is very good in Nursery and Reception classes where learning is firmly rooted in practical activities and good links are made across areas so pupils apply skills relevantly. For example, in the Nursery, a boy engrossed in answering a telephone in the role-play area realised he had to write down 'messages' he took. Teaching of such skills is good in Years 1 to 6, although more stress on practical investigations in mathematics linked to everyday life would benefit pupils' grasp of the purposes of what they do. The school is well aware, too, of the need to make sure pupils

apply skills learned to other subjects. Poor literacy generally hampers progress in subjects such as geography and science. The teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory overall, although some good teaching was also seen. Difficulties establishing a computer suite and Internet connections continue to affect lessons, interrupting the smooth flow of some. Teachers' unfamiliarity with new equipment also affects pupils' progress at times. The school is well aware of difficulties and further development of the subject is planned to make sure it is properly taught. For example, pupils will be expected to apply skills learned in the suite to other subjects. The teaching of science, geography and religious education is similarly satisfactory with some good teaching again seen in each. At times, though, uncertain subject knowledge impairs religious education. In a Year 4 lesson, a teacher's lack of confidence led to pupils' vagueness about the nature of the Old and New Testaments in the Bible. Teaching in history, music and physical education is mainly good with strengths in the teaching of design and technology, which is most frequently very good. Here, some teachers' expertise makes the most difference, as well as good planning across classes, spelling out each lesson's purpose. Good learning frequently results in good end products in terms of what pupils make. On the evidence available, it is not possible to make a judgement on the teaching of art and design. However, lack of confidence in the teaching of art and design is fairly widespread, revealed in displays of pupils' work across classes which, on close study, lacks depth in the way techniques have been explored. Indeed, even where teaching is secure (as in history, for instance), teachers can have difficulty teaching important skills, knowledge and understanding because of insufficient time to deal thoroughly with these.

21. Teachers' use of ongoing assessment is satisfactory overall. At times, such assessment pushes pupils' learning forward, as in a very good Year 2 literacy lesson where a teacher stopped the class and moved to the next part of the lesson after checking around tables and seeing that everyone was ready for this. Frequently, comments in pupils' workbooks are bland, principally praising effort rather than making constructive suggestions about what has succeeded or needs extra attention. There are, though, notable exceptions to this as in a Year 5 class where a teacher's marking of literacy work adheres closely to school policy, with perceptive comments in some books explaining why work is successful.
22. Teachers set homework to good effect in line with the school's policy. Some very good examples of homework extending ongoing learning were seen in some year groups. For example, pupils in Year 6 were instructed to undertake a research task for geography and present their findings to the rest of the class. There is a good emphasis on making sure pupils from the Nursery upwards develop reading skills through taking reading books home very regularly.

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

23. The curriculum for children in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good. It is based on the latest curricular guidance for children in the Foundation Stage. A recently appointed co-ordinator has worked hard to introduce planning that builds on children's relevant skills, knowledge and understanding in each area of learning successively throughout these two years. Good links are made between a wide range of exciting activities across areas of learning. Activities stimulate children's interest and imaginations, with classroom and outdoor spaces taken into account. Such planning allows children to make considered choices for themselves or participate in adult-led activities each day, ensuring they make good progress in both their personal and academic learning. It involves all children with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Sessions known as 'Planned Activity Time' let children move between Nursery and Reception areas to make use of the facilities in each. Generally, both year groups benefit from this organisation. However, during one morning session, the planning and timing of activities lacked clarity and it was uncertain what purpose was served and how Nursery children gained from time spent in Reception. The school realises it has to review these 'Planned Activity' sessions in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, where they also feature regularly. Overall, though, a stimulating learning environment has been created for the children in Nursery and Reception classes, preparing them well for the demands of the National Curriculum when they enter Year 1.
24. The quality and range of the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good overall, with pupils having access to all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. All statutory requirements are met (including the act of collective worship), as are the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for

religious education. The curriculum is broad and very relevant to the age range, with good learning experiences to stimulate interest. However, curricular planning lacks balance. For example, the core subjects of English and mathematics have very generous time allotted, with all pupils studying literacy or numeracy for at least an hour each day. On the other hand, non-core subjects, such as art and design, history and religious education, have insufficient time for teachers to deal in any depth with the content planned. This affects pupils' capacity to build on necessary skills, knowledge and understanding securely. For instance, pupils absorbed in a Year 5 history lesson were disappointed at having to stop work on life in a village in Benin because a lesson in art and design followed. There was really not enough time for this to be organized so that pupils could then apply themselves to the painting task set before having to pack things away for the end of the day. Consequently, learning in both lessons suffered since these particular subjects are planned each week for a half-term period and the good impetus established in the history lesson, for instance, was lost.

25. Since the amalgamation of the two schools, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented. Planning for all Years 1 to 6 classes is now consistent, following the latest guidance for these strategies. As already noted, a number of additional sessions linked to literacy learning are in place for pupils in Years 1 to 4. The school is also working at making sure pupils learn to explain their ideas through talk focused on a lesson's planned content. The school is aware of a continuing need to address problems that pupils commonly experience when recording their ideas, since the poor writing skills of many affect standards in all subjects throughout the age-range. This is seen in pupils' history work books, for example, when pupils mostly do not apply literacy skills sufficiently well to reflect what they have experienced, though they can talk in some depth about history topics during lessons. As well as tackling problems with literacy learning, the school rightly sees it must give more emphasis to problem-solving investigations in mathematics so that pupils understand more readily how to apply mathematical skills to everyday situations. In science, pupils collaborate with a partner or work in small groups on investigations very frequently, which contributes positively to their personal and social development as well as helping them grasp concepts better through constructive talk. Provision for information and communication technology has been improved recently, with the establishing of a computer suite that enables whole class teaching of subject skills. However, there are not yet enough planned opportunities for pupils to use these skills to support their work in other subjects.
26. The school is strongly committed to developing pupils' creative abilities as well as their academic ones. Its curriculum benefits from specialist teaching from a local secondary school to support work in music, drama, dance and physical education. All Year 6 pupils have a series of dance sessions during each school year with a view to participating in one of the end-of-term productions at the secondary school. Watching a group of pupils learn and improve their movements during a session, it is obvious that boys and girls find these demanding and thoroughly enjoyable. The curriculum is also enriched by national and local initiatives such as the local education authority's 'Healthy Schools Project'. This led to the school recently being given an intermediate award marking the quality of work undertaken. As part of this project, pupils acquire good attitudes towards healthy eating and learn about the dangers of the misuse of drugs. A community dietician helped to develop pupils' understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet. There is sensitive provision for sex education, with the help of the school nurse, which teaches pupils responsible behaviour and the values of family life.
27. Provision for personal, social and health education is good overall although there are inconsistencies apparent in its organization. For example, personal, social and health education lessons are timetabled in some classes. In others, such time is labelled 'circle time' or 'golden time' and it is unclear why this discrepancy in labelling occurs, although each type of lesson has different emphases, reflecting different purposes when first set up. To date, there is no scheme of work to underpin planning coherently across the year groups, although the school is working on this. Nevertheless, in lessons observed pupils come to respect others' values and beliefs (peers and adults) and to develop their self-esteem to good effect.
28. Equality of opportunity is good overall, with all pupils having access to the full curriculum. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Pupils most frequently receive support within the classroom. A notable feature is the way that pupils with physical disability get one-to-one support, so that they can gain fully from activities. Equally, pupils with English as an additional language, including those at an early stage of English language acquisition are catered for in line with their peers. However, while the curriculum is wholly inclusive, in that the school firmly intends all

pupils to have equal access to aspects of school life, questions are at times raised about how this is achieved. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are withdrawn from some parts of literacy lessons for extra help with reading and spelling. Although this help is very relevant to literacy learning, it is nevertheless true that pupils are taken away from activities potentially of benefit to them. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson interesting work on studying the content and purpose of newspaper articles involved everyone. The group going for extra help enjoyed their session with a classroom assistant but missed out on important learning within the classroom. Similarly, pupils with special educational needs are taken out of some lessons and occasionally, assemblies, for extra help. Moreover, pupils in Year 5 classes go swimming with their Year 6 peers so that all places for this are filled. Such weekly organization means Year 5 pupils miss either part of a literacy or part of a numeracy lesson. Teachers ensure pupils 'catch up' with missed learning but this is done at the expense of other work, making for yet more additional organisation.

29. Curricular planning has recently been improved so that teachers throughout the school plan to a common format, adjusted for each age group. Crucially, weekly planning ensures teachers give clear information about key teaching and learning objectives and associated skills to be taught, so that monitoring can check how these are built on over time. There are, though, some inconsistencies in the way these plans are met for pupils of the same age in different classes and the school knows it must monitor this more closely. For example, it is intended that music is taught throughout the year to all classes and that similar priority is given to personal, social and health education. There are inconsistencies in planning for the latter and it isn't clear whether, in fact, all classes are taught music each week. In some subjects, such as art and design and geography, the development of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding is hindered because of a lack of effective schemes of work to inform planning.
30. The school has won national recognition for its very good provision of out-of-school clubs. Pupils' social development benefits from clubs and from an extensive range of visits to places of interest related to classroom studies, including residential stays for Years 2 and 6 pupils. Similarly, many visitors to the school profitably add to pupils' learning experiences. Visitors include, for example, theatre groups and musicians able to help pupils develop a variety of skills. Pupils greatly enjoyed learning about African drumming, for instance.
31. Links with the local community are good and contribute effectively to pupils' learning. For example, the vicar of the local church leads assemblies and helps deepen pupils' knowledge of the Christian faith. The community policeman also visits school regularly. Year 5 pupils have taken part in a sculpture trail event in the town centre, organised so that they could write a new brochure about sculptures in Harlow. Links with local businesses have involved representatives from the local newspaper coming into school to work with Year 6 pupils in designing and making a front page for a newspaper. Pupils can raise money for a range of national and local charities, including The British Legion and Dr Barnados. Thus they learn something about the needs of others.
32. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Some assemblies make a very positive contribution, helping pupils reflect on things beyond their own experience – for example the assembly for the Reception class and pupils in Years 1 and 2 focused on memories and Remembrance Day. The deputy head's sensitive way of establishing intense listening created a distinctly spiritual ethos, yet a significant number have little understanding of how to respect and use time given for reflection in assemblies, although they know they must remain quiet. Pupils enjoy learning about the stories of the main faiths (for example, Christianity, Judaism and Islam) in religious education, but most find it really hard to think through ideas towards their deeper significance. They respond best when content is made accessible at a practical and personal level, for example, through role-play as seen in a Year 6 lesson, or when they hear from other pupils and members of staff about their own celebrations and customs. Pupils' understanding of world religions is well promoted by displays of art and artefacts around the school. Respect for each other is both directly taught and demonstrated by the example set by all adults.
33. There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Adults talk through difficulties pupils have had sensitively, helping them see how their behaviour affects others and how other people feel. Pupils' part in deciding on class rules and the displays of these in classrooms and corridors are also valuable means of teaching awareness of right and wrong. Pupils frequently demonstrate understanding of the rules through their actions, rather than just obeying them. Teachers promote

pupils' social development very well. They plan many opportunities for pupils to work in pairs or small groups and pupils volunteer help when they see a need. Those with special educational needs are made to feel fully part of a class. Sessions such as circle time, in which children learn to share things that affect them in a safe and structured setting, enhances social development, allowing a respectful consideration of different viewpoints.

