

INSPECTION REPORT

WEST WIMBLEDON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Raynes Park, London

LEA area: London Borough of Merton

Unique reference number: 102652

Acting Head teacher: Mrs Pauline Davies

Reporting inspector: Mrs S Vale
22476

Dates of inspection: 2 - 5 June 2003

Inspection number: 252123

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bodnant Gardens West Barnes Lane Raynes Park London
Postcode:	SW20 0BZ
Telephone number:	0208 946 1620
Fax number:	0208 944 9730
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Bailey
Date of previous inspection:	There was no previous inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
22476	Mrs S Vale	Registered inspector	Religious education Music	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9835	Mrs G Spencer	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18461	Ms V Wilkinson	Team inspector	Design and technology Special Educational needs The Autistic Unit	
28955	Ms M Slater	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
18083	Ms J Howell	Team inspector	English Art and design History	

32161	Ms G Harrison	Team inspector	Science Geography Foundation Stage	
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The inspection contractor was:

lcp
360 Lee Valley Technopark
Ashley Road
London N17 9LN

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved?	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

West Wimbledon Primary School is a new school established in September 2002. It came into being following re-organisation in Merton. The school community results from two schools, Bushey First and Bushey Middle Schools, coming together to create a two-form entry, all-through primary school with a nursery, housed on the old Bushey Middle School site. Difficulties at the Bushey Middle site over the previous four years had resulted in many parents losing faith in the school and withdrawing their children. Numbers at Bushey Middle School fell rapidly. The new school is situated in Raynes Park and admits children from a wide catchment area, including 82 children who have English as an additional language. Many parents are single mothers. Whilst some live in owner-occupied homes, a large number live in rented accommodation. Baseline assessment data on children entering the nursery shows that there are very few children with advanced language skills and that the majority of children fall slightly below the average expected for their age. Out of the 299 pupils on role, approximately one third have special educational needs. The percentage of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is just under the national average. West Wimbledon Primary was chosen as a borough special educational needs base for up to 20 primary children with autism in 'Treetops'. The number of pupils who start and leave the school over the year is quite high.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

West Wimbledon Primary School is a rapidly improving school with some good features. Good teaching complements the recently appointed acting headteacher's very good leadership, management and clear vision. This is starting to have a positive effect on raising standards of attainment throughout the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership and management of the newly appointed acting headteacher
- Consistently good teaching that is enabling pupils to make rapid progress
- Standards in information and communication technology throughout the school
- Children in the Foundation Stage are given a good start to their education
- Promotes pupils' social development very well through very good moral and personal development learning opportunities
- Provides good learning and support for pupils with autism

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science for pupils by the end of Year 6

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was newly amalgamated in September 2002 and there is no previous inspection report to refer to.

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	D	D	E	E
mathematics	D	D	E	E
science	E	D	E*	E

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

This table shows that Bushey Middle School results in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6, before the establishment of West Wimbledon Primary, were well below the national average in English and in mathematics. In science, they were in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally. The school's results in English and mathematics remained well below average when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds, but in science they did not remain in the bottom five per cent. There has been a steady decline in standards at the end of Year 6 over the last three years. This is due in part to weaknesses in leadership and management in the past, pupils' previously unsatisfactory behaviour, teachers' low expectations of pupils' abilities and an increasingly mobile population. This results in pupils not making the progress they should. The school's results in the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2002 in reading, writing and mathematics overall were below the national average. There is no information available to compare them to similar schools.

Lesson observations and scrutiny of work from pupils in the present Year 6, show standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science to be below national averages. This is an improvement, although standards are not yet up to the national averages. This improvement reflects the school's determined initiatives to raise standards by concentrating on the teaching of English and mathematics since last September. Standards in all other subjects¹ are satisfactory, except in information and communication technology where standards are above those expected for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Religious education provision meets the locally agreed syllabus. Standards in Year 2 are in line with national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. This demonstrates very good improvement in a short space of time. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to meet the early learning goals in all areas of learning², except in communication, language and literacy skills.

Pupils in the autistic unit achieve to the best of their ability. Pupils with special educational needs, throughout the rest of the school, make good progress, although their attainments are below national expectations.

¹ Art and design, geography, history, music, physical education, design and technology

² Areas of learning include communication, language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development, personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen and want to come to school to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils have good concentration. They behave well in lessons and show good manners to their peers and to adults.
Personal development and relationships	The introduction of the 'You can do it' programme has had a very good effect on nurturing whole-school personal development and relationships.
Attendance	Satisfactory, but with a small group of persistently poor attendees.

