

INSPECTION REPORT

KINGS AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Clapham

LEA area: Lambeth

Unique reference number: 133315

Headteacher: Mrs Frances McGregor

Reporting inspector: Frances Forrester
11590

Dates of inspection: 9 – 12 June 2003

Inspection number: 249050

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kings Avenue Clapham London
Postcode:	SW4 8BQ
Telephone number:	020 7622 12 08
Fax number:	020 7498 3332
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Dave Clark
Date of previous inspection:	The school is newly amalgamated and so there is no previous inspection report to compare improvements.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
11590	Frances Forrester	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are the standards? How well is the school led and managed? How well are pupils taught?
9502	Rosalind Hall	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18456	Jill Rankin	Team inspector	Science Physical education	Pupils attitudes, values and personal development
19803	Gillian Thumpston	Team inspector	Information, communication technology Geography History	
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Foundation Stage curriculum Educational inclusion	
16760	Dorothy Latham	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education	
23164	Penny O'Brien	Team inspector	English Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kings Avenue has 530 pupils and is much larger than most primary schools. There are 275 boys and 232 girls in the main school and 69 children in the nursery who attend either full or part-time. There are more boys than girls in the Reception classes, Years 1, 2 and 4. The school is situated in a disadvantaged community in Lambeth. It was formed by the amalgamation of three schools in 2001. Accommodation is split over two sites, some five minutes walk apart. Most pupils live in or around the immediate locality. 283 pupils are entitled to free school meals and this is high in comparison to other primary schools. In addition;

- 73 pupils have special educational needs, which is above the national average. The school provides a service for visually impaired pupils throughout the borough.
- 254 pupils come from heritages other than English and are learning English as an additional language. This too is high compared to other schools. Home languages other than English are Yoruba, Portuguese, Somali and Spanish. 226 pupils are at an early stage of English acquisition. There are six travellers' children and also some Romany asylum seekers;
- children starting school in the nursery or Reception classes have had little or no pre-school education. Many do not speak English and many have no understanding of basic skills in literacy and numeracy before they are admitted. Many pupils start school later than the usual time for admission and their attainments are much lower than those normally found for their age;
- the number of pupils starting and leaving the school after a short period of time is high.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound and improving school with some very good features. The leadership of the senior management team is good. The quality of teaching is good, and this means that pupils in Years 1 to 6 learn well and achieve appropriate standards for their individual ability. By the time they leave the school, pupils have made good progress, although their performance is much lower than the national average in English and mathematics. Their standards are good in science and music. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is totally inclusive and staff do their best to support all pupils, regardless of need.
- There are very good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare.
- The staff are determined to bring about school improvement, and their capacity to succeed is very good.
- The school gives very good support to newly qualified teachers and students.
- Teachers manage the pupils very well, and there are very good procedures in place for promoting good attendance.
- The nursery provides good learning opportunities for the children.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics are too low.
- The governing body is not fulfilling its role as effectively as it should. An imbalance between support and accountability makes day to day management of the school difficult and limits its ability to raise standards.
- The very limited outside play facilities and equipment for the Reception classes.
- Attendance is still below average.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the school's first inspection so it is not possible to comment on its improvements.

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	E*	E*	E
Mathematics	N/A	E*	E*	E
Science	N/A	D	E	C

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Results in national tests are well below the national average in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6. The school's performance in English and mathematics is within the lowest five percent nationally. When the results are compared with schools that work in a similar context, the results in English and mathematics are well below average, but in science they are average. In Year 2, results are low in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When these results are compared with similar schools, they are also well below average. Standards were very low when the school was first founded and, despite positive intervention from the senior management team and good teaching, results have not improved over the first two years. However, whilst overall performance is only just beginning to improve, pupils' achievements in Years 1 and 2 show that the school is making a difference. Individual targets for improving progress are agreed with pupils, and the school has rigorous systems in place for analysing their performance and tracking progress. One of the reasons why the school's results are low at the end of Year 6 is that a high number of pupils start and leave the school mid way through the year.

Inspectors found no evidence of any pupils missing out, although the school has concerns that Caribbean and Portuguese pupils are underachieving in English and mathematics. Boys and girls achieve similar standards, and the many pupils who are learning English as an additional language are appropriately supported so that they make sound progress. Where possible, bilingual assistants assess pupils' knowledge in their family language, and this helps the school to understand their learning needs. The school gives very good support for pupils with learning difficulties. These pupils have suitable targets and they work to their capabilities. The school has agreed realistic targets for future years, and is determined to increase the number of pupils reaching the standards expected nationally by the end of Year 6. In lessons observed in science and music pupils attain good standards. Throughout the school, pupils in Years 1 to 6 attain in line with the national expectations in art, geography, information and communication technology and physical education. There was insufficient evidence to judge attainments in design and technology, history and physical education by the end of Year 2. In religious education, pupils throughout the school attain in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The nursery and Reception children also achieve appropriately and make good progress in their learning. However, because they start with very few skills, many do not move to Year 1 with the skills that are expected nationally for this age group.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about coming to school. They are interested in their work and successfully involved in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The school has very good procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well in class and there is no evidence of bullying or harassment at playtimes.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils have warm relationships with their teachers, and this successfully enhances their self-esteem.
Attendance	Below average. The school has reduced the number of absences, but there are still too many pupils who miss lessons and have gaps in their education because they do not attend regularly.

The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Staff are sensitive to pupils' needs and good attention is given to promoting their personal development and relationships. Attendance is improving and the measures the school has used have been successful.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The good quality of the teaching in Years 1 to 6 has a significant impact on learning. In English and mathematics, the teaching is always satisfactory and good overall. Teachers manage their classes well and they often use humour to successfully motivate pupils. In the strongest lessons, the teachers have high expectations of class productivity and behaviour. They try to make topics more interesting for pupils of all abilities. When the teaching is very good, pupils have work that stretches them and work is presented in an interesting way. For instance, in a very good Year 6 art lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to discover how shades of colour could suggest perspective in a painting, and the class was enthralled. Teachers know their pupils well and, in the best lessons, they match activities to individual needs. Some lessons did not have a fast enough pace and challenge. The teachers were unable to motivate the whole class and, consequently, a few pupils lost interest and made limited progress. Overall, the quality of teaching in the nursery and Reception classes was satisfactory. Teachers know the children well and plan an appropriate range of activities. However, the outside play area is not used enough and there is insufficient equipment for children to use.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides appropriate learning opportunities for all pupils, including the children in the Reception classes. The nursery provision is good. There is also a suitable range of additional activities after school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school is very successful in its support for pupils with learning needs. Good systems are in place for early identification, and teaching assistants are trained carefully to give pupils individual help.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The school regularly assesses pupils' progress in language acquisition. Good support is given in class, although this is only focused on certain year groups and better use could be made of visual clues to help pupils' understanding.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils also benefit from sound spiritual and full integration in the school's multi-cultural community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. This is a strength of the school. Members of staff provide excellent role models for pupils. Strong procedures underpin the school's work. Arrangements for playtimes are impressive.

The school ensures that pupils are occupied well at playtime by providing a wide range of play activities and good supervision. The school meets all legal requirements for the National Curriculum and it also covers appropriately the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Strong leadership from the headteacher and four assistant heads ensures successful management and a total commitment to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Unsatisfactory. Governors have a strong commitment to the school, but their effectiveness is hampered by lengthy procedures, too many meetings and too much attention to detail of the day to day running of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is well aware of its strengths and weaknesses. There are rigorous systems in place for monitoring its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of resources, and it is very efficient. Every opportunity is taken to secure additional funds.

The school provides a high number of support staff to work with pupils with special learning or behavioural needs. There are adequate resources, except for the outside play resources and facilities for the Reception children. The school checks carefully that it is giving value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• that children like coming to school• that children enjoy science• there are many opportunities for pupils to use computers• that teaching assistants are “excellent” and highly valued.• the cleaning team and the very high standards of cleanliness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the amount of work pupils do• the additional activities after school• pupils’ behaviour

At present parents see the school as being satisfactory. The inspection team agrees with the strengths parents identified. Pupils have a lot of work to do in school as well as homework. The school has a satisfactory amount of additional activities, but hopes to extend these in the future. The inspection team noted that some pupils have challenging behaviour, but the staff are very good at managing them. As a result, the inspection team judged pupils’ behaviour overall to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils achieve standards in National Curriculum tests that are well below average in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. When results are compared with schools that serve communities with similar numbers of pupils with free school meals, the results are still well below average. Pupils in Year 2 also have low standards in reading, writing and mathematics. When these results are compared with similar schools, they are similarly low. It is impossible to compare the school's performance with the national trend because there is only data from the last two years. However, the school has received two Department for Education and Skills [DFES] achievement awards for making progress.

2. The standards in science are better, because in this subject the school can help pupils to read the test questions if they have special learning needs or have difficulty reading English. In this way, pupils can demonstrate their scientific understanding without being held back by poor reading skills. In the 2002 teacher assessments at the end of Year 2, the number of pupils reaching Level 2 was below the national average, but showed a 7 per cent rise over the 2001 results. This improvement in standards has continued, as is evident from the depth of understanding shown by the pupils during the week of inspection. By the age of 11, attainment is above the national average, with 89 per cent of pupils in the 2002 national tests achieving Level 4 or above compared to a national average of 86 per cent. However, when compared to schools in a similar context, the results showed that not enough pupils achieved Level 5. During the inspection, the standards achieved by pupils in Years 1 to 2 and in Years 3 to 6 were good because teaching was successful. The majority of pupils in both age groups are making good progress.

3. Teachers agree individual targets for improvement with all pupils, and the school has rigorous systems in place for analysing pupils' performance and tracking progress. Successful analysis of pupils' results takes place, and this identifies pupils who are at risk of falling behind their peers. However, the impact of these strategies is not yet raising standards. The school's performance is also impeded by high pupil mobility. For instance last year a high attaining pupil moved away from the area just before the national tests. The school has carefully analysed its results excluding pupils with complex needs and new arrivals. When these two groups are taken out the performance is better, although still below average.

4. Inspectors found that in lessons in science and music, pupils attain good standards. Throughout Years 1 – 6, pupils attain in line with the national expectations in art, geography and information, communication, technology. There was insufficient evidence to judge physical education by the end of Year 2 but, by the time pupils are 11 years old, they attain the standards expected nationally. There was insufficient evidence to judge design and technology and history, as there were no lessons in these subjects during the inspection. In religious education, pupils attain in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

5. Inspectors found no evidence of any pupils missing out. However, the school is concerned that Portuguese and Caribbean pupils are underachieving over a prolonged period; the co-ordinator for ethnic minority and traveller support is carefully monitoring their progress this year.

6. Boys and girls achieve similar standards, and the many pupils who are learning English as an additional language are appropriately supported so that they make sound progress. Where possible, bilingual assistants assess pupils' knowledge in their own language, and this help the school to understand their learning needs. The school also identifies some target pupils to interview. In this way, staff find out pupils' personal ambitions and their individual difficulties. The school gives very good support for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils with special learning needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and, by the time they leave school,

the majority have made progress in their reading, writing and number skills. Those with profound and multiple needs make good progress against the individual targets that are set for them, because they are well supported by teachers and their class assistants. These pupils have suitable targets for improvement and most work to their capabilities.