34. The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development and some strengths are evident. For instance, there are very good examples of teachers using pupils' own experiences to teach respect for different cultural traditions in some lessons (as seen in history). Displays in the school corridors strongly celebrate the richness of different cultures and traditions and there are striking displays about the lives of major figures such as Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks. Examples of art and sculpture from many lands are on display and pupils regularly hear music from diverse traditions and styles. The different languages spoken by pupils and their families are reflected in dual language books and multi-lingual posters. The school has worked hard recently, through in-service training and liaison with the local education authority, to shape an environment where children and parents from all cultural backgrounds feel welcomed and included. It is intent on ensuring that provision informs all aspects of its curricular planning as a matter of course.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school justifiably prides itself on the good quality care and support it provides. It is a stable and supportive community for pupils, a significant number of whom experience a turbulent family life.
36. Procedures for child protection and welfare are good. The headteacher, as the designated person for child protection, has regular training. He makes sure teachers know how to help a pupil where there are concerns, although whole-staff training on the latest national guidelines has not been undertaken recently. Pupils who are "looked after" in foster homes are well supported. During the current major construction work, the school has maintained the health and safety of its community, including those in need of wheelchair access. Such access to all parts of the school is good. The school's site manager knows how to deal with day-to-day health and safety matters. His good practical expertise could be capitalised on to greater advantage. For example, he is not routinely involved in governors' risk assessment checks. At times, adults are uncertain about how to use equipment for physical education. For example, those responsible for the setting up and putting away of apparatus for lessons in the school halls are not always sure of correct procedures. The school realises that all staff (teaching and non-teaching) have to be trained in such procedures. Arrangements for welfare and first aid are good. Study visits out of school are well organised with pupils' safety paramount. To date, procedures for ensuring pupils do not access unsuitable sites on the Internet are not in place in the newly installed computer suite, a matter the school also sees it must address.
37. The level of care offered to all pupils with special educational needs is very good; class teachers, teaching assistants and special needs staff all take responsibility for the comfort, happiness and learning of such pupils. Their needs are identified and addressed early according to the latest guidance. Statements of special educational needs and reviews of these and individual education plans are kept up to date efficiently. Specialist local education authority staff play a very active part in ensuring pupils' needs are met. The school is vigilant in checking that pupils get therapies to which they are entitled.
38. Similarly, the school takes very good account of the needs of pupils learning English as an additional language. The deputy head's expertise is invaluable in getting pupils assessed against criteria for proficiency in English language and checking that teachers understand criteria used. She has also been instrumental in securing specialist teaching provided by the local education authority for pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition. Although limited in scope, this teaching has meant beginner bilinguals learn necessary skills within a context of ongoing classroom learning. It has also helped teachers learn how to meet pupils' learning needs during the greater part of the week when the specialist support is not available. The school sees the importance of assessing bilingual pupils' needs and whether support can help with their learning difficulties as opposed to the learning of English. For example, it seeks help through an interpreter so assessments can be made in a pupil's first language when possible.

39. Since amalgamation, the school has made standards of behaviour and its management consistent across all year groups. Procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying are now very good. Parents are included well since they all receive copies of their child's class rules and a brightly coloured code of conduct applicable to the whole school. Each class teacher has adapted behaviour-management strategies very effectively to her or his class. For example, in one class, points are collected for "houses" and in another "friendly notes" are displayed alongside pupils' yellow target cards. The school deals very effectively with bullying, whatever form it takes (for example, racist bullying or harassment). In fact, the school lives and works harmoniously. Pupils from diverse backgrounds are happily integrated into activities. The school is now formulating an anti bullying policy that stands alone from its behaviour policy. There is a very good race equality policy, which could usefully be referred to in other documentation to underline its importance on inclusion.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good overall. Year 6 pupils are very well supported during transfer to secondary school. There is a well-planned series of visits and sample lessons and pupils can air worries about their move while in their own classroom surroundings. Most teachers give a perceptive account of pupils' personal development in annual reports on progress given to parents and carers. Such reporting relies on memory and informal assessment, however, rather than on an organised system whereby significant improvements are noted. Currently, the school council is in abeyance so chances for pupils to help run the school and learn about community life are few. They undertake small jobs in their classes, such as returning registers to the school office and enjoy these. Although Years 5 and 6 pupils help with equipment in assemblies (such as managing the overhead projector), there are limited opportunities for pupils to fulfil their status as senior and responsible members of the school community.
41. The school has good assessment procedures for monitoring pupils' academic performance. These start at entry into the Nursery, where very good information is gathered through close observation of children and continue through to Year 6, where procedures are formalized through tests. In addition to statutory assessment tests for these oldest pupils and seven-year-olds there are optional national tests in English and mathematics in Years 3, 4 and 5. The school pays particular attention to pupils' progress in reading through formal assessments each term. It has very recently also implemented an assessment cycle so as to check formally the standards reached in literacy, mathematics, science and information and communication technology in each year group. Relevant activities show not only the progress made by individuals but also the range of content they have covered in these subjects. The school makes good use of the local educational authority's computer package, which analyses test information tracking pupils' progress. So, it is now possible to look closely at how particular groups perform in English and mathematics (for example, boys and girls or minority ethnic pupils). Specific aspects of performance are studied (for example, writing skills in English) so that any weaknesses can be addressed. The program also looks at individual performance. At present, the use of assessment information for curricular planning is only satisfactory because it is at an early stage of development. Teachers do not have full access to data on the computer program to help them set targets for individuals and groups, although such access is planned.
42. The school has good systems for monitoring and promoting attendance. Registers are completed promptly and office staff then chase up pupils who are absent without having given notification. Following the amalgamation, there are inconsistencies between the way symbols are used to denote the different reasons for absence in Years 1 and 2 classes compared to Years 3 to 6, so it is difficult to check absence in detail. The school works effectively with the education welfare service to promote good attendance. The officer has come into school to talk to Years 5 and 6 pupils and has also set up a stall at the school's open afternoon in the spring term to answer parents' questions and offer help. A major concern is the high number of holidays taken during term time. Parents are reminded that they cannot take more than the statutory 10 days in school time and those at the meeting prior to inspection were very clear about this. Messages are not sufficiently direct, though, in terms of the detrimental impact that time out of school has on standards and what children can achieve. Lateness is monitored closely and parents or carers are 'phoned if poor punctuality becomes a persistent problem.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The school has satisfactory links with parents. Many are happy with what the school provides though their support goes no further than quiet appreciation. A small number of parents attended the meeting

prior to inspection and around one in four of the questionnaires sent out (one for each child in school) were returned. Responses to these and contributions at the meeting reveal that parents especially like the fact that their children enjoy school. They think teaching is good and teachers have high expectations. They appreciate the good support children with special educational needs receive and the very good provision in Nursery and Reception classes. The inspection team concurs with all these positive views.

44. Most concern comes from the parents of pupils in Years 3 to 6 and from those whose children have just moved on from Year 2. Many have worries about what they see as unacceptably high levels of misbehaviour. As already noted, inspection evidence shows behaviour is good overall although there are still some difficulties, particularly with older pupils. Nevertheless, behaviour is judged to be improving well in Years 3 to 6 because of the consistent management of pupils by all staff and the ownership of the rules by the pupils themselves. A substantial number of parents believe that there are insufficient activities outside lessons. In fact, the school has a very good range of clubs, outings and residential study visits benefiting social and personal development and enlivening the curriculum.
45. The school communicates well with the parents of pupils with special educational needs, helping them play an active part in their child's education. Review documents are fully and usefully completed and parents get good quality information about their child's progress and needs identified. More generally, inspectors agree with many parents' concerns about the lack of clear information on their children's progress. The school does provide a chance each term for parents to meet a child's teacher to discuss how they are getting on and parents like this. However, end-of-year reports do not all clearly state how each pupil has progressed in each subject since the last report, although there are notable exceptions. Targets for improvement are shared with parents but the way they are expressed in writing is not easy to understand. For example, they are couched in terms such as "to build on mathematical skills to apply knowledge to new situations and different problems". Otherwise information to parents is very good. The home-school diary is a very good regular source of information because it contains not only homework but also curriculum information, results of spelling tests and names of pupils winning behaviour rewards. Once a year, the school holds a very successful open afternoon and evening to allow parents to meet the staff and see their children's work. There are plenty of notice boards around to let the parents know what events are coming up and what the pupils are learning about. Many parents feel that homework is unsatisfactory although it is not clear what the precise nature of their concerns is. Inspectors realise there has been recent inconsistency with homework due to instability in staffing and teachers' illness, but the school is now making a concerted effort to make homework appropriate, regular and always marked. Home/school diaries are a good source of information about homework matters. The school is working well to include parents as much as possible in the life of the school.
46. Parents are satisfactorily involved in the work of the school. Some parents help in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 and others accompany school outings. Parents at the meeting prior to inspection pointed out that working parents cannot give the help they might like to offer, but they now feel welcomed into school to work with pupils when feasible. The parent-teacher association raises a good amount of funds towards resources through its summer and Christmas fairs. A good number of families attended the spring open afternoon and the school attracts surprisingly high numbers to the annual governors' meeting because it combines this with concerts or fashion shows involving pupils. A significant number of parents, though, make little contribution to their children's learning. Some do not meet their children's teacher to discuss progress and many do not acknowledge their children's work in the home-school diary by signing it regularly. Of particular concern is the frequency with which pupils leave school for family holidays, so disrupting their children's learning. Parents at the pre-inspection meeting stated the school makes requirements for attendance and punctuality very clear.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. Following the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools and the opening of the present school, there have been significant changes. Considerable disruption continues to be caused by the ongoing building programme. Initially, there was a high turnover of staff and governors. This led to a redefining of the roles and responsibilities of teachers, classroom and learning support assistants and office staff. During this period, the leadership and management of the headteacher, senior staff and governors has been good overall. With the strong commitment from all staff to increase pupils'

learning opportunities and raise standards the school is well placed to move forward.

48. The headteacher is a very good leader with a clear educational direction worked out for the school. He has managed disruption and change very well. He works in close partnership with his deputy and the two have complementary skills regarding leadership and management. For example, the deputy head has considerable experience of working with children in the Foundation Stage. With her strong support, the headteacher has worked to foster the positive climate for learning that now exists throughout the school. This has also been achieved through the hard work of all teaching and non-teaching staff at improving behaviour management, curricular provision and teaching. It has resulted in the highly inclusive approach found in all classrooms. All pupils are valued members of the school community as promised by the school's stated aims and values.
49. Upon his appointment, the headteacher realised he had to unite the staff and create greater consistency in approaches across the age-range. He has, therefore, initiated a variety of formal and informal opportunities for consultation. For example, there is a clearly defined management structure whereby managers gather information from all staff in assessing the school's needs. This feeds directly into the school development and improvement plan. All teachers discuss their placements with age groups and classes for the coming year with the headteacher so that their views are taken into account when decisions are made. Such initiatives contribute valuably to team building as well as to the professional development of teachers. Despite the considerable difficulties caused by working on separate sites, good progress is being made to develop a shared vision among staff, embracing the needs of pupils from the Nursery to Year 6. Although taking time to have the required impact in some areas it has been well managed. Keeping all staff well-informed and fully involved in decision-making via effective channels of communication between senior management and other staff is a particular challenge. It is an area that requires further attention, as acknowledged in the school development and improvement plan.
50. There are good systems in place to enable the school to measure how well it is doing. School improvement planning is of good quality with relevant targets set to meet the school's needs. Targets are discussed at staff and governors' meetings and the school is beginning to use assessment data more systematically to build up a picture of pupils' progress. The headteacher and senior staff, with good support from the local authority, observe all teachers in classrooms, giving helpful and constructive feedback. This emphasis on improving teaching through considered evaluation and discussion has worked well in English and mathematics and the co-ordinators for these subjects are helping refine the curriculum significantly. The effectiveness of the literacy and numeracy strategies has sharpened, as seen in the better teaching beginning to raise standards in these subjects. Quite rightly, in view of problems related to pupils' poor literacy and numeracy skills, the emphasis has been on English and mathematics, with the result that other subject co-ordinators are at different stages of development. To date, there have been few formal opportunities for them to pin down strengths and areas for improvement within their subjects and many are, in fact, still adjusting to their new roles. Nevertheless, action plans for co-ordinators clearly outline the scope of their responsibilities, including checking teaching and learning in classrooms as a basis for improving provision.
51. The headteacher is committed to the professional development of all staff. Performance management is used to determine training needs at all levels, in line with school improvement planning. The school has given training support through the graduate teacher-training programme to a member of staff and another is about to start the programme. Mentoring for such staff is deemed to be of high quality. New staff members speak highly of the way all senior managers and colleagues are helpful generally (such as in year group meetings) in explaining school procedures and ways of working. Teachers and teaching assistants take part in training linked to school and national priorities, bolstering their own professional development. Learning support assistants who work with pupils having special educational needs get specialist training, such as handling and lifting, so that they can give the best support possible to their focus-pupils. The senior management team organises not only regular teaching staff meetings but also sufficient opportunities for non-teaching staff to be kept up to date with events and issues and to hear their concerns and suggestions. The school has strong links with initial teacher-education departments in two universities. During the inspection, initial teacher-trainees were working in Year 2 and Year 4 classrooms. The school also helps train students seeking to qualify as nursery nurses and takes school experience students from a local secondary school.

52. Provisions for special educational needs is very well led and managed by the deputy head and very well served by its support staff. Communication between teachers and learning support assistants is of high quality. Learning support assistants are able and well trained and their commitment to their pupils and to their parents is impressive. The school provides an environment virtually free of barriers for pupils with physical disabilities, enabling those in wheelchairs to take full advantage of mainstream education. The governor for special educational needs is also a member of the special needs staff. She makes a worthwhile contribution to this role.
53. The governing body is very supportive of all achieved by the school. Governors are committed and conscientious in fulfilling statutory responsibilities and helping to foster good links with the community. They do not yet have a sufficiently clear grasp of the school's strengths and where improvements can be made. They therefore rely heavily on the headteacher's input into school improvement planning. It is to their credit that they have taken part in a valuable self-review exercise, which will improve their contribution to the leadership and management of the school.
54. The overall efficiency of the school and its day-to-day administration are good. Most routine tasks are diverted away from teachers, freeing them to concentrate on teaching rather than inappropriate administrative work. All staff, including teaching, support, administrative and finance staff, make good use of new technology to enhance planning, monitoring and administration.
55. Financial controls are good. Expenditure is reviewed regularly and records are in good order. Specific additional funding, such as that for special educational needs and the national funding for information and communication technology, is accounted for and used well to support teaching and learning. The headteacher and finance officer have a sound grasp of principles of best value and these are applied to good effect when comparing costs for purchases, for example. Wider consultation and participation by staff, governors, parents and pupils in financial planning, though, are at an early stage of development.
56. Financial planning is also good and budget priorities are closely matched to those in the school improvement plan. Through careful financial management the school has maintained its levels of expenditure on staffing and learning resources during the amalgamation. In particular, the whole school has benefited from a decision to free the deputy headteacher from full-time class responsibility. This has enabled her, as part of her management role, to use her considerable skills to support the headteacher during a challenging period. Also, she has been able to improve the quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, while supporting colleagues in a variety of ways both in and out of the classroom. The school inherited a substantial financial reserve from the former infant and junior schools and has prudently earmarked this to support the commissioning of the new building. It is aware of the considerable expense involved in establishing a school library as well as furnishing and equipping new classrooms. The intention is that at the end of this period the reserves will be at the recommended level of five per cent of annual income.
57. The match of teachers and support staff to the curriculum is good. There is a good mix of experienced and young and newly qualified teachers. Levels of support for pupils with special educational need, including those with a statement of special need, are very good. In addition, all classes benefit from an attached teaching assistant providing educational and behaviour management support. In Years 3 to 6, however, assistants are shared between classes in the same year, which has an impact on the pace of learning at times. The school has good accommodation. Currently, pupils in both buildings benefit from spacious classrooms with a dedicated computer suite and generous corridor areas. Nursery and Reception children have suitable outdoor play spaces. There is no central library, but there are attractive reading areas in classes, corridors and the infant hall. A new library is to be equipped when building works finish. Playgrounds are already being developed, with well-advanced plans for quiet places and climbing areas. At present, pupils have hard-surfaced playgrounds sufficient for outdoor play and physical education purposes. They also benefit from a large expanse of grass for sports and summer recreation. Resources are adequate for all subjects. Since its amalgamation, the school has spent large amounts of well-directed funds on resources and equipment across the curriculum to ensure curricular demands are met.
58. In view of the good progress made in establishing whole-school approaches to behaviour management and curricular matters, to improving teaching and gaining strong commitment from all staff to school

improvement as essential 'building blocks' in raising standards, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The headteacher, staff and governors should ensure that:

- (1) Standards in all subjects are raised, especially regarding pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills:

(Paragraphs: 3-5, 7-8, 20, 25, 50, 63, 74, 78, 81-82, 87, 90, 92, 95, 107, 110, 113, 119, 123, 132)

- (2) Attendance is improved and parents come to understand the detrimental effect time out of school during term time can have on their children's progress and standards reached.

(Paragraphs: 14, 42, 46)

- (3) Curriculum planning is reviewed so that:

- necessary subject skills, knowledge and understanding are built on over time;
- teachers' secure subject knowledge informs their planning;
- teachers' planning makes explicit a subject's content so that a focus on this is maintained throughout a lesson; and
- pupils do not miss important learning in classrooms and school assemblies when they are taken out for additional help or to go swimming.

(Paragraphs: 17, 20, 23-24, 27-29, 50, 78, 89, 96-97, 100, 108, 116, 118, 121, 130-131, 133)

- (4) Communication across the school is improved so that:

- all staff members understand systems and procedures meant to keep them informed about school matters; and
- staff also feel confident they are kept so informed.

(Paragraph: 49)

- (5) Safe practices are adopted in the use of:

- information and communication technology concerning policy and practice in accessing the Internet; and
- physical education equipment by all members of staff having responsibility for its use.

(Paragraph: 36)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in an action plan.

- The lack of opportunity for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to develop initiative and independence in their learning.
- Teachers' ongoing assessments in lessons and marking of pupils' work.
- Information to parents about their children's progress.

(Paragraphs: 13, 21, 40, 45, 78, 85, 90, 92, 97)

It is acknowledged that the school is well informed about many of the issues raised (including minor issues) and identifies them for action in its school improvement planning.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

73

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

52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	15	32	22	3	0	0
Percentage	1	21	44	30	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	359
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	97

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	90

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	20

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	37
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2002	32	36	68

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	23	22	26
	Girls	32	29	34
	Total	55	51	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (69)	75 (77)	88 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	23	28
	Girls	30	31	33
	Total	49	54	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	72 (69)	79 (65)	90 (83)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	30	25	55

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	19
	Girls	15	16	20
	Total	29	30	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	53 (65)	44 (60)	71 (73)
	National	75 (75)	73 (83)	86 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	18	19
	Girls	17	18	23
	Total	30	36	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (64)	65 (58)	77 (68)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	298	5	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British – African	7	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	5	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	19	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)	13
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.1
Average class size	27.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.1
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	1,045,087
Total expenditure	935,958
Expenditure per pupil	2,162.50
Balance brought forward from previous year	73,263
Balance carried forward to next year	73,263

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	N/A
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	410
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	38	4	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	48	14	2	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	43	15	1	0
The teaching is good.	56	43	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	40	17	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	33	5	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	33	3	1	3
The school works closely with parents.	28	48	15	5	2
The school is well led and managed.	32	48	11	4	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	53	5	3	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	18	33	23	13	12

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

59. The Nursery and Reception classes are still situated in the old infant building. Both will move into purpose-built accommodation when it is completed next year. This will further strengthen liaison across the age range and facilitate the sharing of resources such as outdoor play areas and equipment. Teaching is very good in the Nursery. It is good in Reception, with some very good teaching also seen. In the Nursery, planning and co-operation between the teacher and the nursery nurse is particularly strong and their joint input adds much to the very good teaching in this year group. In both classes, all children make good progress because of the consistently good support they receive from teachers and other adults who work with them. In consequence, children with special educational needs achieve at least in line with their prior attainment and those learning English as an additional language also do well, achieving similarly to their peers. Provision across the classes has improved recently, with greater consistency in curricular planning over the two years of the Foundation Stage in order to meet the early learning goals set out in the latest guidance.