7. The nursery and Reception children also achieve appropriately and they make good progress in their learning. By the time they leave the Reception classes, the majority of the children are achieving satisfactorily and are on course to meet the early learning goals¹ in their personal, social and emotional development and in their physical and creative development. In their knowledge and understanding of the world, most children attain standards that are still below the national expectation for this age group and in their communication, language and literacy and mathematical development their attainment is well below expectations. This means that when they move to Year 1 they have very low attainment in these aspects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils show very positive attitudes to school. They are proud of their new building and treat it with respect. Pupils come into the school and move about quietly and purposefully; as a result the school has a calm and businesslike atmosphere. If a visitor appears to be lost, a pupil will soon approach with offers of help and will be keen to show him or her round the school. Pupils start their lessons with enthusiasm and, when the teaching maintains their interest, are keen to learn, joining in activities, answering questions and soon becoming involved in the task in hand. One Year 4 class prepared a presentation for the rest of the upper school on 'Forces' that they had been studying in science. This was so successful that they were asked to repeat it for the rest of the school, which they did with great pride, and subsequently put the resulting photographs on their classroom wall. The school gives pupils 'time out' for those who have challenging attitudes. Each class has a place for time out, and in one class there were instructions for pupils which said, 'If you are feeling hurt, read the book on feeling hurt and think about what it is saying to you. You are not a bad child. Don't give up trying to reach your goals.'

9. Children settle quickly to the daily routines of the nursery and grow in confidence. They quickly become independent, and respond to the activities provided with enthusiasm. At the start of the day they enter the nursery happily, and confidently choose from the activities on offer and apply themselves enthusiastically to the chosen task. Their behaviour is variable and, at times, some children find it difficult to adapt their behaviour to different social situations. By the time they leave the Reception classes, their behaviour is generally good. When working and playing together they learn to co-operate and support one another in their learning.

10. Pupils behave well in lessons. They are considerate of each other, respond well to teachers' instructions and settle down to tasks sensibly. If pupils find these expectations difficult, there are set procedures and sanctions that are well known to all. The whole-school implementation of these rules over the past year has contributed greatly to the current positive attitude and growing confidence of the pupils. They are also contained in a very attractive home-school agreement leaflet that very effectively links the expectations of the pupils in school with those of their homes. At lunchtime pupils behave well and chat enthusiastically together at their tables as they eat. In the playground they share equipment well and make full use of the quiet areas or the different play areas. This is mainly due to the excellent facilities available to the Year 1 to 6 pupils in the playground. The organisation of the equipment by the teaching assistants, who organise games such as tennis and maximise the use of every inch of space, is impressive. There was no evidence of bullying seen during the inspection.

11. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties which are creating a barrier to their learning are well supported to learn new patterns of acceptable behaviour that enable them to make

¹ Early learning goals are nationally agreed areas of learning for children in the nursery and Reception classes. Children cover activities that promote their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, creative and physical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world.

progress in their learning. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language are eager to learn. They work very hard to communicate with other pupils and they are very well motivated.

12. Staff and pupils have good relationships. Pupils respond well to the respect shown to them by staff, and are usually polite in their dealings with adults. They work well together, for example in group activities during mathematics lessons. A strength of the school is how well pupils from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds get on. They appreciate differences, for example a Year 5 class studying dialects in their English lesson became fully involved in the story of the inhabitants of a West Indian village.

13. Most pupils have a clear understanding of the effect of their actions on others and can demonstrate this in discussions, but a significant minority in all age groups lacks the self control or emotional maturity to be able to apply this knowledge all of the time. Staff give these pupils good support during these times and progress is already being noted. Pupils take responsibility for some aspects of their learning but on the whole this is an area for development once the whole-school ethos has been fully established.

14. Although the school has been successful in reducing unauthorised absence and increasing attendance overall, the levels remain unsatisfactory. This success has been due to a range of procedures: parents are rung on a daily basis to check the cause of absence; weekly letters are sent home; and attendance results are published in the weekly newsletter. In addition, the family link worker and an assistant headteacher monitor attendance and punctuality each week and parents are invited to discuss their child's poor attendance. Where appropriate parents are supported and followed up with a home visit.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The good quality of the teaching in Years 1 – 6 has a significant impact on learning. Two-thirds of lessons observed were good, very good or excellent. Under a third of lessons were satisfactory and there were four lessons where teaching was unsatisfactory. In English and mathematics, the teaching is good. Teachers manage their classes well and they often use humour to successfully motivate pupils. A very good example was a Year 4 numeracy lesson where the teacher had given nicknames to the basic rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The learning objective was to teach lower ability pupils to solve problems by adding three consecutive numbers to make a given figure. To help the class to concentrate, she referred to multiplication as 'Timmy Times'.

16. In the strongest lessons, the teachers have high expectations of class productivity and behaviour. They try to make topics more interesting for pupils of all abilities. For example, in an excellent lesson that was planned to promote pupils' personal, social and health education, the teacher wanted to encourage pupils to express their fears without embarrassment. He planned an exciting game as a way of encouraging pupils to talk freely. Although the boys were reluctant to join in at first, they soon participated as willingly as the girls. Two specialist teachers worked on drama and music with pupils during the inspection. Their lessons were excellent because their subject knowledge was so very secure and, moreover, they were very enthusiastic.

17. Teaching is good in science, art, geography, information, communication technology, physical education and music. It was impossible to judge the quality of teaching in design and technology and history because no lessons were observed. There are no significant differences between the quality of teaching in different year groups. The teaching of basic skills throughout the school is good. Most lessons have a clear structure that includes identification of learning objectives, very clear whole-class teaching and group activities. Most often, teachers plan a plenary session at the end so that they can reinforce learning.

18. When the teaching is very good, pupils have work that stretches them and is presented in an interesting way. For instance in a very good art lesson in Year 6, the teacher demonstrated how to improve landscape painting skills. This captured pupils' attention and they were enthralled.

Teachers know their pupils well and, in the best lessons, they match activities to individual needs. For example, the teacher who planned a very good physical education lesson in Year 5 ensured more agile pupils worked with less agile pupils to help them improve skills. Pupils of all abilities and cultural heritages successfully practised their starting positions.

19. The lessons that were satisfactory or unsatisfactory did not have a fast enough pace and challenge. The teachers were unable to motivate the whole class, and consequently a few pupils lost interest. As a result, they made limited progress and achieved less than other groups in the time. In the unsatisfactory lessons, pupils made very little progress and some groups underachieved.

20. Overall, the quality of teaching in the nursery and Reception classes was satisfactory, although almost half of the lessons were good or very good. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the nursery is consistently good. Teaching of this quality means that all children learn at a rate appropriate to their abilities, and any that do struggle are given extra help and support. The good balance between structured and free play activities helps to build relationships between children and to develop their independence. A strength of the teaching in the nursery is the very good teamwork between the teachers and nursery nurses. All adults in the nursery know the children well as individuals, and are skilled at developing warm relationships. Consequently the children settle happily into the nursery, gain in confidence and move into the Reception classes with appropriate attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception classes is satisfactory overall, and children broaden and consolidate their knowledge in most areas of learning. There is a strong emphasis on promoting children's speaking and listening skills. All adults working with the children listen with interest to what they have to say and, through careful questioning, develop their communication skills and maximise their learning. The teaching of social skills is especially good, and children enter Year 1 with an appropriate understanding of how to behave and a growing awareness of others' needs as well as their own. The management of children overall is good, and all teachers work closely with the teaching assistants to provide caring support and help to stimulate children's learning. Teachers' planning in the nursery is good and carefully matched to the recommended early learning goals. In the Reception classes however, there are shortcomings in the provision and planning for role-play activities. Reception class teachers have appropriately modified the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies to meet the needs of the children.

21. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. This was very evident in an excellent lesson in mathematics in Year 3. The teacher set pupils work that was challenging and matched to their ability. The objectives were very clear and pupils had a good understanding of what they were learning and how they could improve. Teachers' planning is satisfactory throughout the school. However, there is insufficient use of assessment information to inform the planning. This means activities are often not planned to challenge different ability groups. It is not common to see three or four similar tasks of different degrees of difficulty during the activities part of a lesson. In literacy and numeracy, teachers use planning formats recommended by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In addition, schemes of work recommended by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are modified and used in the other subjects such as design and technology. This planning and the use of these schemes of work ensure pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed progressively as they move through the school, and they learn well.

22. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve and of their behaviour. One of the main strengths in teaching is that most teachers know their pupils very well. As a result of this, pupils learn successfully, and most learn something new in each lesson. Teachers use a variety of methods in their lessons. For example, individual white boards for writing are frequently used in mathematics lessons. These encourage a high level of pupil participation.

23. When teaching assistants are in class, they are used effectively to support their targeted pupils, particularly in group work. Throughout the school, relationships between adults and pupils and pupils themselves are very good and the mutual respect shown has a good impact on learning.

24. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. Teachers plan appropriate work for pupils in line with their individual education plans. These pupils are well supported by teaching assistants in lessons. Teachers identify pupils with special educational needs as early as possible. The special educational needs co-ordinator then makes initial assessments, and supports teachers effectively in writing appropriate individual education plans. Targets are well matched to the needs of pupils, and progress towards achieving targets is reviewed regularly. Teachers and support staff know these pupils well.

25. The pupils who are learning English as an additional language are appropriately supported. When they first arrive in England and are admitted to the school, they have one week of support from a specialist support teacher from the local education authority. In addition, the school tries to assess pupils' learning in their mother tongue using bilingual assistants. There is a specialist teacher who gives good support in lessons, but her time in class is very limited so she focuses on targeted year groups rather than trying to cover every class. Although teachers do their utmost to give pupils additional support, there is insufficient use of good visual stimuli to promote pupils' understanding.

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

26. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all its pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stages 1 and 2. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught throughout the school, and statutory requirements are met. There is an appropriate amount of time allocated to each subject, except for English where there is no additional time allowed for writing at length. The curriculum is planned for the whole school to cover all aspects of each subject without repeating them. Teachers in each year group plan the core subjects of English, mathematics and science together, and share ideas and skills. This effectively supports new teachers and teachers unfamiliar with the National Curriculum. Plans are monitored by the assistant head for teaching and learning, who offers good advice and support on planning. The National Primary Strategy for English and mathematics is in place, and this provides a strong degree of consistency in teaching these subjects. This has been an important factor in harmonising the practice in the different schools that were amalgamated to form Kings Avenue Primary.

27. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is very good. These pupils have access to the full curriculum, which is modified to meet their needs. Pupils receive good support from teachers and teacher assistants linked to their individual educational action plans. Their progress is regularly reviewed and monitored. Since the amalgamation, school staff have worked hard and effectively to develop the provision for pupils with special educational needs. This has included putting in place new individual education plans, and developing a record keeping system from scratch.

28. There are a number of policies, including the sex education policy, awaiting approval by the governing body. There is a nominated governor for special educational needs, but none for the Primary Literacy and Numeracy strategies. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs meets regularly with the special educational needs co-ordinator and has monitored the quality of individual education plans. Not all subject co-ordinators have yet had the opportunity to explain developments in their subjects to the governing body.

29. Kings Avenue is a school in which all pupils are valued, and great care is taken to include them in all aspects of the curriculum. All pupils are included in the life of the school, and all benefit from the learning and social opportunities provided. There is a firm commitment to providing in-class support for pupils with special educational needs. The staffing implications of access to swimming facilities have however meant that it has not been possible to provide this for every pupil.