Personal, social and emotional development

60. This area of learning is managed especially well because children learn within an atmosphere of trust, responsibility and high expectations. From their first day in Nursery, they experience a rich and varied learning environment, establishing a foundation for good, early, progress in this area. In both Nursery and Reception classes, they choose activities they prefer in any order they wish. This works well in teaching them to organise themselves and learn how to work around others. For example, only a few children can work in the sand tray at one time and children need to wait for a space to become available before they can complete planned tasks. However, while they do this well, most of the Nursery children still find it hard to play and work with others, tending to engage in solitary play rather than join in a group. For example, one boy spent a great deal of time by himself manning the "hospital" phone and "writing" down messages. He was so engrossed in his own world that when the teacher asked the children to come to the carpet he actually said "I've got to go now" before putting down the phone. Often, adults are good at showing children how to mix with classmates by playing with them and initiating conversations. Even the youngest Nursery children sustain good concentration and stay at activities for reasonable periods, painting patterns perhaps, or cutting along zigzag lines. They tend not to act voluntarily though, usually responding to instructions rather than taking initiatives. There was great excitement when a frog was found in the outside sunken area, but the curiosity of the children soon waned. They show some independence during self-registration and, when clearing away, busily put things in their place. Very good teaching of social skills happens routinely – for example when children sit down together and fairly share out snacks.
61. As a consequence of the very good foundations for learning established in the Nursery, Reception children get on very well together. Children organise themselves well and confidently share ideas with adults and each other. For example, two children working in the Three Bears' house were seen acting out aspects of the story. "We've got to have three plates" said one to the other when laying the table. They talk excitedly about their work and their families, but are very much concerned with the "here and now" rather than recalling things they have done in the past. Nevertheless, because of good teaching, by the time they leave Reception to start Year 1, the great majority have very effectively attained most of the early learning goals in this areas of learning and are enthusiastic, independent, confident and sociable learners.

Communication, language and literacy

62. Nursery children are encouraged to talk but, at this early point in the school year, they do so reluctantly. They have been in Nursery for just over half a term and are not confident speakers. They do not engage easily or enthusiastically in conversation. Very skilful questioning by the teacher, nursery nurse and other adults during formal group sessions extend children's responses from one or two word replies into longer phrases and sentences. Inspectors trying to initiate conversations with small groups or individuals playing in, for example, the sand and water, were often met with blank

expressions. All children listen to stories and look at pictures wide-eyed, as adults read them with good expression and animated voices to enthuse their listeners. All children know how to hold a book and, in one quiet reading session, turned the pages carefully to look at the pictures. In both the Nursery and Reception classes there are good systems whereby books are taken home to share with adults and children greatly benefit from this.

63. Even now, after a short time in Reception, children have already progressed. They are beginning to offer longer contributions to class discussion, but during planned activities still tend to talk alongside rather than with others. They recognise many letter sounds and know, for example that “a” is the first letter of “ant” and “f” starts off “fish”. The teacher consolidates this knowledge in many ways. She has introduced a range of actions related to sounds to make the work fun and learning effective. For example “nnnnn...” with arms outstretched represents aeroplanes. In class sessions, children recognise a range of simple words, for example “with”, “and” and “it” and can spot these in big books read together. Very few individuals recognise words in their reading books, although they understand that print carries meaning and use pictures to help them remember a story. Pencil-control skills are developing and the teacher works hard to extend these through activities such as tracing, copying and colouring. Within emergent writing, there are recognisable letters and, in a few examples, some children spell simple words correctly. A love of stories is widespread. The teacher reads enthusiastically and adds excitement to the text by asking children what they think will happen next. She successfully creates an air of suspense by turning pages slowly. When the book contains a well-known story, such as “Goldilocks and the Three Bears” children join in enthusiastically and are able to simulate voices of different characters. Even so and despite the very good teaching in Nursery and good teaching in Reception, on entry to Year 1 not enough children fully attain the early learning goals for this area of learning.

Mathematical development

64. Teaching in this area of learning is very good in the Nursery and good in Reception. In the Nursery, a good range of mathematical experiences is always set up to aid number and counting, including opportunities to fill containers in sand and water trays. Pupils eagerly join in number songs, such as “Five currant buns in a baker’s shop”, with related counting actions. The teacher and nursery nurse plan structured opportunities for children to build up mathematical skills and language. For example, when putting the appropriate clothes on different dolls, a group of children were asked first to estimate the size for each. Then good questioning such as “Does the dress need to be bigger?” guided their mathematical language. Children make good progress over the year but by the time they enter Reception their mathematical development is still below that expected for their age.
65. In Reception the children make good progress in counting and now know the order in which the numbers one to five are placed. Several count beyond this. Focused class activities with an element of fun ensure their interest in numbers is retained. Individuals accurately copy patterns made by rows of differently coloured teddy bear shapes. The class topic on ‘Goldilocks and the Three Bears’ is used well to teach mathematical knowledge and to consolidate children’s earlier work on size. Good use is made of registration to extend and consolidate knowledge of days of the week, months and the date. Yet by the end of the Reception Year not all children are secure in attaining aspects of the early learning goals in this area, although most are close to doing so.

Knowledge and Understanding of the world

66. Teaching and learning are good both in the Nursery and in Reception. Children enter the Nursery with limited knowledge and understanding of their world. Their interest in a frog found in the play area was only fleeting. They are much more interested in their own “here and now” than in places, things and people elsewhere. They remember and talk about significant things that have happened to them. The teacher has exploited this interest productively by displaying a gallery of class photographs. She has already introduced children to a greater knowledge of their own bodies and to the correct names for the different parts. As the year progresses, children are introduced to a range of activities designed to extend their knowledge and understanding more widely. Presently, Nursery role-play areas reflect different topics being studied, such as life in a hospital. Children in the classroom have access to a computer and to tape recorders. Several are competent at using this equipment and, for example, are reasonably able to control a computer mouse. Others find it hard to use even simple equipment and one boy tried to record his voice using a microphone instead of listening to the tape in the

machine.

67. In Reception the children's role-play is used to good effect. They learn about how a puppet theatre works and how to cook porridge. Their handling of simple equipment improves and some become reasonably competent on the class computer. Not only have they good mouse control but they are able to match programs to different purposes and "drag and drop" items across the screen for pictures. These older children use construction kits to build different structures. They use simple tools and techniques to make puppets for their puppet theatre. Planning and work from the previous year, shows that the children's knowledge and understanding of their local environment and community and an awareness of other cultures and beliefs, is considerably widened in the Reception class. By the time children enter Year 1 they have an appropriate understanding of the world around them broadly in line with the expectations set out in the early learning goals.

Physical development

68. Children's physical development in both Nursery and Reception classes is very good as a result of the frequently very good teaching in both. Physical skills are taught and developed very well through both indoor and outdoor experiences. Consequently, most children attain the early learning goals by the time they leave Reception and their skills are as expected for their age.
69. The Nursery has a purpose-built outside area, with a very good range of equipment. In addition, during planned activity times, Reception children benefit from the opportunity to use these resources. Nursery children use apparatus very confidently and competently, with developing co-ordination and control. They balance and climb well. They learn to throw and catch such objects as beanbags and toss these with increasing accuracy into hoops. When using the secure area outside the Reception classroom these youngest children enjoy cycling around on tricycles obeying different model traffic signs. In their classroom, they learn to hold paintbrushes correctly and to stroke the paper with the bristles rather than just stabbing at it. They use cutting skills with considerable control for their age, following curved and zigzag lines carefully with their scissors.
70. During Reception class lessons in the hall children interpret aspects of nursery rhymes, for instance "Jack and Jill", through imaginative movement. They make good use of the space in the hall and avoid bumping into each other. When asked, they watch each other's performance attentively and then try to improve their own. Children change fairly quickly for physical education lessons and, with a little adult help, are able to dress again afterwards. They cut out, paste and fasten materials with even more control than in the Nursery, making a teddy bear puppet using these skills. Their pencil control is steadily improving due to the good opportunities for practice the teacher provides.

Creative development

71. Teaching in both classes is at least good. It is very good at times. Children's creative skills are fostered very well and, because of this, standards are as expected for children of this age by the end of the Reception Year. Children in the Nursery paint patterns in bright colours, mixing colours on the paper as they go along. They sing together with adults energetically and build up a repertoire of well-known songs. In both the Nursery and the Reception classes teachers are especially good at providing props and arranging areas in the classroom and outside to effectively support the growth of imagination through role-play.
72. In music, Reception children come to see the difference between soft, loud and very loud sounds. They enjoy singing many songs, accompanying these well on untuned musical instruments. The teacher makes sure children know the correct names of these instruments which have to be played very sensibly and put away carefully. Children's very positive approach to the equipment aids their good personal development. These older children mix paints to an accurate skin colour on pictures of themselves and successfully join parts of their puppets together. They make good use of collage techniques for "posters" of what they like doing at school and to illustrate class rules. Appropriate early printing skills are revealed when pupils use their own painted hands. Groups of children working with a classroom assistant made bowls of real porridge and found this a really exciting experience. The activity was well managed and the assistant used lots of good strategies to foster communication skills. By adding salt and sugar to the porridge, the children learned something about why they liked or disliked different tastes.

ENGLISH

73. At this early point in the school year, standards for pupils in Year 2 are broadly in line with national expectations in reading and writing. Pupils in Year 6 reach standards below what is expected in these aspects of English. In the main, this finding reflects those revealed by the latest statutory test results (2002), although it reveals something more positive for pupils in Year 2. Test results show rising trends over the two years since the school's amalgamation, especially in Year 2. Inspection evidence supports this picture. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need, make good progress because of the frequently very good work of classroom and learning support assistants as well as of their teachers. These pupils achieve in line with their prior attainment. Similarly, pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. Most achieve at least on a par with their peers. No significant differences were found in the performance of boys and girls.
74. Inspection evidence shows a very wide span of ability in Years 2 and 6, notably in the latter. Here, the difference between the performance of above average pupils and those below average is stark. Since a high proportion of below average pupils in the current Year 6 has special educational needs, this affects overall standards adversely. Strategies aimed at improving pupils' performance are working. Nevertheless, these will take time to work through in full measure to classes for the oldest (as with improvements seen through the early reading research programme in the Reception class and Years 1 and 2). Inspection evidence also finds pupils' speaking and, to a lesser extent, listening skills, are below average across the age range. In tightly structured literacy lessons, though, more able pupils and those of average ability are helped to express their ideas well in response to questions or during discussions with one another and this helps later written work.
75. In Year 2, pupils co-operate when working out instructions for playing board games. They received high levels of adult support and this helped pupils to maintain concentration throughout to very good effect; so a pair of above average girls are quickly 'put on track' in sorting out what a rule means, which they have managed to read together. Below average pupils, too, are consistently guided towards reading the rules, discussing these and taking turns to play the game. Pupils' grasp of the rules is reinforced by the practical nature of the activity and by their having to explain them to a new partner. In this very good lesson, a strong emphasis on oral communication and on a teacher's insistence on clarity made sure all made good progress. Written work in exercise books shows above average Year 2 pupils and those of average ability structure sentences correctly, using simple punctuation (such as full stops and capital letters). They recall something personal to themselves or a lesson discussion (what happens to a character in a story, for instance) and sequence events sensibly, at a reasonable length. They plan what they will write using a writing 'framework' to help them sort out their ideas. Below average pupils get more support for such work and find it hard to write. At times, these pupils' work is not very legible. In the lesson observed, Year 2 pupils had good reading skills, especially considering this early stage in the year, with below average pupils obviously benefiting from adult help. Most pupils know their letter sounds and apply their knowledge to unknown words. They also make good use of picture clues and guess words sensibly, using the sense of what they read to help.
76. In a Year 6 lesson, good progress is also made by all. Pupils across the ability range achieve better than expected results in tasks because excellent teaching makes them want to do well. Pupils explain how work links to learning in history. They are very good at identifying with children evacuated from cities to the countryside during World War 2. They talk knowledgeably about how alienated these children must have felt in such a different place where just about every experience would be strange. Such feelings are reflected in letters they write home, especially by above average pupils. Those of average ability manage the task well, although spelling is often poor and the use of punctuation inconsistent. However, interestingly, when a pupil of average ability reads her work to the class, she puts in correct punctuation throughout. Her lively reading reveals a much better grasp of written language conventions than shows on the page. In work in exercise books above average pupils write at length on many topics. They strive to use vocabulary so as to catch a reader's interest. They are good at spelling and punctuation and see how the latter can enliven a text (as in the use of exclamation marks, speech marks or questions). Their writing reflects both an interest in reading and a knowledge of 'book language'. Below average pupils find writing hard and struggle to write half a page of ideas suitably sequenced. They write more confidently about things of personal

interest, which explains their success in the writing task discussed above when they identified with how someone about their own age felt in a strange place. These oldest pupils are good readers relative to their age and abilities. In the lesson observed, they could all read a range of texts allowing them to extract relevant information for use in their writing. Similarly, in a group reading session, pupils read texts with understanding and can explain a story's events.

77. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent but is most frequently good. Teachers understand the literacy strategy and plan lessons well. Work on establishing consistency in practice across the school has had a good effect on teaching and raising literacy standards. Teachers commonly explain teaching and learning objectives at the start of a lesson and make sure pupils know these, frequently referring to previous learning to set the context. For example, in Year 1 classes teachers started with the book "Each, Peach, Pear, Plum" helping pupils recall previous work and build on their knowledge of rhyming words. Weaknesses in speaking and listening are being addressed by stressing talk about the specific content of lessons in ways keeping pupils' interest. For example, in a very good Year 3 lesson mundane content was enlivened as a teacher insisted everyone took part and held concentration well. So, pupils put forward ideas enthusiastically when discussing the 'content' and 'index' pages in information books and tried even harder when congratulated on their correct understanding of these. For example, a boy was very proud when praised for his recall. He explained that an index shows the "alphabetical order and gives page numbers" to tell people what is in a book. Subsequently, everyone worked fast to find examples of such things as 'headings' and 'sub headings' in a selection of information books and enjoyed 'beating the clock'. A brisk pace added to the fun. Where teaching is satisfactory, a lesson's pace falters at times so pupils lose impetus. Sometimes, factors beyond a teacher's control affect pace. This was seen in a Year 5 class when pupils got off to a good start and enjoyed a class discussion. They settled quickly to work in pairs or small groups, 'brainstorming' ideas linked to "James and the Giant Peach". Unfortunately, about half the class then left to go swimming, which affected the rest adversely since partnerships were broken up.
78. Teachers mark work regularly but do not always apply the school's guidance, though there are notable exceptions. For example, in some classes, pupils have pasted information in the front of their literacy workbooks about why it is important to make a note of a lesson's teaching and learning objectives. This helps them see how their work will be marked against these objectives. They understand the purpose of the symbols used. In these classes, marking is frequently at least good. At times, it is better, when constructive comments inform pupils what they have done well and how they can improve. These teachers also tend to place greater priority on the need to apply handwriting skills to all work so that it is well presented. Information and communication technology is used for some word-processing but this practice is not well established. In fact, at times, computers in classrooms are not linked specifically to a literacy lesson's content. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson, two pupils spent time on the two classroom machines. One pupil wrote a diary entry, which did have connections with literacy learning although not with the lesson observed. The other pupil, however, worked on a mathematics program. Computer use, here, was dictated by 'turn-taking' rather than matched to learning in the lesson. Yet pupils might (for example) have made labels to support the group task they were otherwise engaged in for their ongoing literacy work. There are good links with literacy across subjects, especially through activities promoting speaking and listening. For example, the board games used in the Year 2 literacy lesson discussed above are used in mathematics. At times, pupils apply literacy skills well to other subjects, although not often. It is seen, for example, in some Year 6 history work where more able pupils, especially, have written well on the theme of World War II.
79. Two teachers share the co-ordination of the subject to very good effect. One teaches in Year 2 and the other in Year 6, but both have experience of working with younger and older pupils. This helps them understand pupils' learning needs throughout the school, as does their evident determination to work in close partnership to raise standards. Clear action planning includes time to extend co-ordinators' monitoring of teaching and learning practices. They have conducted a thorough audit of resources and the school has committed a lot of money to new resources to make sure curricular demands are met. A further priority is to set up a library when building work is finished. Co-ordinators have also developed a system of assessing pupils' reading linked to National Curriculum levels of attainment. This allows teachers to see how pupils' difficulties can be overcome and gives practical guidance in ways moving pupils on to the next level. The Year 6 co-ordinator has trailed the system in his classroom and a folder of assessment sheets proved informative when seen in a group reading session. It is now ready to be disseminated across the school. A similar tool for writing is

being developed. Formal test information is gathered and analysed to help set targets for improvement. Co-ordinators have a detailed understanding of strengths and areas for improvement through their involvement with such analysis and target setting. Their vision for the subject testifies to the energy they bring to their work.

MATHEMATICS

80. In both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are below average. This finding broadly echoes the school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in 2002. However, the school's analysis of test results shows that standards are rising and the school's expectation is that this trend will continue. Inspection evidence supports this expectation. Indeed, there have been improvements in the way mathematics is taught. The consistent implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has led to more effective planning by teachers. It has also produced motivating tasks, particularly in the mental mathematics sessions at the start of each lesson. These are beginning to have a positive effect not only on standards of attainment but on pupils' enthusiasm for mathematics, which all teachers try hard to promote. Taking into account the low standards when pupils enter the school, most are achieving at least satisfactorily. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.
81. Teachers work hard also to ensure that mathematics lessons are fully inclusive and that pupils are provided with sufficient opportunities to fulfil their potential. As a result, all groups make satisfactory gains in knowledge and understanding of number, shape, space and measure and handling data as they move through the school. This includes those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Teachers suitably emphasise pupils' mental calculation skills. However, they frequently miss opportunities to get pupils to talk about their mental strategies and to build constructively on pupils' growing awareness of their own errors.
82. Pupils' progress in using and applying their mathematical knowledge is slower. This is partly because real-life problem solving is not a regular feature of many lessons, but also it arises from weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills. For example, solving word problems is a common difficulty the school knows needs more attention. There was little evidence of classroom computers being used to support teaching and learning in mathematics.
83. Most pupils in Year 2 are gaining a sound knowledge of the place value of each digit in numbers to 99, can add and subtract to 20 and recognise patterns such as odd and even numbers. They are introduced to centimetres, measure with reasonable accuracy and record their heights on simple block graphs. By Year 6, most understand place value to at least 999 and are beginning to use decimal notation, fractions and percentages. They learn about shape and lines of symmetry. They continue to record data on block graphs but have not yet met more challenging methods of organising and interpreting data. Many lack confidence with written methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.
84. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Teachers' strategies for managing behaviour are a notable strength, founded on high expectations and good relationships. These strategies underwrite pupils' growing enthusiasm for learning and their personal development. In Year 3, for example, a teacher made good use of humour to motivate pupils who respected the rules of a mental mathematics game and made good gains in addition and subtraction. Teachers' planning is another strength, based on the consistent and thorough implementation of the numeracy strategy, which gives them a secure knowledge of the subject, evident in their clear, assured explanations. As a result, in most lessons seen pupils knew exactly what was expected of them and settled well. Good teamwork features strongly in the most effective lessons. In Year 4, for example, a teacher and support assistant worked well within groups to give all pupils a high proportion of direct teaching, ensuring a high work rate. In all lessons seen, learning support assistants contributed significantly to the good progress of pupils with special educational needs. Relevant skills are applied well to other lessons, as when pupils measure accurately for design and technology or read from a variety of scales in science lessons.
85. Teaching is less effective when there are inconsistencies in the implementation of whole school policies. This is true of the school's very helpful guidance on marking, designed to give pupils feedback and help them improve. In addition, in some lessons the final part, where learning is

reviewed, was not used to check pupils' understanding. As a result, they do not always know if they are getting better. A common shortcoming is that teachers, generally, spend too much time directing pupils' activities. This fact restricts pupils' development as independent learners. In some classes and in Year 1 and Year 2 in particular, there is an over-dependence on worksheets.

86. The co-ordinator provides strong leadership and support for colleagues. Through the school's monitoring of teaching and learning and her efficient management of assessment procedures she has a clear view of standards across the school. The results of annual tests are carefully analysed and information shared with teachers who use it to address weaknesses. More frequent tests are about to be introduced to assess pupils' understanding of recently completed work. In order to refine these arrangements further, the school has decided to set individual learning targets in order help pupils improve and to provide a clear focus for teaching.