30. The school provides learning opportunities that are enhanced by a range of visits and

visitors. The school has recently been involved in 'A Chance to Dance', an outreach programme run by the Royal Ballet to identify and foster talent in communities where opportunities to experience classical dance are limited, and in an African dance workshop. Drumming workshops have led to the continuation of drumming classes as an extra-curricular activity. The process of the school's amalgamation was explored positively through the involvement of a resident composer, who worked with pupils to write the new, much appreciated and enjoyed, school song, which has played an important part in developing the identity of the new school. Pupils visit local theatres, museums and galleries as well as places of work such as Pizza Express. There is an appropriate range of out-of-school clubs and activities. These include classes to help Year 6 pupils prepare for national tests, a football club, the 'Trojans' after-school club, and a drama club. There are appropriate links with a local secondary school, and an excellent preparation programme run by Bigfoot Theatre Company to help pupils think through their feelings, both positive and negative, about their new schools.

31. High priority is given to ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils, and equality of access and opportunity are good. The school has effective policies in place to support this, and there is a clear statement in the governors' report. The school has identified underperformance of boys as an issue it needs to address. There has, as yet, been no further identification or monitoring of under-performing groups, although the senior management of the school is aware that this is an area of great importance, given the need to raise standards of attainment throughout the school.

32. Overall, the quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage² are satisfactory. Planning for the children in the nursery and Reception classes takes full account of the six areas of learning as recommended in the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage. However, in the Reception classes provision for indoor and outdoor play is insufficient both in range and frequency. In the nursery, a strong emphasis is placed on providing first-hand experiences of quality, and on helping the children to acquire language skills. There is very good provision for personal and social development, which prepares the children well for their entry into the Reception classes.

33. The provision that the school makes for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good, and the school has worked hard in a short space of time to establish an ethos of teamwork where everyone's contribution is valued. The school song that was written earlier this year by Year 6 pupils typifies this. It is sung with enthusiasm at assembly:

This is our school Kings Avenue,
These are the things that we all do,
Working so hard,
Having such fun,
Making good friends
With everyone.

The third verse ends with:

No matter what you are going through
There'll always be a place for you.

34. Since the amalgamation and arrival in the new building, staff have focused on the social and moral provision for pupils, and these areas are good. Assemblies are used to emphasise the need to work as a team, valuing friends and looking after the environment. Pupils are aware of what is right and what is wrong, and time is taken to ensure that those pupils who find it hard to adhere to the school rules understand the consequences of their actions. Throughout the day pupils are encouraged to work together. This is particularly noticeable in the playground, as members of staff have spent time ensuring that the equipment and markings are used to best advantage. Pupils

² The Foundation Stage is the technical term for the nursery and Reception classes. In these classes, children carry out activities which cover their personal and social development, language, literacy and communication, mathematical development, physical and creative development and a knowledge and understanding of the world.

have run a Blue Peter bring and buy sale, and have raised money for Comic Relief.

35. The provision for spiritual development is sound. During assemblies pupils are encouraged to reflect on a theme, for example after discussing the 'important' adults in their lives they were asked to think of one particular individual and how they could improve that person's day. Pupils responded well. During lessons there is evidence of moments of awe and wonder, for example in music and singing lessons, but these are not yet planned consistently across the curriculum.

36. The pupils are given many opportunities to develop their cultural awareness, and this area is good. They visit museums and art galleries and have participated in the Proms at the Royal Festival Hall. Visitors such as the Royal Ballet come into the school, and recently a theatre group performed 'The Silk Road', a drama about a multicultural group of traders journeying from Baghdad to China. Displays around the school celebrate ethnic diversity. The school hosted a very successful International Food Day with celebration assemblies and parades in national costume. After school, parents joined pupils and staff for a party with food, music and dance from around the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The educational and personal guidance for pupils is very good. Pastoral systems in the school are a strength, and all staff provide outstanding role models in the way they relate to each other and to the children. Procedures to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of children are very good. A health and safety policy is in place with risk assessment, and action is taken promptly to address any issues. Child Protection procedures are clear and staff are aware of them. All members of the senior management team have a designated role with regard to Child Protection, and work effectively with the Home Link worker. There is a dedicated room for First Aid, and detailed records are kept of any incidents.

38. Children in the Foundation Stage are well cared for, and it is evident that they feel at ease in the nursery. They are quickly helped to settle into the Reception classes. Assessment and record keeping procedures are good overall. 'Pathways to Assessment' has been successfully introduced into the nursery and is being carefully phased into the Reception classes. On-going observations are used to monitor the children's progress against the nationally agreed areas of learning. The assessment documents are used as an evaluative tool; highlighting areas of learning requiring further development.

39. The school has worked hard to reduce the level of unauthorised absence, and attendance procedures are good. Registers are taken formally and are monitored weekly. Pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern are followed up with letters being sent home to ask for reasons for absence and lateness. The Home Link worker and the educational welfare officer become involved when appropriate. The school works hard to impress upon parents the need for regular attendance, with reminders in the newsletters and weekly figures for each class's attendance and punctuality.

40. The procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour are very good. A strength here is the way they are implemented consistently throughout the school and the confidence that all staff have in managing the behaviour of a significant number of pupils whose behaviour is often very challenging. Good work and behaviour are rewarded at weekly assemblies and throughout the school day with stars and stickers. The names of those pupils who are 'Stars of the Week' are recorded in the weekly newsletter. Poor behaviour is recorded and monitored carefully by staff. Time is taken to explore with pupils the reasons behind their behaviour, and to encourage them to seek ways to modify their actions. The paperwork relating to exclusions shows that the school supports the pupils involved well.

41. A particular strength of the school is the work it is doing to ensure that all children have access to learning and in particular those children that the staff feel are, for a variety of reasons, most vulnerable. A dedicated inclusion team has been set up to support and nurture pupils who are

experiencing difficulties. The Home Link worker has an important role here in counselling pupils on an individual basis or in small groups. She runs a bereavement group and anger management group. She works with groups of six to eight pupils after school in a self-esteem group. Each course runs for about 12 weeks and through a variety of activities such as cooking or arts and crafts pupils learn to accept compliments and think more positively about themselves.

42. Playtimes and lunchtimes are well organised and well supervised. They provide good opportunities for pupils' social development, for example in playing games. The equipment in the playground is plentiful and is set out before the children arrive so that they can make full use of it. Staff at break time and lunchtime are fully involved in the games, and they have very good relationships with pupils.

43. The school has worked particularly hard over the last couple of years on assessment, an area that the school acknowledges was particularly weak at the time of the amalgamation of the three schools. The new school is now systematically assessing pupils in English, mathematics and science, and in religious education. Assessment procedures are also about to be introduced in information and communication technology. These procedures will enable progress to be tracked well. Pupils and their parents are aware of their individual targets in English and mathematics, and these are reviewed regularly. Pupils' performance is analysed by gender and ethnicity. In addition, bilingual class assistants often assess pupils who have newly arrived in this country in their mother tongue. While teachers are quick to adapt their lessons if they realise that a learning objective has not yet been fully grasped, assessment procedures do not influence their planning. Records for all assessments and for pupils' personal development are detailed and up to date.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Now the school is settled in the new building, staff are aware that creating positive relationships with parents who have endured the uncertainties of the amalgamation of schools in difficulties and the relocation to the new site is a priority.

45. Induction procedures for children who are starting school are appropriate. The school has established an appropriate 'settling in' policy that gives all children a happy and relaxed start to school. Workshops and coffee mornings have been arranged for parents, but the turnout is very low. The school has only recently started to give parents information about the learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage. Photographs are being taken to show parents the activities that take place.

46. The quality of information parents receive is good. The prospectus and the annual report to parents from the governing body are combined in one document. It is well written, meets requirements and is up to date. Weekly newsletters are sent out, and these are positive in tone, for example they celebrate success in class attendance figures while also acting as a reminder to parents about the need for regular attendance. Parents have the opportunity to meet with staff three times a year to discuss pupils' progress towards agreed targets. Two of the senior management team are at the gate each morning, greeting children and being available to parents. The home link worker is also available to families to assist them in supporting their child. The school hosts regular 'Inclusion' meetings for parents, where they can discuss their concerns with professionals. Specific meetings for parents about aspects of the curriculum have been organised, such as sessions on reading, national tests and the home school agreement. The school gives one-to-one support to parents when their children are moving to secondary school. Across the staff, a wide range of languages is spoken, a useful resource in dealings with parents for whom English is new or an additional language, and which assists new arrivals in settling in quickly.

47. Some parents ensure homework is completed and hear their child read, but the school's arrangements for reading and homework are not yet consistently applied. The school does much to promote regular attendance, but some parents have yet to realise the importance of their child attending school daily. The Friends of Kings Avenue supported the very successful party for parents, staff and pupils on International Food Day.

48. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to meet regularly with staff and take part in reviews where individual education plans are discussed. The school takes good care to engage parents in this process as fully as possible. Statements of special educational needs are translated into parents' languages to enable them to participate fully in the support for their children's needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator and special educational needs staff are very approachable, and build very good relationships with parents.

49. At present, the parents' views of the school are that it is satisfactory. Those parents who completed the inspection questionnaire and attended the meeting at the school agreed strongly that their children like school, that the school expects them to work hard, and that teaching is good. Parents also agreed strongly that the school is approachable and that it is well led and managed. Parents raised concerns about homework and the range of activities available outside the curriculum; the inspection team judged these areas to be satisfactory.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The senior management team, led very effectively by the headteacher, is the driving force for improving standards. The headteacher has placed strong emphasis on improving teaching and learning right from the start of the newly amalgamated school and, despite the upheaval of moving to new buildings. She has been very successful. The high number of pupils starting and leaving the school or with special educational needs means the impact on standards is not as high as might be expected. The headteacher and her four assistant headteachers share the principle of providing a good quality education for all pupils regardless of need. They have established a very strong partnership. As a result the staff have a very clear commitment to school improvement. Their commitment to projecting a community spirit and the sensitive care that members of staff show for all pupils, are particularly impressive. Many of the pupils have serious learning difficulties or disabilities and they are successfully and patiently supported so that they achieve as well as they can for their capabilities.

51. The senior management team manages the difficulties of the school site very effectively. An experienced assistant headteacher leads the Park Hill site, which provides appropriate learning opportunities for nursery and Reception children successfully. He ensures this building is managed carefully and, despite being five minutes walk away from the main building, he communicates very successfully with the other members of the senior management team. Assistant headteachers are responsible for managing teaching and learning, the inclusion team, developing links with the community and the visual impairment support service. They are all having a significant impact on pupils' learning.

52. The relationship between the governors and senior staff is not as close as that between the members of the senior management team. As a result, the governing body is not fulfilling its role as effectively as it should. While governors have a clear view about their role they are not carrying it out in a way that meets the needs of school. Essentially, this is about emphasis and the balance between support and accountability. At present, the governing body's emphasis is on accountability: holding the school to account for its performance and setting exacting expectations. Clearly, this is an essential part of the governing body's role but it is not balanced by similarly exacting expectations to support senior managers.

53. That said governors are enthusiastic about their responsibilities and several have professional expertise that is used to benefit the school. A good example is the important part governors played in ensuring the new building was completed on time. They were closely involved with the local education authority, overseeing the building work and this allowed the headteacher to manage the early stages of the amalgamation within the constraints of the old, difficult building. However, now that the school is established in the new building there is a new set of priorities.

54. One example of the imbalance between the different aspects of the governing body's role is the approach to the budget. Here, the governing body has requested, quite appropriately, monthly

expenditure reports in a different format so that governors have more detailed information with which to track spending and meet their responsibilities for accountability. The difficulty is that the school is unable to provide the budget in this format without buying into additional services from the local education authority. This has been put to the governors' committee for pupils, parents and community but no decision has been made about the school using this service.

55. The governors have set up a suitable committee structure and procedures but they are cumbersome and this delays decisions. Committees have a very wide range of responsibilities but have no powers to make decisions all of which are made by the full governing body: again, this delays decisions. In addition the governing body has not ratified a number of policies that are required by law, including those for performance management, for teaching pupils about sex and relationships, and for promoting cultural awareness and racial equality.