SCIENCE

87. Standards reached by most pupils in Years 2 and 6 are below national expectation at this point in the school year. As most start school with poor skills, this actually represents real progress. Pupils throughout the school achieve satisfactorily given their different ages and abilities, including those with special educational needs and those having English as an additional language. No differences were found in the achievements of boys and girls. However, many have great difficulties communicating their ideas beyond a word or simple phrase when answering questions. In science, where subject-specific language is crucial to the ideas taught, these poor language skills affect standards adversely.
88. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught to observe using all their senses, as evident in a lesson for pupils in Year 1 about sound. A computer program in the information and communication technology suite stimulated pupils to produce noises such as a dog barking, for others to identify. The pace of the lesson slowed occasionally as pupils waited to make their noises, but overall it was a satisfactory use of the technology to support science. In a good Year 2 lesson, the teamwork of the teacher and support assistants (including an initial teacher-trainee) ensured pupils benefited from a high proportion of direct teaching. So all made good progress in learning how water changes some materials when mixed with them. It also improved pupils' attitudes to learning, encouraging good behaviour. They collaborated well in small groups on investigative tasks, noticeably enjoying their work.
89. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 record their findings in a 'curriculum book' alongside other subjects. This is not helpful in showing how scientific skills, knowledge and understanding develop over time. The standards of written presentation are often poor, with some teachers not having high enough expectations of pupils. Consequently, pupils' skills in recording what they have discovered in various ways are hindered. Some investigations are not sufficiently structured and, as a result, pupils' abilities to make sensible predictions and carry out a simple fair test are not as well founded as they might be, affecting overall standards. However, as a result of the satisfactory progress pupils make, most work reveals a grasp of the different properties of materials and how these affect their use, by the time they are at the end of Year 2. Pupils also know which foods are healthy and which are not.
90. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 still stresses learning through practical experiences and pupils have good opportunities to develop their skills with a wider range of scientific resources. In a good Year 3 lesson, pupils used torches to discover how much light different materials let through. The teacher insisted on correct scientific vocabulary and, as a result, pupils grasped the meaning of 'opaque', 'translucent' and 'transparent'. In another good Year 4 lesson, a teacher's skilled classroom management allowed pupils to master skills involved in using forcemeters to measure accurately in Newtons when checking the mass of various objects. Pupils enjoyed both lessons a great deal, were curious and keen to ask further questions. They listened closely, concentrated well and appreciated the contributions of other pupils. However, there are times when pupils' immature attitudes, poor behaviour and a lack of respect for teachers severely hampers progress. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 lesson about the structure of the human skeleton. A teacher had to work very hard to keep discipline and that this was achieved and some progress made in teaching a planned content testified to very good behaviour-management skills. While practical work is suitably emphasised, pupils cannot sufficiently interpret information and identify trends in the patterns observed, or make conclusions that are evaluative rather than descriptive of what they have done. As a result, by the

time they are at the end of Year 6, most cannot suitably identify the need for a fair test or plan and carry one out independently of the teacher.

91. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is satisfactory overall. Teachers prepare lessons well, so resources are suited to planned activities. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure so they ask questions needed to develop pupils' scientific thinking. Precise explanations are given at the start of lessons. Pupils know what they are to learn and how to set about their activities.
92. Literacy skills are not generally promoted well because some teachers accept and sometimes praise, written work that is not of a satisfactory quality. In addition, there are inconsistencies in marking. Pupils do make satisfactory use of numeracy skills when taking measurements during investigations, as was seen in the workbooks of Year 6 pupils who had shown on a chart their findings about the effect of different temperatures of water on dissolving sugar. There is also some use of information and communication technology to enhance work, such as that outlined above and in the use of the Internet in a Year 5 lesson connected with learning about the rotation of the Earth but the school accepts this as an area for further development.
93. The curriculum is good. Good learning results from an effective use of visits and visitors. These have included a visit to a pharmaceutical laboratory and representatives of Thames Water coming in to school to talk about issues relating to pollution. The subject has had a whole-school focus to raise its profile (for example, during a science week held last year in the spring term).
94. Subject leadership is good. The co-ordinator has a real insight into where there are strengths and where improvements can be made, gained through monitoring and assessment activities. Monitoring does not include, however, checking teaching and learning in classrooms to gain first-hand knowledge of how best to support teachers. The co-ordinator's action plan sets clear targets aimed at raising standards. The school has rightly identified the need to track pupils' progress in science better and to set each manageable targets. Accommodation is good, with extensive grounds used well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things.

ART AND DESIGN

95. Due to timetabling arrangements and the fact that the subject is taught in half-termly blocks in some year groups, only two lessons (one in Year 5 and one in Year 6) were seen. Pupils' work in their books and on display, was scrutinised and a discussion held with the subject co-ordinator. From the limited evidence available, it is not possible to make a firm judgement about standards reached in Year 2 or the quality of teaching overall. In view of work generally, indications are that standards in Year 2 are likely to be below what might be expected. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below national expectations and the progress made by all pupils from Years 3 to 6 is inconsistent and unsatisfactory overall. There is insufficient evidence to show the progress of other groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. Consequently, no separate judgement is made on what these pupils achieve.
96. A Year 5 art and design lesson is inappropriately timetabled. There is too little time for the teacher to put out necessary resources and for pupils to complete the task set satisfactorily. In this rushed situation, pupils are not really in the mood to concentrate and work creatively. When producing work in the style of "The Snail" by Matisse, their printing and collage skills are underdeveloped and work produced is below standards expected for this age. By Year 6, pupils are familiar with the work of famous painters and make detailed pencil sketches related to work on bridges. However, standards in using and applying paint, in printing and close observational work are, again, generally below expectation. In a good Year 6 lesson, a teacher sensibly saw a need and taught colour mixing which the pupils should have learned at a much earlier age. A classroom assistant gave a pupil with English as an additional language good support during this lesson. Although there was no language match between herself and the pupil, to make communication easy, he was able to make progress in line with his peers through her help in getting him to understand the task.
97. Artwork in classrooms and around the school is very well displayed. While this makes for an attractive building, a close examination finds many pieces of art of an unsatisfactory quality, given pupils' ages and abilities. For example, there is a lack of sufficient progression in how pupils build on skills and techniques as they grow older. Evidence suggests too much teacher direction, resulting in

stereotyped work, where, for instance, pupils colour in shapes cut out for them or follow teachers' instructions too closely. To illustrate: in Year 1, pupils coloured in ready-made Chinese mask shapes and were also supplied with the heads for their folded paper dragon puppets. There is little evidence across the school of work based on a close observation of something seen at first hand (such as objects or the built environment) and pupils' sketchbooks are not generally used appropriately to jot down or try out ideas and develop techniques.

98. In all classrooms, artwork is often used to illustrate work in other subjects. In some cases this is done well, as for instance in Year 4 when pupils design and paint Greek plates related to their history studies. Drawings are also used well to illustrate pupils' writing and poetry. They add colour and interest to pupils' creative writing about rivers in Year 6 connected with geography and in Year 5 where pupils work on similes and metaphors in their literacy lessons. The use of information and communication technology in artwork is minimal although some computer-generated pictures illustrate topics being covered (for instance history and geography work on Benin in Year 5).
99. Many of the displays in public areas tell the pupils about different cultural traditions and beliefs and serve this purpose well. There is work on the Chinese New Year, the Hindu festival of Diwali and Muslim practices in relation to Ramadan and Id-ul-Fitr to mention just a few. Much of this is produced jointly by two classes, with the work of older pupils interspersed with that from a younger age group. For example, work by Year 6 and Nursery children on Ramadan and the feast of Id-ul-Fitr go together very attractively. The co-operation and organisation involved in this has been helpful in bringing the classes in the two buildings together as an all-through amalgamated school.
100. There is no art and design policy or scheme of work but the school is now following national guidelines. At present, subject skills and techniques are not sufficiently planned for in terms of their successive development through the school. Teachers generally lack confidence in art and design and, from comments in pupils' art books, expectations are insufficiently high. The co-ordinator has good subject expertise and is committed to raising standards in the visual arts. As headteacher, too, he knows what needs to be improved and accepts that external support is required to help him provide in-service training for staff. However, because of his many responsibilities the subject has not been a matter of priority to date and the school acknowledges its leadership has lacked sufficient direction. Last year, pupils in Years 3 and 4 benefited from an artist-in-residence who helped them make some wonderful sculptures out of environmental waste. Other pupils much enjoyed the visit of an illustrator and there are cartoon-like reminders of his work on the infant hall wall. Work done under the guidance of such experts has been displayed in the local town library. The school is aware this is a subject in need of much development but that, realistically, it cannot be given greater priority at the moment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Due to timetabling and the subject being taught in half-termly blocks in some year groups, it was not possible to observe any lessons in Years 2 and 6 during the inspection. However, from a scrutiny of planning, work in pupils' books and on classroom walls, it is possible to say that standards in Years 2 and 6 are at least in line with those expected for these ages. As much of the work is practical, pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make the same good progress as their classmates. Pupils work in a wide range of different media at challenging tasks, which greatly enhance their practical, making skills. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the design element of this subject. Too few instances of pupils planning a design before executing it were seen.
102. In Year 1, pupils competently cut out card photograph frames, following their teacher's clear instructions. They decorate these attractively with a range of exciting resources. Pupils make good progress regarding differing ways to stick or fasten pieces of material, feathers and sequins to the card. They work well together, sharing equipment and materials politely and are delighted with their results. Year 2 pupils refine their cutting skills, making pictures that can be moved over a page or be seen through an aperture in a card wheel.
103. In Year 3, very good teaching consolidates pupils' experience of levers and very effectively reinforces their vocabulary naming the different parts of these mechanisms. Pupils have an assured grasp of words such as 'pivot', 'fulcrum' and 'effort' and there are good links with aspects of science. Pupils

work hard to devise a simple lever system for making a picture pop up from behind a piece of card. When they meet problems they persevere until they have completed the task successfully. Classroom assistants are on hand to give effective support where needed. When designing masks for a Greek theatre production, Year 4 pupils carefully prepare swatches of materials and examples of paint colours for decorating these. They then sketch the actual face on paper, annotating to show which of their assembled suggestions they will use and where. In a subsequent lesson, they plan to make the mask out of modelling materials and put their ideas into practice. In Year 5, pupils show a good understanding of how gears work. They model with pieces from a construction kit, investigating where gears will move when several mesh together.

104. Although no lessons were seen in Year 6, there is extensive evidence of pupils' topic work on bridges. A visit to Sandford Mill Education Centre was the motivation for pupils' independent work on bridge construction. Pupils make different models from paper bent or folded in a variety of ways, string and wood, or pieces from construction kits. They employ their previous knowledge of scientific principles such as an understanding of forces in their preparatory thinking. They use standard weights to test the strength of structures and download pictures from the Internet to illustrate their work. Their findings are well recorded with appropriate explanatory diagrams.
105. There is very good teaching in this subject. Lessons are very well planned and resourced. Activities catch pupils' interest even if they are sometimes too teacher-directed. Very good classroom management results in pupils behaving well and getting on with their work, with no time lost in calling individuals or the class to order. Specialist words are taught well and their appropriate use consolidated. Teaching is particularly good in Year 4, because teachers have a real grasp of the requirements of the subject. They effectively introduce the design element prior to pupils actually beginning the making process. Teachers plan markedly worthwhile links with other subjects such as science and history. However, their use of information and communication technology, for example control technology in Year 6, is limited. Most teachers mark work constructively which further extends pupils' thinking.
106. An experienced co-ordinator is very successful in her leadership of the subject, raising enthusiasm in pupils and staff alike. A carefully planned scheme of work based on national guidelines and incorporating a published scheme, is in place. This ensures a consistent proper coverage of all elements to be taught, with approaches systematically building pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The co-ordinator carefully monitors pupils' learning through a scrutiny of planning and samples of resultant work, although she does not visit classrooms to observe teaching and learning in practice. In the light of her evaluations, she makes informed improvements to subject planning. A successful technology week in the summer term allows pupils, particularly those in Year 6, to develop their ideas over an extended time.

GEOGRAPHY

107. In both Years 2 and Year 6 standards in pupils' geographical knowledge, skills and understanding are below average. Several factors contribute. They include weaknesses in literacy which restrict the development of pupils' research and study skills and therefore their ability to deal with geographical questions (for example, when discussing and recording differences and similarities between localities). In some lessons, as a result of skilful teaching, pupils reach standards in line with expectation. Samples of pupils' earlier work show that the subject is not covered in sufficient depth for this achievement to be sustained over time. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress and achieve in line with their prior attainment. Bilingual pupils make good progress and achieve at least in line with their peers.
108. A planning framework has recently been introduced to ensure a balanced curriculum. However, inconsistencies between classes and age groups in the way this is put into practice hinder the systematic development of geographical skills as pupils move through the school.
109. From the earliest stages teachers pass on a sense of place. In Year 1, pupils locate Harlow on maps of the world and the British Isles and start to realise the significance of individual addresses. In Year 2, they look further afield, comparing Harlow with the Isle of Struay, an imaginary Scottish island in the Katie Morag series of stories. A treasure hunt helps them locate features and objects around the school, guiding them to the front door, the office and the computer room, for instance.

110. A significant amount of pupils' recorded work in Years 3, 4 and 5 deals with narrative rather than geographical questions and an understanding of different locations. The quality and amount of work varies between classes and age groups. For example, in one Year 3 class, a good display makes very good use of aerial and other photographs to record progress on the new school building. In a Year 5 lesson, a similar theme is followed but the work does not build on pupils' earlier experiences or extend their geographical understanding. In their other work in Year 5, pupils study an overseas locality, focusing on Benin. Photographs depicting village life in the rain forest and images scanned from the Internet of African art contribute well to pupils' cultural development. In Year 6, teachers make pertinent links with current work in science and design and technology while focusing sharply on the geography theme of rivers. There is a strong emphasis on stocking a bank of relevant 'river vocabulary' to support pupils' learning.
111. Two lessons were seen during the inspection, in Years 5 and 6. Other evidence, including talking to teachers and pupils, samples of pupils' work and teachers' plans shows that teaching is satisfactory overall. In both lessons, teachers' questioning was good, involving pupils actively in their learning. In spite of this a significant minority of these older pupils took part in discussions reluctantly. The teachers planned interesting tasks and gave clear explanations so pupils knew what was expected of them. In a very successful lesson in Year 6, a teacher made very good use of well-managed resources to enliven pupils' learning. These included atlases, CD-ROMs and an excellent practical replication of the water cycle. As a result pupils made very good gains in their knowledge of the physical and human features of river scenery.
112. The recently appointed and well-qualified co-ordinator has drawn up an action plan to deal with the lack of continuity in the way subject skills, knowledge and understanding are developed as pupils move through the school. This, along with insufficient guidance for teachers, is at the root of the shortcomings in teaching and learning.

HISTORY

113. Evidence on which to base judgements was limited at this early point in the school year. However, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils could recall previous learning about events and people connected with the Great Fire of London in some detail, reaching standards in line with those expected at this age. More able pupils and those of average ability write simple sentences answering questions on worksheets, clearly understanding the main points taught. Year 6 pupils' writing shows standards are below those expected overall, although the more able write well and achieve at least in line with expectations. Those of average ability also make sense of what they have learned in lessons but their literacy skills are insecure, affecting standards reached. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress. In almost all lessons, pupils do well relative to their age and abilities.
114. In Year 1, pupils talk simply about how they have changed since they were babies. They need a lot of adult help however, because they much prefer to talk about things they do with their families. They find it hard to link the theme of 'how have we changed?' with the stories they want to tell. Pupils love looking at photographs of each other as babies and make pertinent remarks such as "I'm taller now". Their concept of times past is limited though, even when an activity holds their interest because it involves them directly. In Year 2, all pupils want to answer questions about the Great Fire of London. They consolidate learning really effectively when they 'brainstorm' ideas about a specific place or person (such as Pudding Lane and King Charles) in groups, with a member of each group taking a turn in a 'hot seat' to answer questions from the class. This experience is novel, but pupils quickly see what has to be done and enter into the spirit of things willingly. For example, a girl answering questions about King Charles' actions thought hard before giving a response, trying to imagine how the King felt as the city went up in flames.
115. In Year 4, pupils are helped to understand historical time when learning about life for children in Ancient Greece. Through a teacher's skilful questioning, they consider where relevant dates can be placed on a time line of known events. They purposefully research information about life in Sparta from books, mostly finding pictures to help them because many find reading the text hard. In a Year 5 class, pupils gain much from watching a video about life in a village in Benin. Their interest is captured by a traditional tale about life in ancient Benin told by a grandmother. They find it hard,

though, to link her story with times long past when a teacher probes their understanding, although they have a lot to say about differences between village and city life and between Benin and life in England. Subsequently, one group is delighted to have the help of a pupil recently arrived from another African country who can identify with the video presentation and tell them at first hand about different cultural traditions. By Year 6, pupils put the main events about Britain in the 1930s into a historical context. This is seen in their writing (including that of below average pupils) and, especially, when they answer a teacher's questions. For example, they explain what the Depression was and how it affected people's lives in terms of jobs and economic circumstances. They answer sensibly and can expand what they say when challenged. However, in a lesson shared across the two classes, many of these oldest pupils (most especially boys) behaved immaturely when exploring boxes of objects, so that little progress was made in the task set. Their excitement at looking in the boxes and playing with the objects became uppermost for those not supervised closely by adults. Many made no discernible effort to place things from the 1930s with their modern day equivalents, although some were interested when questioned on the subject. For example, a boy was fascinated to realise that a book by Rudyard Kipling was a 1932 edition. By contrast, a small group supported by a learning support assistant enjoyed examining their objects and imagining how they would have been used around 70 years ago. They could explain their ideas to everyone at the end of the lesson.

116. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to good and is mostly good. Teachers know their subject and convey their own interest and enthusiasm effectively. They plan activities carefully with a view to involving pupils as much as possible in using primary sources, making sure pupils use relevant vocabulary when handling these and secondary source material. Role-play helpfully extends pupils' thinking about times past, as seen in the Year 2 lesson. Teachers make good links with other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils copy designs carefully when looking at Grecian pottery in art and design. Year 3 pupils link their study of local history with geography. Teachers use information and communication technology appropriately (as in the use of videos) although computers are underused as research tools. Where teaching is good, a lesson's purpose is made clear to pupils and a focus on this is maintained throughout, as seen in the Year 4 lesson on Ancient Greece. In satisfactory lessons, the main purpose is not made so clear and pace falters. For example, in the Year 6 lesson, pupils watched a video as a means of summing up learning about the 1930s prior to moving on to a World War II theme. In fact, this material proved hard for pupils to understand. In addition, it was not clear how its presentation led into the potentially more interesting activity of handling artefacts. Consequently, time was lost and, as noted, a significant number of pupils did not make enough progress in their learning relative to the main task. In Years 3 to 6, pupils record what they have learned in their workbooks suitably in ways meaningful for them, although the poor literacy skills of many is generally obvious across classes. In Years 1 and 2, there is an over-reliance on worksheets, which are not particularly attractive or of good quality.
117. The subject is enhanced through visits to places of interest and visitors to school. For example, a Year 3 class visited the local museum during the inspection as part of its work on the history of Harlow as a new town. Back in school, a teacher built well on the visit by exploring pupils' understanding of what had proved difficult material at the museum. This was made easier through skilled questioning and the help of maps and photographs to reinforce the visit, showing how the town had developed over time.
118. The co-ordinator took up her role on starting at the school in September but it is evident co-ordination of the subject is good. She has already written a policy and gained an overview of work throughout the age range (including in the Foundation Stage) by sampling pupils' work and looking at teachers' planning. Planning is based mainly on the latest guidance but other sources are also used and there is no scheme of work presently to show how these different sources fit together. The co-ordinator is aware of inconsistencies in how history is taught. For example, some classes are taught history throughout the year and some in half-term 'blocks'. It is uncertain how teachers choose what they will do in this regard. Although all elements of the subject are 'mapped out' across the year, the co-ordinator rightly intends to review curricular planning so as to check whether elements are covered in sufficient depth. Planned time for observing teaching and learning in classrooms is built into release time for managing the subject. Action planning includes auditing resources to suggest priorities for new purchases. Currently, there are sufficient resources to meet curricular demands.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Standards in information and communication technology throughout the school are below average but indications are that they are improving. While Year 6 pupils' work falls below expectations, aspects of the work of Year 2 pupils are close to national expectations. The experience of all pupils, however, is limited and standards are improving from a low base. The school has invested in a great deal of new equipment and now has a computer suite in which whole classes are taught. Delays and difficulties in getting this suite fully operational have been a major hindrance to pupils' progress. At the time of inspection, pupils were making only their second visit to the suite and neither staff nor pupils were fully familiar with the computers or the software programs. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in this subject and make good progress. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make also make good progress and achieve in line with their classmates.
120. Pupils in Year 2 can turn on the computers, use the mouse to select from menus and use "drag and drop" actions to create rules and make cartoon characters move in different directions. In doing this they need a high level of support from adults. They are building up a very simple vocabulary of basic information and communication technology terms. Many are not confident enough in reading and writing to rely on written instructions on the screen. However, they are really excited by the work and behave very well; once they get the idea, many pupils are able to explore programs imaginatively. Pupils in Year 6 know what a spreadsheet is and what it can do for them. They also know that some calculations are more appropriately done without a computer. Pupils enter values into spreadsheets and, with support, use a formula to add or multiply values together. They understand the basic vocabulary of computer use. Pupils' use of computers and their breadth of knowledge are nonetheless very limited. The amount of work completed in lessons is often small. Pupils are, however, very positive in their attitudes, if inclined to get overexcited when they use the equipment.
121. Teaching is satisfactory; teachers' knowledge of the subject is generally satisfactory and sometimes good. Good links are made in information and communication technology lessons to work in other subjects, particularly mathematics, but the work in pupils' books shows that information and communication technology skills are not yet used routinely across the curriculum, even at the simple level of redrafting written work. Time is not well used in the computer suite. While this is partly because of unfamiliarity and continuing technical problems, teachers do not plan carefully enough for pupils to work at a suitable speed – the speed is too often that of the slowest pupil. Teachers' management of behaviour in the suite is often good. For example, a Year 2 class teacher's very high expectations of behaviour helped promote enthusiasm and confidence. There are occasions, however, when pupils' use of wheeled office chairs is not adequately controlled and can present hazards to others. The recording and assessment of pupils' work are at a very early stage of development and almost no written work was available for inspectors.
122. The co-ordinator has worked extremely hard over the past two years, building up resources, arranging in-service training and putting in place a scheme of work and policy. The school is well placed to move forward and raise standards in this subject. The governing body urgently needs to adopt and implement a policy on safe use of the Internet. While resources are now generally satisfactory, some of the furniture in the computer suite is inappropriate and does not allow pupils to work at the correct height and in a comfortable position. This needs to be remedied before pupils develop bad working posture.