56. Overall, the delays in making decisions and approving policies, and requests for additional information, are time consuming which makes it difficult for the school to manage its day to day work. They also take the headteacher away from her responsibilities in school. The governing body's insistence on attention to detail and their many meetings with lengthy agendas mean that governors do not have a true sense of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For instance, some governors have the impression that the school does very little to promote good attendance when, in fact, it is working very hard to improve absence figures. The school is doing all it can to ensure pupils are given the best education possible but all these factors are hindering progress rather than supporting the senior managers in raising standards.

57. The school has agreed clear and concise policies, many of which were started from scratch following the amalgamation. Most of the teachers with responsibility for a subject have focused on developing manageable schemes of work, although these have had to be introduced and trialled by teachers before presenting them to governors for approval. The procedures for tracking pupils' progress are particularly rigorous, and the school is successful in its monitoring although it is too early to note the positive impact this is having on the school's overall performance.

58. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs is very successful. A very effective assistant head manages this and also acts as the co-ordinator. Pupils are set realistic targets for improvement, and great importance is attached to enhancing their self-esteem. For instance, stickers, certificates and other rewards are used to motivate pupils to work hard and learn. Pupils who have tried hard are praised in assemblies, and the headteacher makes it a priority to know most pupils so that she can praise them individually when she meets them in the school corridors. The school's educational psychologist says that the school is very careful to take her advice on board, and teachers are released from their class to discuss ideas she has for new strategies for managing behaviour difficulties or promoting more effective learning. She says that a lot has been done to encourage more parental involvement, although she was disappointed that only about ten parents attended a meeting with her.

59. The staff have a strong working relationship with each other, and a clear commitment to school improvement. The school works closely with the local education authority. As a result, the quality of teaching is good overall. Newly qualified teachers reassured inspectors that mentoring support has been very successful and helpful.

60. The quality of the management by teachers with responsibility for subjects varies but is good. Most are very enthusiastic about their roles and responsibilities. Even those who have only been in post this academic year have carefully set about evaluating the school's provision and improving resources and programmes of study. A good example is in design and technology, where there was initially only very limited provision. The teacher in charge of this subject has developed programmes of study for each year group, and evaluations are taking place of teachers' topics to identify any difficulties in promoting pupils' designing and model making skills. There are good co-ordinators in place for several subjects, including mathematics and science, and for managing personal, health and social education (PHSE). The co-ordination of information, communication, technology (ICT) is particularly successful and is having a great impact on pupils'

standards in this subject. However, the management of English is only satisfactory as there is no focused drive on raising pupils' standards of attainment.

61. The support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language is managed well. The headteacher works closely with the support teacher who co-ordinates the provision. Detailed analyses are kept of pupils' progress, and the school makes effective use of local education authority data on the progress by different ethnic and heritage groups. Newly arrived pupils are often assessed in their own mother tongue. The school has bilingual assistants who speak several European languages as well as several African languages. Staff provide excellent role models, especially for Black African and Caribbean boys. Pupils have individual targets for language improvement, and class support enhances their learning. The school has started to interview different groups of pupils to discover their goals and ambitions. This information is passed on to class teachers to influence their planning.

62. The school has a very effective site and finance manager. She is most efficient and she has a very good understanding of her role and responsibilities. She works very closely with the headteacher and the assistant head for community. The school hopes to obtain additional funds by letting the outside sports facilities to other educational institutions and the community.

63. Children start school with very few skills, because they do not generally benefit from pre-school education. A high number of pupils have learning difficulties, and many are learning English as an additional language. Many start school later than the nursery or Reception classes, and pupil mobility is high. From this low starting point, pupils learn well and achieve appropriately, despite having low standards in English and mathematics. The school recognises there is still a lot more to do to ensure all pupils achieve as well as they can and attain standards appropriate to their abilities. Pupil costs are high, but the figures are distorted by the school's visual impairment service that is hoping to introduce charges to other schools for its service. Taking this into account, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to raise the school's standards, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

i. Raise attainment in English by:

- making sure pupils know what they need to do next in order to improve their work;
- improving the balance between the introductory part of the lesson and the task section, so that pupils do not spend too long listening passively at the start of lessons and have sufficient time to consolidate skills;
- making wider use of key words, word banks, dictionaries and thesauri;
- developing opportunities for writing that have a real context and purpose;
- continuing to develop guided reading and the home/school reading scheme so that pupils enjoy a range a good quality literature;
- encouraging discussion and debate so that speaking and listening skills improve.

[Paragraphs 1, 15, 26, 43, 61, 63, 82 –95, 142]

ii. Raise attainment in mathematics by:

- ensuring work is matched to pupils' abilities and their previous learning;
- giving more emphasis to ensuring that all aspects of mathematics are fully covered including problem solving;
- rigorous monitoring to check that assessment influences teachers' planning.

[Paragraphs 1, 15, 26, 43, 96 –105]

iii. Improve the school's governance by:

- making sure all legal requirements are fully met;
- planning governors' meetings more efficiently and agreeing delegated powers to committees to make agendas more realistic;

- ensuring governors seek guidance from the lead professionals in the school;
 - agreeing a programme of regular training for governors.
- [Paragraphs 31, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57]

- iv. Improve the outside play area for Reception children by:
- developing the area to make it more versatile for promoting all areas of learning;
 - auditing resources to identify what equipment is needed as a priority;
 - agreeing a suitable budget plan to fund these initiatives over time.
- [Paragraphs 74, 76, 79, 80, 81]
- v. Improve attendance by:
- working more closely with parents;
 - seeking advice from the education welfare service.
- [Paragraphs 14, 39, 46, 47, 56]

The educational inclusion team

65. The school is totally committed to providing all pupils with the best education possible. The use of additional funding to appoint a dedicated Inclusion team manager has enabled the school to make effective educational and personal provision for those pupils who have experienced difficulties in school in earlier years for a number of reasons. For example, through their education being interrupted, difficult family circumstances or as one of the many pupils who enter the school speaking other languages who have to learn English as an additional language. At the time of moving to the new site, great care was taken to ensure that pupils with a high level of need were fully integrated into their classes in a gradual and planned manner, thus allowing the optimum chance of success. Parents/carers worked alongside teaching and non-teaching staff to facilitate the inclusion of pupils with complex needs.

66. The school makes a thorough assessment of pupils' needs when they enter school and uses this information to identify where pupils are likely to need additional support. Individually tailored programmes are prepared to ensure that all identified pupils are helped to learn and are supported in the development of their personal and social skills. As a result, all targeted pupils are quickly integrated into the school. The school has established close links with outside agencies in support of identified vulnerable pupils. Staff are kept fully informed, because the school maintains information about all vulnerable pupils. They value all pupils equally as individuals, whatever their needs, and work hard to make sure they get the best from their time at school. The school's inclusive ethos ensures that all pupils from the many different countries, ethnic groups and those who are at risk of disaffection, are given the security and confidence to derive the maximum benefit, according to their needs. The inclusion team provides a very good example for other schools.

Support service for visually impaired pupils

67. The school provides a very useful and successful support service for visually impaired pupils throughout the borough. Until now, this service has been freely available to other schools as part of a local education authority initiative. The service has the clear and appropriate aim of assisting pupils with visual impairment towards full integration into mainstream schooling. An assistant head, also the school's special educational needs co-ordinator, very successfully manages the provision. She is trying to promote a scheme for schools to pay for this service, and thereby recover some of the subsidy provided until now by the school's budget. The two support teachers work with two pupils at Kings Avenue Primary School and 111 other pupils, across the borough. Teachers carefully plan imaginative programmes of work for the pupils, and an essential part of their work is training class teachers how to manage these activities independently. The support teachers carry out initial detailed assessments to check the level of visual impairment, and the results are evaluated. They report back these results to the schools and suggest manageable approaches for supporting individual pupils. It is essential that these teachers are very good communicators and skilled in their knowledge and understanding of visual impairment. The support

service includes the efficient services of a media resource officer who provides a useful service to schools because she transfers national test papers and results, GCSE exam papers and mock examination papers into Braille.

68. The service has worked very hard to develop positive relationships with other schools and agencies, for instance, by lending out equipment, including a special computer, which allows pupils to type Braille to convert into printed text. Staff also work closely with parents, discussing diagnostic test results and consulting them about the programmes of work.

69. The support service provides a multi-sensory service for all visually impaired pupils. There is a sensory room where pupils can have time out and stimulation through a variety of activities. The local education authority sees the service as a centre of excellence. It is truly a valuable asset to the school, and enhances the school's commitment to educational inclusion.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	12	33	22	4	0	0
Percentage	4	16	45	30	5	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	46	530
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	15	283

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	107

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	254

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	134
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	144

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	7.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	27	38	65

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	13
	Girls	26	28	26
	Total	37	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (58)	60 (51)	60 (65)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	19	18
	Girls	23	31	29
	Total	34	50	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	52 (50)	77 (59)	72 (65)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	40	33	73

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	16	36
	Girls	16	14	29
	Total	33	30	65
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (36)	41(30)	89 (82)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	15	35
	Girls	15	12	29
	Total	28	27	64
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	38 (45)	43 (N/A)	88 (80)
	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	7	6	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	11	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	6	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	1	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	16	34	3
Black or Black British – African	5	7	1
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1	3	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	27.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	33.4
Average class size	24.15

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	25
Total aggregate hours worked per week	630

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	64
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.75

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	24
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	21

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	6
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002
	£
Total income	2,433,160
Total expenditure	2,417,677
Expenditure per pupil	4,640
Balance brought forward from previous year	91,456
Balance carried forward to next year	106,939

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	552
Number of questionnaires returned	71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	21	1	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	42	7	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	37	11	3	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	39	18	3	10
The teaching is good.	62	34	3	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	58	28	8	0	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	28	3	0	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	20	3	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	52	32	6	1	8
The school is well led and managed.	59	30	7	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	37	8	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	25	14	1	17

Other issues raised by parents

Teaching assistants are “excellent” and highly valued by parents. Parents value the cleaning team and they have noted their very high standards of cleanliness. Parents say that the school dinners are “impressive”. There are special meals for vegetarians and pupils of different religions.

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

70. The children get a good start to their education in the nursery. They enter the nursery from a wide variety of backgrounds, with many having a limited knowledge of number and literacy. A number of children are at an early stage in their ability to communicate in English, and as a result their skills are varied. A significant number of children in the nursery have limited speech and language development and very limited social skills. The well-planned curriculum in the nursery gives children a wide range of relevant experiences. This, together with the consistently good teaching, helps them to make good gains in their learning. The quality of teaching and learning in the Reception classes is satisfactory overall, and children broaden and consolidate their knowledge in most areas of learning.

71. Children enter the nursery either part-time or full-time in the autumn and spring terms after their third birthday. Most children transfer to the Reception classes to start their full-time education in the autumn or spring term before their fifth birthday.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. By the time they leave the Reception classes, most children are on course to meet the early learning goals in this area. This shows very good achievement, and reflects the very good teaching and learning, where children are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve. Children in the nursery have settled extremely well into their new surroundings, and confidently explore the wide variety of activities on offer. They are given very good opportunities to play and work together, and adult support is given when needed to encourage them to take turns, share and show consideration for others. There are, however, a few children who find it difficult to adapt their behaviour to different events and social situations. By the end of their time in the nursery, children become increasingly independent. They make choices, grow in confidence and learn to link up with others while at play, although at times their play can be rather boisterous.

73. The nursery is totally inclusive, with all children having equal access to the very good opportunities provided. In the Reception classes, children show great enthusiasm for learning and interest in the experiences provided for them. Throughout the Foundation Stage, all members of staff take prompt action to address any unacceptable behaviour. As a result, children's behaviour is generally good and, by the time they leave the Reception classes, most children understand what is right and wrong, and why. They settle quickly to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, and show ability to concentrate for appropriate periods of time. Most children attend to their personal hygiene appropriately, and can dress and undress themselves before and after physical education lessons.

74. Personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning, and the broad range of activities provided for all children in the nursery is used to good effect. The well-established routines and caring nature of the provision in the nursery allow all children to feel secure and to grow in confidence. The nursery teachers have created a secure environment in which children are valued as individuals. In addition to this there are many moments for fun provided by the staff, which strengthen the developing bond within the nursery. The planning is comprehensive for this element of learning. All adults working with the children in the Foundation Stage provide very good role models for the children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships and helps the children to develop an awareness of others. In the nursery, all staff promote children's personal independence effectively. For instance, the well-planned free and focused activities provide very good opportunities for the children to choose whether to work alone, in small groups or with an adult. In the Reception classes however, although teaching of relationships and interactions is of good quality, the provision for free play is insufficient. This reduces the children's co-operative interaction with others and their abilities to

work and play collaboratively. The Reception teachers ensure that the children know what is expected of them, and encourage them to become responsible for tidying up.

Communication, language and literacy

75. On entry to the nursery, a significant number of children have difficulty communicating, for a number of different reasons. Many cannot speak English, and others have had little 'talking time' at home. A high priority is given to promoting language skills, and the good teaching ensures children make sound progress and become more confident in their use of a growing vocabulary. The children who are learning to speak English respond well and achieve satisfactorily; they become increasingly confident to communicate with familiar words and gestures. All activities in the nursery are carefully planned to encourage children to give verbal responses to questions and to extend their vocabulary. For example, as the children play in the 'Animal Hospital' they are encouraged to talk about why the animals might be visiting the hospital and what they can do to help them. All adults show children that they value their efforts at communicating. Consequently, the children take part in these activities with great enthusiasm. By the time the children leave the nursery, most listen with enjoyment to stories and songs, and join in with the repeated phrases. In the Reception classes, children become more confident in their use of a growing vocabulary when participating in discussions. However, their communication skills remain below those expected for this age group. During any discussion time, all adults draw out children's responses and, in most cases, successfully encourage them to take their turn when speaking and to listen to others. As part of their literacy work in the Reception classes, children are introduced to an increasing range of books and learn to recognise that pictures and print carry meaning. For example, during the week of the inspection, the book 'Over the Meadow' was used well by teachers to promote children's understanding of rhyming words, and develop their phonic knowledge. All children readily share books with adults. They enjoy books, handle them well and understand how they are organised. Most are beginning to associate sounds and letters, and a number of higher attaining children recognise frequent words in their reading books. However, overall, by the time the children complete the Reception year many are still well below the recommended early learning goals in language and literacy.

76. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are introduced gradually in the three Reception classes, and are used appropriately to meet the needs of the children. The quality of teaching in formal aspects of literacy is sound, and helps to promote children's early literacy skills. In the nursery and Reception classes, children are provided with sufficient opportunities to develop an awareness of writing for different purposes, whatever their stage of development. Supplies of paper, pencils and crayons are readily available for children to use, and they happily have a go at 'writing.' For example, in the nursery, a child spent some considerable time 'writing' a letter to his sister and carefully addressing the envelope. Children in the Reception classes attempt writing for different purposes, such as lists, recipes and simple stories. A few manage to write a simple sentence. For example, a higher attaining child wrote, 'The fox took the little ducks to heis (his) Hou..(house).' Many children, however, are still at the early stage of giving meanings to marks they make or writing random letter strings. Although teachers in the Reception classes make imaginative efforts to provide active tasks that are suited to the children, insufficient use is made of role-play to fully facilitate the development of language. Classrooms are, however, thoughtfully planned to promote the importance of language and literacy through signs, notices and books.

Mathematical development

77. Children's mathematical abilities are very varied when they start in the nursery, and many have difficulties in using and understanding the vocabulary associated with practical mathematics, and little idea of number. The satisfactory teaching and learning in the nursery and Reception classes successfully promote children's understanding of number, although very few attain the recommendations for mathematical development by the end of the Reception year. In the nursery, children are provided with an appropriate variety of practical experiences, such as sorting activities and number games to extend their mathematical skills. Number songs such as '1, 2, 3, 4, 5 Once I

caught a fish alive,' are also used well to reinforce counting to five and back. The children gain experience of basic activities underlying the development of mathematical understanding in aspects of capacity and volume, for example, through play with sand and water, which they experience on a regular basis. In the Reception classes, teachers build on these experiences appropriately, and develop children's mathematical ideas through number puzzles and games. Many of the children count reliably up to ten, and recognise the numbers. However, there is a wide spread of ability. The more able children are familiar with the term 'add' and confidently add two numbers together when solving problems involving ten objects, and in some instances beyond to twenty. However, many children are less confident in the use of language such as 'more' or 'less' to compare two numbers. Most children name the simple shapes of triangle, circle, square and rectangle and can recreate a repeating pattern with two colours.

78. The more formal activities for mathematics are introduced carefully to children in the Reception classes and in general meet the needs of all children. Whilst the direct teaching of mathematics is carefully done and of good quality, the group activities are at times undemanding. Classrooms are used effectively to display numbers and give counting opportunities. Although many children make satisfactory progress during the Foundation Stage, by the end of the Reception year their attainment overall remains well below the expected standards in their mathematical development.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

79. Children enter the nursery with a limited general knowledge. Although they show great curiosity in their surroundings and are happy to explore and investigate all the activities, many children need encouragement to talk about what they see and ask questions. The well-planned curriculum offers them a wide range of experiences to extend their knowledge of the world around them. The nursery provides a stimulating environment, and all staff ensure that the children's enthusiasm is enhanced by questions that promote learning. Activities are well planned and organised to enable children to explore aspects of the environment and to relate the work to their own experiences. For example, children in the nursery have been on a 'sound' walk around the nursery grounds and, as a follow up activity, listened to a tape recording of different sounds and tried to match the sounds they heard to the correct picture on a picture board. Teachers in the Reception classes build on these experiences and encourage children to use all their senses. For example, they plant seeds, watch them grow and learn that seeds need water and light to help them grow. Most children begin to develop an understanding of the past by comparing old and new Teddy bears. However, their use and understanding of the language of time such as 'then' and 'now' are still at a very early stage. Activities with the 'small world' toys allow children in the nursery to engage in role-play that relates to everyday experiences. For example, they play with the farm animals and, with the skilful intervention of an adult, learn about the different homes animals live in. This is built on well in the Reception classes as children have the opportunity to play with toy animals from other countries, such as giraffes and crocodiles, and learn that they need different environments to live in. A good range of construction toys, bricks and materials are provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. Children in the nursery make simple boats using card, plasticene and straws, and show great excitement when testing them to see if they float or sink in the water. Children have an increasing understanding of modern technology as they regularly use computers. In all the Foundation Stage classes, children are becoming increasingly confident in using a computer. Careful consideration is given to supporting children and deepening their knowledge of the wide range of cultures and religions that are represented in the school, through listening to different stories and by providing a suitable range of experiences that reflect a variety of cultures. The celebration of special events and festivals such as the Chinese New Year, the Hindu festival of Diwali, Eid and Christmas, further raises their awareness. A good range of planned activities, which always starts from what they know at the moment, enables the children to expand their experience and knowledge of the world. However, by the end of the Reception year, their attainment in general is just below average, due in the main to their low communication skills. Resourcing of the outside area as an extension to the learning environment of the classroom has been identified as an area for development, and staff working with children in the Foundation Stage are involved in an exciting scheme supported by 'Learning Through Landscapes'. The project

includes organic gardening and composting, and an amphitheatre for role-play.

Physical development

80. Children in the nursery achieve broadly what is expected for children of this age. They show increasing control and skills when using the wheeled toys outdoors, and develop an awareness of space around them. There is a secure spacious outside area attached to the nursery, which gives an appropriate amount of challenge to enable all children to gain confidence and practise physical skills, such as running, riding tricycles, clambering and balancing. The nursery staff make very good use of the space, and the time outdoors is well planned as part of the everyday activities provided for the children. Although children in the Reception classes have their own designated outdoor play area, the provision for appropriate and frequent enough free physical play with push and pull toys, wheeled toys and clambering apparatus is inadequate. They do, however, have physical education lessons in the hall. In these lessons, most children learn to move with appropriate co-ordination and increasing control when dancing to music. However, at times they become over-enthusiastic when dancing with a partner and lose control. Good opportunities are provided for the children to develop their finer manipulative skills in the nursery and Reception classes. For example, in cutting and sticking paper to make pictures, threading beads, fixing jigsaw pieces together and using different tools for painting and drawing. They are also provided with an appropriate range of malleable materials, such as play-dough and plasticene. Consequently, by the end of the Reception year, the children demonstrate increasing dexterity and control in the use of scissors, construction sets and puzzles. Most children make marks with a variety of writing materials, but in general their handwriting skills are at an early stage of development.

Creative development

81. Children start from a fairly basic level of skill when they enter the nursery but with the good range of activities and well-focused adult support they make good gains in their learning and are on course to reach the expected standards by the end of the Reception year. Children in the nursery take great delight in role-play activities, and act out their own stories with increasing imagination, as for example in the animal hospital, going on an outing in a boat or having a tea party. Adults enthusiastically join in with these activities and help children develop their ideas and gain confidence. In the Reception classes however, there are insufficient role-play opportunities provided to extend children's imaginative play. Many children enjoy playing with the 'small world' toys to act out their own stories, and create interesting models using an appropriate range of construction equipment. Children use paint imaginatively, print with different objects and make pictures by blowing bubbles and using straws to blow paint in order to make patterns. They learn to use crayons and pastels skilfully to produce some realistic self-portraits and detailed observational drawings of flowers, such as daffodils and sunflowers. Children thoroughly enjoy singing and learn a range of songs by heart, including nursery rhymes and action songs. In dance lessons, children in the Reception classes learn to keep a steady beat when clapping in time to the music, but encounter difficulties when attempting to skip in time to the music.

ENGLISH

82. Standards achieved by pupils in English are below average in reading, writing and speaking and listening. However, there are indications in pupils' books that standards are beginning to improve as consistently well-planned and well-delivered English lessons begin to have an impact on pupils' learning.

83. Results in national tests for Year 6 last year were well below average, with few pupils reaching the higher levels. The number of pupils reaching the nationally expected level in English in the current Year 6 is below the national average. Boys achieve less well than girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as their work is carefully matched to their abilities.

84. In Year 2, results in national tests last year were well below average and few pupils reached the higher levels. A significant number of pupils achieve at the lower end of Level 2 in reading and writing, and this means these pupils need to make faster than average progress in Key Stage 2 in order to reach national expectations by the time they are 11. In the current Year 2, attainment is below what is expected nationally, although there are some pupils reading at the higher levels. Boys achieve less well than girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in English.

85. Pupils in Year 1 have reasonable listening skills, but many have an immature and limited vocabulary with which to express themselves. A significant number of pupils are at the early stages of learning English. This means that, although pupils make sound progress, by the time they are seven the speaking and listening skills of the majority of pupils remain below average.