MUSIC

123. Standards in music are generally below average by Year 2 and Year 6. However, some aspects of lessons in Years 1 and 2, particularly pupils' ability to sing with confidence and to take solo parts, were close to and occasionally above expectations. Some Year 6 work was also fully in line with national expectations. The new scheme of work, in place since the beginning of the year, is giving pupils access to all the different aspects of musical development. It is supporting teachers well and expectations and standards are rising. Lessons are accessible to all pupils, with additional materials prepared for those with special educational needs. Across the age-range, all achieve well relative to their ages and different abilities. The practical nature of the work ensures pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need and those learning English as an additional language make good progress.
124. Pupils in Year 2 listen carefully to music, taking notice of both words and music and comment on how it makes them feel. They clap different rhythm patterns and sing cheerfully with quite good

rhythm. Their pitch is not always accurate and their co-ordination in clapping rhythms is sometimes weak. However, they really enjoy taking part and show disappointment when it is time to stop. They are beginning to remember facts about music they have heard and compare pieces of music from different places and cultures. Pupils in Year 6 can perform with confidence on untuned percussion instruments, putting together different layers of rhythm patterns from conventional notation. They listen to each other's performance attentively and sympathetically and are learning to discuss key aspects of performance. Pupils work with enthusiasm and enjoyment, behaving very well.

125. Teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and they nurture a supportive and happy atmosphere, allowing pupils to take part happily and confidently even when they are not naturally gifted singers. Good use is made of resources included in the scheme of work. The good teaching is ensuring good progress and rising standards.
126. Music is well led and managed. The introduction of the new scheme of work is having a noticeable impact on standards and the breadth of what is studied. There is some recording of work for assessment but this is accepted as needing further development.
127. There is good use of music in assemblies and pupils can listen to many different styles from different cultures, including classical, jazz, spirituals and folk music from around the world. The school also provides opportunities for pupils to take part in performances and hear live music at concerts both in and out of school. There is good co-operation with local secondary schools, for example, in organising music workshops.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Overall, standards reached by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are average. Standards in swimming are above average. Almost all pupils meet or exceed the expected 25 metres before they leave the school. All the essential elements of the National Curriculum are properly included in curricular planning. Games, gymnastics and dance are taught, with the addition of athletics, swimming and outdoor and adventurous activities for older pupils. Most achieve satisfactorily relative to their age and different abilities and there is no difference in performance between boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress ensuring they achieve at least in line with their prior attainment. All, including those with a statement of special need, are fully integrated into lessons as a result of teachers' careful strategies. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress and achieve in line with their peers.
129. In Year 1, pupils have sound co-ordination in gymnastics, exploring basic movements on the floor and on large apparatus. In dance, pupils in Year 2 work well together. They collaborate successfully at devising interesting mechanical movements in Santa's workshop. Each group has to work independently at original movements and this contributes to their personal development. In Year 3, pupils are introduced to rugby, sustaining high levels of activity and making good gains in passing and catching. Their awareness of space and of other pupils when moving around the playground is not as good as it should be, however. In Year 4, pupils listen attentively and try hard to balance on different parts of the body, on mats in the hall. Many found this very challenging but all of them persevered and as a result achieved well. In Year 5, although ball-handling skills are below average, a teacher's positive and clear instructions enabled pupils to improve their techniques. Pupils in Year 6 can control their actions appropriately when executing a range of different rolls (including circle, pencil, log and forward) in a gymnastics lesson.
130. Teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to very good and is good overall. Main strengths include the important skill of managing pupils well to invoke good attitudes and behaviour. In all lessons, there were clear and well established strategies for behaviour management, with the expectation that pupils listen carefully and concentrate on their movements. In a Year 2 dance lesson, for example, pupils quickly stopped what they were doing and even in a situation they found exciting listened in silence when the drum sounded. As a result, the pace of teaching and learning was not disrupted by inattention and pupils were able to build well on previous learning. In a gymnastics lesson in Year 4, there was a good blend of teacher assessment and pupils' evaluation. A teacher closely watched pupils balancing and by letting them comment helped them to improve. This successful strategy is

missing from many lessons. Where teaching was found unsatisfactory, it was because a lesson's objectives were too broad, without a sharp enough focus for pupils to acquire relevant movement skills. For example, in another Year 2 lesson, the link between a story and dance activity was not made explicit, so pupils were not clear about the reason for what they were asked to do. Some insecurity in subject knowledge was evident. More generally, too much teacher talk can on occasion limit the time available for physical activity.

131. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership. Her action plan quite rightly identifies the need to gain a clearer view of teaching and learning throughout the school and particularly in Years 3 to 6. She has introduced a scheme of work to support teachers' planning but there have been no opportunities for teachers to discuss the systematic development of pupils' skills across the age range, not only in performing, but also in planning and evaluating their work. It is often difficult, therefore, for teachers without specialist knowledge to identify what pupils need to do next in order to improve. Pupils in Year 5 enjoy opportunities to swim with their older peers but arrangements for this mean they miss parts of literacy and numeracy sessions. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the school's good range of after-school clubs, where they practise and extend their skills in informal situations. These sessions also contribute to pupils' personal development by encouraging them to pursue their own interests and to work with pupils from other classes. Teams representing the school achieve considerable success in local competitions.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

132. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils reached satisfactory standards when learning about Ramadan and the Muslim festival of Id-ul-Fitr. At this early point in the school year, there was insufficient evidence in pupils' workbooks to show whether standards are maintained across the subject. What work there is shows pupils have learnt something about the Hindu festival of Diwali and have considered events special to them. By the time that they are in Year 6, most do not meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Many have poor language and literacy skills, restricting their ability to put their ideas orally or in writing. Most pupils are not suitably familiar with the life of Jesus and find it hard to give examples of how Christian belief has changed someone's life. They do not have a secure grasp of the main traditions and values of Christianity. Most also lack appropriate knowledge about the traditions of other major world faiths and why sacred texts are so important to different religions.
133. Teaching is satisfactory, with most lessons planned so pupils can bring prior learning to new ideas. Activities are interesting and appropriately challenge pupils of all abilities to progress satisfactorily as they pass through the school. This includes all pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language. There are instances, however, when lessons have little religious content and are more akin to literacy lessons. This was true for example of a Year 4 lesson on Rama and Sita and a Year 5 lesson on Moses. In both cases the literacy elements were uppermost and pupils gained little understanding of the religious significance of the ideas taught. The school is to review and amend provision, so as to gain a better balance of content within lessons.
134. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught that the Bible is special for Christians and learn about the effect Jesus had on the people who met him. They are able to talk about pertinent issues in ways they can relate to: for example, in Year 1 classes pupils discussed what it is like to be a member of a family. Here, teachers obviously valued pupils' contributions, which, in turn, led pupils to try hard to put forward relevant ideas. One of these lessons gave a good boost to pupils' spiritual development, when they were asked to close their eyes and quietly reflect on how people who do not have families might feel. In this lesson a local vicar fostered pupils' awareness of the Church as a wider family. In a good Year 2 lesson, pupils made discernible progress in their understanding of Muslim traditions when learning about the feast Muslims hold after a period of fasting for Ramadan. A teacher's sensitive involving of a Muslim pupil effectively developed others' knowledge and understanding of Muslim culture.
135. In Years 3 to 6, pupils are taught the key features of all major religions, enhancing their cultural development. They learn about the influence of the Qu'ran and the mosque on the lives of Muslims and the importance of the Torah scrolls and the synagogue to the Jews. They compare these with Christian values and beliefs. Teachers also use religious education lessons to foster pupils' social and moral development, considering when they have done wrong and what they could do to make it right. This was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 6 on considering 'rules for life'. During this lesson,

there was a good input from a Muslim teaching assistant to pupils' understanding of the meaning of the 'Five Pillars of Islam'. In another Year 6 lesson, a teacher used role-play effectively to help pupils learn how David captured Jerusalem and the importance of the Ark of the Covenant to Judaism. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils and, consequently, pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their behaviour in lessons usually good. They respect the feelings, needs and beliefs of others, as well as demonstrating that they can reflect on the consequences of their own actions.

136. The curriculum meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. It is suitably broad, involving all major faiths, with an emphasis on studying Christian beliefs. The co-ordinator is new to the role but has already written a policy and devised an action plan to raise standards. There are links with the local church, that give pupils further relevant learning experiences. As noted, the vicar comes into school regularly to lead assemblies and pupils visit the church for celebratory services, along with developing their knowledge and understanding of the functions of its key features. There are satisfactory resources, including artefacts and reference books.