86. In Years 3 – 6, most pupils continue to make sound progress, and a number of pupils make good progress, so that by the time they are 11 many pupils have satisfactory speaking and listening skills, but they lack confidence when expressing themselves in formal situations. When pupils took part in a drama workshop during the inspection, they talked freely and with confidence in pairs and small groups, but were much less confident and fluent when sharing their thoughts with the whole class. Higher attaining pupils throughout the school talk enthusiastically about the books they read.

87. When pupils start Year 1, their pre-reading skills are not well developed. They make satisfactory progress but, by the end of Year 2, attainment for most pupils is still below standards expected nationally. The most able pupils read fluently with good expression. Pupils make good use of their developing knowledge of letter sounds to work out unfamiliar words. They make sound progress as they develop their skills, and become confident reading books from the graded reading scheme. They recognise familiar characters and follow simple story lines. In Years 3 – 6, pupils make steady progress but few make the faster progress that enables them to reach national standards by the end of Year 6. More able pupils read fluently and enjoy good children's literature by a wide variety of authors, ranging from JRR Tolkien, Jackie Wilson, JK Rowling and Michael Morpurgo. They talk about their preferences for different styles of writing, and make comparisons between the enjoyment of *reading* 'Goodnight Mr Tom' and *watching* a video of the book. However, other pupils read less fluently and show less interest in reading. They sometimes struggle to grasp the more subtle meaning of words and expressions. Less able pupils read known texts with confidence, but they do not always recognise errors and struggle to understand more complex texts. All pupils understand how to find information in books using the index and contents page, but library skills are undeveloped and currently the school library is undergoing re-organisation following the move to the new building. There has been considerable recent expenditure on books and a very good range of group readers is available to develop reading skills. The books have been very well chosen and teachers are beginning to make effective use of them in the well-organised group reading sessions.

88. Standards in writing by the end of Year 2 are below what is expected nationally, but pupils make sound progress from a low starting point. Throughout Years 3 – 6, a systematic programme for teaching pupils to recognise letter sounds means that most pupils are successfully learning good skills to help them to read and to spell. By the end of Year 1, many pupils write short sentences based on teachers' models and, in Year 2, begin to write simple short stories based on their own experiences. The most able pupils extend their story writing skills and start to include imaginary features that reflect their widening reading experience. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their writing in other areas of the curriculum, such as history. While the most able pupils spell the words they use correctly and use simple punctuation correctly, less able pupils make good attempts to punctuate their work, although they sometimes forget to use the punctuation they have been taught. The least able pupils struggle to write sentences, although they show awareness of some punctuation. Their spelling shows that they try to use their knowledge of sounds. Presentation in books is often unsatisfactory, although pupils' practise handwriting skills regularly. The well-formed handwriting they produce in their handwriting books or for wall display is not transferred to their everyday writing. Pupils with special educational needs

make good progress as they begin to link their knowledge of letter sounds to spelling simple words.

89. In Years 3 – 6, the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress from a low starting point, but many pupils do not make the faster progress needed to reach national average standards by the time they are 11. A small number make very good progress and achieve the higher levels. Often, pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons, working on short exercises linked to grammar and vocabulary development, but because there are not enough opportunities for writing at length or in other areas of the curriculum they do not transfer these skills to longer pieces of writing. In Year 3, pupils link adjectives to describe characters from 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory'. In Year 4, they examine the language of advertising, and develop their own jingles. In Year 5, they study how use of dialect adds variety and impact to writing and, by Year 6, higher attaining pupils have begun to develop a sense of audience, choosing words for effect and developing different writing styles. However, only a few pupils develop these skills to Level 5. Overall, average attaining pupils in Year 6 make sound progress; their writing is punctuated accurately, and spelling is generally correct. However, not all of them manage to use adverbs, adjectives and complex sentences consistently, and their writing remains at Level 3. Although lower attaining pupils do not achieve standards expected nationally, they make sound progress relative to their previous attainment. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress with effective support from other adults. When given time to develop their own poems, based on a poem by Benjamin Zephaniah, pupils in Year 6 write imaginatively and thoughtfully. Pupils practise handwriting regularly in Years 3 – 6, but insufficient emphasis is given to the importance of good presentation and consequently work in pupils' books is often messy and careless.

90. The quality of teaching is overall good throughout the school, and is never less than satisfactory. The key strengths in all lessons were planning and behaviour management. Well-structured planning and careful preparation by teachers support all pupils to make sound, and sometimes good, progress. Work was always planned at different levels for pupils' differing abilities, although sometimes there was insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. It is important that, as a new school, Kings Avenue Primary has this planning in place, as it will ensure that over the years pupils build on their learning systematically and thus improve attainment. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils, and have very high expectations of good behaviour. This ensures there is a good climate for learning in classes, and pupils concentrate well.

91. In good lessons in Years 1 – 2, teachers make good use of National Literacy Strategy material to teach phonics effectively. In Years 3 – 6, in good lessons there are good opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, and think through what they want to say and to write. Teachers use lively approaches to motivate pupils to rise to the challenge of some of the more demanding areas of the National Literacy Strategy. Role-play and 'hot seating' were used effectively to give pupils good understanding about dialect and character development. Teachers set time targets for pupils to complete their work, and this helps pupils to concentrate well and to work at a smart pace. At both key stages, teaching assistants are used very well to support lower attaining pupils and pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are very aware of areas which prove difficult for some pupils to master, and they make sensible adaptations to their plans so that these areas can be re-visited.

92. In some satisfactory lessons, teachers missed opportunities to support pupils' learning further and improve the speed at which pupils make progress. There was not enough attention given to encouraging pupils to use word lists and word banks, so writing was sometimes held up because pupils needed the teacher to give them a correct spelling. In some lessons, the introduction was too long, not leaving enough time for the task section of the lesson where pupils practise the skills they have been learning about. This meant pupils did not always get good opportunities to reinforce their learning.

93. Teachers know their pupils well. They assess how well they are progressing during lessons, and give them good support if they are struggling to understand the work. Since the amalgamation of the schools, new systems for assessment have been introduced. Pupils are

assessed regularly through reading tests and end-of-year tests. It is too soon to judge the effectiveness of these systems in raising attainment, but they are beginning to provide senior staff with a good overview of pupils' attainment. Work is marked regularly, and all teachers use the school's agreed systems. It is not always clear to pupils what they need to do next in order to improve.

94. More attention is given to developing the skills of reading and writing than to speaking and listening. Teachers rarely plan for speaking and listening, although some good strategies were observed and circle time provides a good opportunity for pupils to develop these skills. The National Literacy Strategy is well established, but the additional national support programmes are not yet used effectively to help to close the gap between lower attaining pupils and the rest of the year group. Good use was made of transition material for Year 6 pupils to develop higher order reading skills in preparation for their move to secondary school.

95. There is extra time for English outside of literacy hours, and this is used for guided reading and for handwriting practice. Guided reading lessons are well organised and well resourced. Pupils enjoy the good range of books available to them. This is a new initiative and it is not yet possible to assess the impact of this. Most pupils take books home to read, but the scheme is not put into practice consistently in all classes. There is no time identified for extended writing, and there are few opportunities for pupils to write at length in other subjects. The standards attained by pupils in writing indicate that insufficient time is given to this part of the curriculum.

MATHEMATICS

96. Pupils join the school with very low numeracy skills, and standards overall are well below national expectations in Years 2 and 6. This is in line with the school's results in recent national tests and assessments. Even so, with good teaching overall, pupils make satisfactory progress and standards show signs of improving slowly. This improvement is due to great attention to the structuring and assessment of mathematics throughout the school, the emphasis on developing strategies for making calculations, the use of appropriate mathematical vocabulary and the appropriate implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.

97. High attaining pupils in Year 2 are generally achieving appropriate levels for their age, and a few are beginning to work at a stage above that of national expectations. They can count and manipulate numbers to 100 in mental mathematics, such as counting on and back in tens, and calculating multiples of ten. They understand multiplication. They can identify shapes and describe them in terms of their attributes, and can transfer their number knowledge to simple problems of time in hours, and money up to £2. Pupils of an average standard for the year group in Year 2 are approaching the appropriate levels for their age, or are working below this. Most are developing a firm knowledge of notation to 100, and an understanding of addition and subtraction. They can subtract by counting backwards, are aware of odd and even numbers, and are developing a sound knowledge of the 2 and 10 times tables. They use standard and non-standard methods of measurement, and are aware of lines of bilateral symmetry. They can work out change from the sum of 20p. Bar graphs are used to record comparative investigations. Lower attaining pupils are working at a level well below that expected for their age, and can use addition and subtraction with numbers to 10. They can utilise this knowledge for amounts of money to 10p, and can measure capacity by counting non-standard measures.

98. In Year 6, high attaining pupils are working at levels appropriate for age against national expectations, with a few attaining more highly within the next band. They are able to calculate in all four rules up to thousands, and to translate fractions to decimals and percentages and vice versa; they can use a variety of quick mental strategies for doing these calculations, including the use of the calculator, and can explain and describe their procedures. They are able to transfer their learning of processes to problem solving tasks and to simple data handling projects. They have tackled simple probability exercises, can work out the perimeters and the areas of two-dimensional rectangular shapes, and can use the metric measurement system accurately. Pupils within the average bands in the year group are working at a range of levels from those at or approaching

national expectations for age to those below such expectations. Despite this, these pupils have followed similar mathematical topics to pupils in the high attaining group, although often working with easier numbers. They have begun to understand the relationship between fractions and decimals, and fractions and simple percentages involving easily factorised whole numbers and have calculated perimeter and area for simple rectangular shapes. They are familiar with metric measures, fractions of a pound in money, and have been introduced to the notion of angles in work on triangles. Lower attaining pupils are working at levels well below those expected for age nationally. They are able to add subtract and multiply using easy numbers, to 10, to 20 and for some to 100, and most of this group are able to use division. Some, but not all, are able to understand simple fractions or the basis of the decimal system, and that percentages are based on 100. As in Year 2, this group particularly still has persisting weaknesses in reasoning, retention and full understanding of mathematical concepts, which makes extension of their learning to problem solving situations difficult. They can often complete their tasks well with constant adult reminders, prompting the sequencing of the relevant processes, but find it hard to concentrate on both the sequencing and the calculations when they work unaided.

99. Pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language particularly at an early stage, learn satisfactorily but they have difficulties understanding abstract mathematical ideas. There are small differences between the performance of boys and girls in the subject, with girls doing slightly better than boys. On the whole, pupils have weaknesses in reasoning and this hinders their understanding of problems and their ability to solve them. In addition, pupils have limited understanding of basic number bonds hindering quick calculation.

100. Despite good teaching overall, limited understanding of abstract ideas, requiring much revisiting and revising, hinders achievement in mathematics. While the rate of progress is satisfactory throughout the school, improvements in teaching and learning have not yet had sufficient time to bring about improved performance by the end of Year 6. There are signs of some improvement taking place and being gradually built upon; this is most evident in the middle of the school, in Years 3 and 4. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is sound, leading to satisfactory levels of learning. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, and use appropriate mathematical vocabulary well. Pupil management is generally good. Planning is sound, and the teaching of basic skills is satisfactory. Expectations are high, leading to the formation of good levels of challenge for pupils.

101. Assessment is satisfactory; however, the ongoing use of assessment to adjust the next steps in the work of groups and individuals is not yet sufficiently sharp to enhance learning to better levels. Sometimes the teaching lacks pace, and pupils are not always given work that is matched closely enough to their needs. The greatest amount of time is spent on number and algebra, in order to focus as a priority on basic skills, and while there is evidence of work in using and applying mathematics, in shape and space and data handling, these aspects of the subject are not yet sufficiently prominent to contribute to a broad and balanced mathematics curriculum.

102. In Years 3 - 6, the quality of teaching is good overall. None of the lessons seen were less than satisfactory, with the majority ranging between good and excellent. Teachers have good, secure subject knowledge and understand how to teach numeracy. Planning is good, and work is usually matched well to the needs and abilities of pupils, although sometimes those with special educational needs are not given work appropriate to their previous attainments and capabilities. Learning objectives are always clear and shared well with pupils, so that they understand what is expected. The management of pupils is good and contributes to the good behaviour and learning attitudes seen in most lessons. When teaching is most effective, there is good pace, skilful questioning, active involvement of pupils, work that is well matched to pupils' needs and appropriate challenges set for all ability groups. Where teaching is less effective, it is mainly because work has not been appropriately matched to the needs of pupils, and often this tends to be for the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. It is also sometimes where the pace of learning through the lesson is less than brisk.

103. While the major emphasis is on number and algebra to focus on raising standards in numeracy, there is some substantial evidence of work in shape and space, particularly in terms of

perimeter and area of rectangular shapes. There is rather less in terms of using and applying mathematics, especially involving problem solving, and although some data handling has been done, the proportion of work in this area is small. An interesting data handling exercise in Year 6 centred round the different proportions of various substances in the earth's core, showing a good use of mathematics in connection with another subject, geography, and the combination of data handling with using and applying mathematics. For a broad and balanced mathematics curriculum, emphasis on these aspects of the subject is insufficient. The national numeracy strategy is effectively taught, starting with brisk questioning to promote mental work, and with plenary sessions that are well used to build upon pupils' learning and consolidate it. Although calculators and overhead projectors are used with facility by older pupils, generally the use of information and communication technology is not very well integrated within the subject; this is due to delays in the arrival of hardware and the setting up of computer facilities in the school. Levels of numeracy in other subjects reflect those in the subject itself.

104. Assessment in the subject is generally good. Targets are set for individuals and groups and are reviewed at least half-termly for all pupils, and the results of these reviews are used to influence future planning. In 2002, the school's target for mathematics attainment at Level 4 or higher, at the end of Year 6, was 44 per cent and the school achieved a figure of 41 per cent, very close to the target; the national average for 2002 was 73 per cent. In 2003, the target has been set at the realistic figure of 40 per cent, which it is hoped to reach.

105. The subject contributes satisfactorily to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in particular to the last two elements of this through its subject matter, but to all aspects through the development of self-esteem and of mutual understanding and help which is engendered well by the teaching and non-teaching staff. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum, and shows improving provision, teaching and learning in an improving school.

SCIENCE

106. The standards achieved by pupils throughout the school during the week of inspection were good when compared to national expectations. The majority of pupils are making good progress. Pupils are introduced to all aspects of the science National Curriculum in a systematic and cyclic manner based on a scheme of work from Bedfordshire Local Education Authority. Most areas are covered every year throughout the school, being studied in more depth each time. This cyclic approach ensures that all pupils meet all aspects of the curriculum several times during their life in the school, even if they miss lessons due to ill health or family holidays. Consequently they are working at, and have a good knowledge of, each aspect at an age appropriate level but rarely meet principles that would normally be met at the next age level. This has resulted in the more able pupils being unable to achieve a Level 3 at age seven or a Level 5 at age 11 due to insufficient knowledge or understanding.

107. Pupils in Year 2 were observed investigating the components of an electrical circuit with the target of lighting up a bulb. They worked collaboratively and successfully in groups with all achieving one electrical circuit and some managing to light three bulbs by applying the knowledge they had obtained from achieving the initial target. Most pupils could explain how the bulb lit up and the source of the power when asked. Pupils in Year 5 were studying the reproduction of plants as part of a longer-term study of life cycles. They had grasped the concept that the life cycle is part of a continuous process. Although Year 6 pupils were not studying science at the time of the inspection, an analysis of pupil work shows that they make good progress and have a good understanding of the work covered, achieving a good Level 4 with a few pupils showing evidence of Level 5 work in life processes and living things and physical processes.

108. In all year groups, it was evident from the lesson observations and the analysis of the pupils' work that pupils are making consistently good progress and achieve well from initially a low level of understanding. Teachers encourage pupils to undertake their own experiments and investigate for themselves. This is resulting in good pupils' enquiry skills, but is highlighting a weakness in their ability to record efficiently what they find. This is due to their poor writing skills.

All pupils enjoy investigative work, and this is especially beneficial to pupils with special educational needs, who receive good support from teachers and other pupils in the class.

109. The quality of teaching is good overall in Years 1 - 2 and 3 - 6. Teachers plan well together in year groups, following the agreed scheme of work that provides the knowledge base and suggested methods for delivery. Consequently, teachers have a good subject knowledge that enables them to ask probing questions to make pupils think. They encourage pupils to explain their thinking to others to help clarify their understanding. This happened in a Year 2 lesson on forces when the teacher explained the importance of fair testing and then pupils discussed the reason why different groups had recorded very different results, and in a Year 4 lesson on forces when a balloon was used to demonstrate up-thrust when pushed into a bowl of water and pupils went on to discuss the flight of birds. Teachers use a good range of resources to support this experiential approach to the subject, and they are well stored and maintained by the co-ordinator. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology to support science, however. There was very little evidence of statistics being recorded in order to produce pictorial diagrams to support findings, for example.

110. Pupils are assessed informally. Records are kept and this works quite well in conjunction with the planning cycle, but teachers do not record the development of pupils' investigative skills. As a result, lessons are not planned to extend work in this area that reduces the progress made by the more able pupils. They could achieve more.

ART AND DESIGN

111. Standards are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils achieve and learn appropriately. They make good progress in their lessons. There is no evidence of any groups missing out. They are given opportunities to paint and draw what they see and imagine, using a range of materials. They are taught to practise and refine specific skills, with their teachers modelling these skills very effectively. For instance in Year 3, the pupils have been looking at pictures of sculptures and in the following lessons they attempted to copy them in a modelling medium. The teachers then planned to continue this 3-dimensional work by introducing clay. Teachers also give pupils the opportunity to examine prints of famous works of art and to copy different artists' styles.

112. Pupils enjoy their art lessons, and those who have special learning needs are well motivated and keen to try hard. For example, Year 6 pupils are all particularly enthusiastic about sketching. They seem enthralled with their work. Pupils work very well together and boys and girls are supportive of each other. Behaviour was good in the lessons that were observed during the inspection.

113. Only three lessons were observed during the inspections and overall the quality of teaching is good. One very good lesson in Year 6 was the best example, because the teacher took time to develop pupils' painting skills. The teacher demonstrated how to paint objects in the distance and then pointed out that objects in the foreground should be painted with darker colours. The pupils examined various prints of Lowry's work and they carefully planned their watercolour paintings by drawing detailed sketches copied from these prints. Where teachers have confidence, high expectations and a good understanding of the subject, pupils achieve well. A consistent strength in the teaching is good class management. Assessment procedures are informal, but teachers know their pupils' abilities in art well. The school provides a suitable curriculum in art, but there are limited opportunities for pupils to use computers to enhance their artistic awareness and skills.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

114. There was insufficient evidence to judge pupils' attainment or learning by the end of Years 2 and 6. As this subject takes place on alternate terms with art and design, there were no lesson observations during the inspection. The analysis of the school's new schemes of work shows that

teachers are expected to cover a range of designs as well as food technology. Suitable attention is given to developing skills, for example using rulers, scissors and glue and materials, such as cloth, paper, straws, card and wood. In Year 3, there are plans for pupils to make freestanding structures and to eventually develop the skills to make a photograph frame.

115. There are good links with other subjects. For instance in Year 1, pupils look at the main features of different types of homes. They consider mathematical shapes in the context of the building. In Year 2, pupils make simple puppets, which are used to act out a story from the literacy lesson. Another example is in Year 4 where there are links with science; there are plans for pupils to use their knowledge of circuits to design a simple alarm.

116. All year groups have interesting programmes of study. For example, Year 6 pupils study rides in a fairground. There are plans for them to build a rotating model using card and straws, and to provide support for the rotating parts on a well-supported axle and spindle.

GEOGRAPHY

117. Attainment by the end of Years 2 and 6 is in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.

118. Year 2 pupils show a satisfactory understanding of the features of their own locality. They study routes to school and produce maps and plans. They identify, compare and contrast different locations. Year 1 pupils are aware of hot and cold places in the world, and how climate affects the clothes we pack for a holiday in a hot country. Year 6 pupils identify and name continents and countries, and they are aware of the influence of human economic activity on the environment. They understand and appreciate the differences in various environments, climates and terrains, and know how plants, animals and humans adapt. Pupils in Year 4 are able to draw upon their experiences of a variety of housing to identify different characteristics of buildings, and contrast these with the characteristics of buildings in other countries. During discussion of the differences between types of accommodation, pupil awareness of the social and moral aspects was demonstrated when a pupil remarked, 'It doesn't matter that most of us live in flats. What is important is that we have somewhere to live.'

119. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and sometimes good. Objectives are given for each lesson, recorded in pupils' books and linked with each piece of work. In a Year 2 lesson, good use was made of photographs and artefacts to develop children's understanding of how climate affects the design of clothing. Speaking and listening skills are developed as pupils are expected to respond to questions with full sentence answers. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils were encouraged to work in pairs to support each other when reading the information text and to explain their ideas verbally, prior to completing a writing task which enabled them to order their thoughts and reasons in their written work. Support staff are clear about their role, and provide good support for the individuals or groups with whom they work so that these pupils make good progress. Some links are made with numeracy, for example a Year 5 class discussed the ways of handling and presenting the data they obtained from a traffic survey linked with a field trip. Pupils make use of information and communication technology to develop their research skills, which increases their knowledge and understanding. A Year 6 class talked enthusiastically about how they would use their lesson in the computer suite to access the Internet and deepen their understanding of the way animals adapt to life in a mountain environment. Teachers ensure that the level of challenge in the work they set for their pupils is appropriate because they have good knowledge of individual pupils. The good relationship teachers have with their pupils fosters a classroom environment that enables all pupils to make appropriate progress. As a result pupils show interest in the subject and are keen to talk about what they have learnt.

120. Pupils are taught a good range of skills through a scheme of work based on national guidance. Individual lessons are generally well planned and resourced, with work planned for three levels of ability with specific provision for children with particular needs. During lessons, pupils'

interest and motivation is maintained by teachers' skilled use of targeted questions matched to the pupils' level of attainment.

HISTORY

121. No teaching was seen during the week of the inspection. Judgements are based on scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils. This evidence indicates that standards are broadly average. There are missed opportunities to make links with aspects of literacy and numeracy, such as narrative writing and use of time lines.

122. Pupils in Year 2 are beginning to understand the concept of time and events that happened a short while or a long time ago. They know aspects of the lives of famous people such as Florence Nightingale. By looking at and comparing toys past and present, they are beginning to understand how things change over the course of time. In Year 3, they develop their knowledge and understanding of past events in Ancient Greece. They study the way of life, beliefs and achievements, and demonstrate their understanding of legends by writing their own legends set in the present day. Pupils in Year 4 have gained knowledge and understanding of Britain and the wider world in Tudor times. They were particularly interested in Henry VIII and could retell how all six wives met their death. Year 6 pupils were able to recall aspects of work they had been taught in previous years, such as the impact of the Romans and Celts upon the British Isles.

123. The resources for history have been audited and reorganised, and the school has purchased some supplementary materials. Currently the planning, which is based on national guidelines, is underdeveloped and does not ensure pupils develop skills or build on their previous knowledge and understanding as they progress through the school.

INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Standards at the end of both Years 2 and 6 are in line with national expectations. Provision is good, and all classes have timetabled access to the computer suite on a weekly basis. Pupils also have access to classroom computers. Pupils are very keen to be in the suite, and in some classes their excitement at using this facility causes them to forget expectations and routines. The technician, who also supports groups of children in some lessons, provides good technical support. She is also effectively involved in supporting individual pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language so they make appropriate progress.

125. Pupils in Year 2 know that machines can be controlled by a sequence of physical actions and demonstrate good mouse control. They know that information and communication technology makes it easy to correct mistakes and explore alternatives and select and use simple mark making tools. They are enthusiastic, and experiment with different tools on the tool bar. They enjoy setting themselves challenges such as drawing flags, and experiment with different tools until they obtain the image they want. They are able to save their work to disk and explain the effect of each tool on the tool bar. Year 3 pupils are learning to read, annotate and reply to e-mails. They can find the correct icons to open the application, enter address and subject, write messages and send them. In Year 4, pupils are learning about databases and how to use them to access information. Year 5 pupils are entering data into a spreadsheet and using this to answer 'What if?' questions. They also use sum and product to manipulate the spreadsheet. Year 6 pupils talk confidently and enthusiastically about their ability to cut, paste and save work to disk and in folders. They use the spelling checker, the thesaurus, desktop publishing, search engines and clip art. They talked about using a revision program on the Internet to help prepare for their end of key stage tests. They use spreadsheets and the graphing tool for data handling.

126. Direct teaching of information and communication technology was seen in all lessons and was generally satisfactory with some good and very good teaching. Where teaching is good, pupils are provided with a good level of challenge and are supported by confident, knowledgeable teachers. Lessons are well planned and in good lessons links are made with other curriculum

areas such as data handling in geography and calculations in mathematics.

127. Pupils with special educational needs have specific programmes and activities to secure their literacy skills as well as developing their computer skills. Pupils with English as an additional language are given satisfactory support to ensure they can access the curriculum.

128. The school's scheme of work is based on national guidance and covers all areas of the National Curriculum. Currently the assessment and recording system is informal and the co-ordinator is developing this area so that it is fully in place for the next academic year. There is a programme for staff training in line with the school development plan which will run alongside the 'Future Class' project to develop teachers' confidence and capability. The computer suite is to be refurbished and developed through this project to give improved access for all pupils including those with special educational needs, to enhance provision and ensure progress in line with the school's commitment to inclusion.

MUSIC

129. A limited number of lessons was observed at Key Stage 2. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the quality of music at Key Stage 1. Attainment at Key Stage 2 is in line with standards expected nationally. In Year 3, pupils listen attentively to music and identify a range of instruments in a piece of samba. They play percussion instruments with control and accuracy. They begin to understand how tempo and duration produce different effects as they work together as a samba band, responding to the signals of the conductor. They listen carefully to each other and enjoy playing together. They respond well to the complex challenge of learning to play ostinati. By Year 6, pupils enjoy the opportunity to learn new songs for the end of term production. They have a repertoire of songs they enjoy and sing tunefully and enthusiastically with a good sense of tempo, dynamics, timbre and pitch. They improve their performance in response to suggestions from the teacher and quickly learn a new song.

130. Teaching ranged from very good to excellent. Specialist teachers have excellent knowledge and understanding which enables them to provide a high level of challenge to which the pupils respond with enjoyment and excitement in learning. The teachers' high expectations of achievement and behaviour were clearly communicated to pupils, who responded to the lessons with good concentration and a high degree of creative effort. Clear instructions and references to previous learning helped pupils to recall past learning and make good progress with new learning during lessons.

131. The current arrangements for music teaching are designed to develop the skills of class teachers who work with the part time specialists. The school provides a good range of musical experiences for pupils outside of lessons. There are opportunities for pupils to perform in assemblies and in musical productions. There is good extra-curricular provision of instrumental tuition in brass and drumming, and opportunities to enjoy live performances by professional musicians at, for example, the Primary Prom.

132. There are good resources for music that reflect the diverse nature of the school community, and good attention in the music curriculum to that diversity. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

133. Standards in physical education are in line with national expectations in Year 1 and in Years 3 to 6. Insufficient lessons were observed in Year 2 to make a judgement. Inspectors found no difference in standards between boys and girls. There is good coverage of outdoor games, gymnastics and dance lessons, with two periods a week allocated to the subject. The school is working hard to maintain the quality of the provision in the absence of a co-ordinator for the subject. For example, a template has been provided for staff to use to remind pupils to bring their kit into

school on the correct days. Despite this, several pupils sat out during every lesson observed, sometimes up to a quarter of the class, because they had no kit in school.

134. Pupils in Year 1 understand the importance of a correct warm up at the beginning of a lesson and the effect of exercise on the heart and breathing. They can use space well, work collaboratively on a sequence of movements and are learning to control their bodies. Some pupils have good ball control, using hands and feet to kick, roll or throw the ball, while the majority of pupils need plenty of the good skills training in order to reach this level. Older pupils in Year 6 can throw and catch with some accuracy while playing a game to practise the skills needed to play cricket. They can play co-operatively and appreciate the importance of fair play in order for the game to be played successfully. However, a significant number of pupils find it difficult to control their emotions outside the security of the classroom and in some lessons time was wasted on behavioural issues.

135. The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory or better. Most teachers manage their pupils well and use time effectively to keep pupils active throughout the lessons. They plan across year groups and include all the elements of a good lesson. In gymnastics, the pupils are learning to perform with good precision and control, and in games lessons they are learning games skills and techniques systematically through the school. Where teaching is good, pupils have a good attitude to the subject and participate with much enjoyment. They listen carefully to their teachers and respond immediately to any instructions given. This has a positive effect on their learning, as they remain focused on the learning objectives throughout the lesson. Where teaching is less than satisfactory, the lesson lacks pace, pupils lose their incentive to participate and the teacher fails to achieve the lesson objectives. Some teachers allowed pupils to take part in a lesson wearing totally inappropriate clothes, in one case several pupils had their jumpers tied round their waists in a potentially dangerous manner.

136. Swimming is incorporated into the timetable, but due to the recent move to the new building and the lack of a co-ordinator it is not clear what standards are being achieved in this area of the curriculum. However, the school is keen to address this area and to make full use of the excellent outdoor facilities that are now available to them by extending the after school facilities and community sports use.

137. The lack of leadership in this subject is apparent in the variation in quality of the teaching and learning that takes place from class to class. However, a satisfactory standard has been maintained overall.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. Provision in the subject is good overall, and religious education enjoys a high profile in this school, which has a multi-faith clientele. Multi-faith aspects of the religious education programme are well covered, and festivals from all faiths represented in the school are celebrated. Pupils' attainment in the subject by the end of Years 2 and 6 meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Teaching is good and the curriculum is well planned and meets statutory requirements.

139. Only a limited number of lessons was observed during the inspection, but other evidence included analyses of pupils' past and present work in the subject and discussions with them, their teachers and the subject co-ordinators. Overall, the pupils throughout the school attain satisfactory standards in the subject and make good progress, due to appropriate choices of topics and their interpretation by teachers, and to tasks that are well matched for age and capability, as well as to the interest of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress against their previous learning and their capabilities. There are no apparent differences in performance between boys and girls.

140. Throughout the school, pupils not only learn about religions, but also learn from them, since they are encouraged to relate events and teachings to their own lives. In a Year 1 lesson about the Buddhist festival of Kathina, pupils discussed other festivals, such as Christmas, Diwali and Easter that they had experienced, and from this drew a common thread about thanksgiving.

This led to pupils telling each other about those who helped them in their everyday personal lives. In a Year 2 class, a creation story led on to a discussion about caring for the environment, with a final discussion about how they could help to care for the school environment. The version of the creation story was well chosen, and was presented dramatically by the teacher, riveting the attention of the pupils who enjoyed the whole episode. In Year 2, pupils learn well, due to good teaching and a programme tailored to their ability to understand in terms of their own experiences. They are able to recall and recount events and stories. They are able to draw pictures to illustrate what they have learned and to write a caption or label for their drawing. Some higher attainers are able to write a simple story or description.

141. In Years 3 through to 6, pupils learn more about different religions, including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Sikhism. They study the special places, special books and special celebrations of the different faiths, and learn to compare common elements where these exist. In Year 3, pupils have learned about some Old Testament stories from the Christian tradition, such as David and Goliath, and Joseph and his amazing coloured coat, as well as about Palm Sunday and the Easter story. In Year 4, pupils have looked at special places such as synagogues and mosques, and have had stories from Hinduism and Christianity. They have also studied the place of prayer in different faiths. Year 5 have studied the life of Mohammed as leader and prophet, and have learned about the Koran. They have also compared celebrations such as weddings in a range of different faiths, as well as focusing on the theme of friendship. In Year 6, pupils were comparing different aspects of symbolism and their meanings, and in one lesson were focusing particularly on those given in the Buddhist 'Wheel of Law'. In ensuing discussion, the eight laws from the wheel were related to aspects of pupils' daily lives, and the lesson finished with a lively role-play session in which pairs of pupils depicted to their peers an everyday illustration of their chosen 'law'. Active participation and relation to their own lives rendered this learning very meaningful to pupils. These Year 6 pupils were able to discuss with each other how to represent their interpretation of their chosen topic, and could also describe what they were doing and why.

142. Role-play is a valuable part of the repertoire teachers use to enhance learning and as a tool for assessing the understanding of their pupils. Others include class discussions, small group discussions, writing notes or stories, giving written opinions about information they have learned, and making illustrations. Written work in the subject in Years 3 through to 6 reflects the abilities of pupils in English to some extent, but does not enshrine the understanding pupils have achieved of religious facts and concepts. Pupils learn well in this subject due to good teaching and careful adaptation of the work to pupils' interests and needs, and by Year 6 they are beginning to think for themselves, to interpret religious ideas, and to relate them well to their own lives, and their spiritual awareness is developing. The subject also makes good contributions to the moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

143. Coverage of the locally agreed syllabus is good. In the autumn term, the normal sequence of the syllabus was changed just for that term, to fit in with a programme involving religious education, personal, social and health education, and some aspects of English, as an initial basis for pupils' learning in terms of behaviour, social interaction, moral rules and the laying down of the school's own ethos. Topics were chosen from the syllabus to fit in with this project, entitled 'Kick-start'. Subsequent to that term, the usual pattern and sequence taken from the syllabus have been adopted. Teachers' planning is reviewed, and work in the subject is regularly sampled. The monitoring of lessons is planned. Assessment arrangements for the subject are good, and every teacher has an assessment package, showing modes of assessment and related criteria, to use when evaluating pupils' work.

144. A great deal of effort goes into arranging celebrations of various festivals belonging to a number of faiths as they occur during the year, enriching the experiences of pupils and enhancing their understanding. Music, singing and dancing frequently accompany such occasions, and other special events involve special food, provided by parents. Special displays are arranged to coincide with the different festivals, and, of course, special assemblies. Visits are frequently made to places of worship of different kinds, to fit in with pupils' studies, and visitors representing the different faiths

also come to school to talk to pupils. Resources are adequate in the subject, and there are sufficient artefacts for all to share, but the school hopes to build a larger collection of resources of all kinds, and to create an organisation for storage that will be easier of access for teachers. There are plenty of books about the different faiths. There is satisfactory integration of information and communication technology in the subject, with the use of CD ROM and the Internet for information, word processing for desk-top publication, and now the use of video camera to record aspects of celebration and plays performed by pupils for subsequent showing and discussion.