Pupils' personal development and relationships are very positive. The introduction of the 'You can do it' programme has played an important part in raising pupils' self-esteem and in developing their confidence to organise and persist with their work. The procedures for monitoring and encouraging pupils to come to school are good; unfortunately there are still parents who take their children out of school for holidays during school time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Strengths in the good or very good teaching are:

- the effective management of pupils;
- an orderly and calm atmosphere allowing pupils to give their full attention to their work;
- good relationships between pupils, teachers and support staff;
- pupils listening attentively, so that behaviour is better and they take on new knowledge and understanding well;
- the reinforcement of prior learning and use of probing questioning to ensure that all pupils are actively involved in discussions;
- tasks carefully matched to pupils' abilities;
- sound use of homework, resources and support staff to improve the quality of pupils' learning;
- good quality tasks that capture pupils' interest.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities throughout the school are good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The specialist unit for autistic children provides well for their particular needs. Other pupils in the main part of the school are supported well by both teachers and the teaching assistants.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Pupils are provided for well by the teachers, and make rapid progress in learning to speak, read and write in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for moral and social development is very good. This is supported by the 'You can do it' programme. Pupils have the opportunities to learn about other cultures and are beginning to develop their ideas on right and wrong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good provision for the monitoring of pupils' behaviour. However, the procedures for assessment in the foundation subjects are inconsistent.

The school works well in partnership with parents. Parents are very pleased with the rapid progress and improvements, which have been made in the last year.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The acting headteacher gives the school very clear and purposeful leadership. She has a true vision of how the school should develop. This results in very effective teamwork by the staff and a joint commitment to raising standards
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities. It is starting to take a more active role in monitoring the school's finances, standards and the curriculum.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses the results of annual tests carefully to ensure that they can support pupils' raising standards. There is very good monitoring of teaching by the acting headteacher, deputy headteacher and leadership team. The school knows exactly what to do to continue its good improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's resources are used well to promote pupils' learning. Improvements to the premises, such as the new building work in order to accommodate the first school, are supporting pupils' learning. The newly decorated school provides a stimulating learning environment.

Accommodation, resources and the number of teaching staff are good and support pupils so that they are starting to make rapid progress in their achievement. The leadership and management of the school by the acting headteacher is very good and her vision and hard work has enabled this rapid progress to take place.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school• Their children make good progress• Behaviour is good• The teaching is good• They feel well informed about what is going on at school and that the school works closely with them• They are comfortable about approaching the school and feel that the school expects their children to work hard• Leadership and management are good• The school is helping their children to become mature• There is an interesting range of activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A very few parents would like to see more homework

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments by the parents. Pupils receive a satisfactory amount of homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of children on entry to the nursery overall is broad but generally it is below that expected for children of this age in many areas of their development. A small number of children have attainment typical for their age. Children make good progress so that their attainments continue to rise when they join the Reception classes. They are broadly in line to reach the early learning goals in most areas of the curriculum, except in communication, language and literacy skills at the end of the Reception Year.

2. In Years 1 to 6, the proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average. However, in some classes as many as one third of pupils have special educational needs. The school also provides a specialist unit for 20 autistic children called 'Treetops'. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language is around 24 per cent of the school population. Most play a full part in all activities. The progress of these children is good, because they are supported effectively not only by their class teachers, but also by specialist teachers who teach English as an additional language. Taken as a whole, the attainments of minority ethnic pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are generally good. This includes pupils of Black African and Black Caribbean origin, and the many Korean pupils at the school.

3. The school's results in the 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics were well below the national average, and in science were in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally. The school's results remained well below national averages when compared to schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. There has been a steady decline in standards at the end of Year 6 over the last three years. This is due in part to weak leadership and management in the past, pupils' previously unsatisfactory behaviour, low expectations from teachers of pupils' abilities and an increasingly mobile population. The current Year 6 had four teachers during the previous year, which made it difficult to maintain continuity in learning and raise standards. All of this culminates in pupils not making the progress they should. Also, the school does not give sufficient attention to investigative skills in mathematics and science. In some lessons the brighter children are not challenged enough and there is work to do in making up for lost time in the mathematics curriculum for some pupils.

4. The school's results in the national tests in 2002, at the end of Year 2, in reading, writing and mathematics overall were below the national average. There is no information available to compare them to similar schools. The findings of the inspection team show that standards have improved in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils at the age of seven and that the majority achieve national averages. These pupils have also made very good progress in a very short space of time. Attainment in all other curriculum subjects³ is satisfactory, except in information and communication technology where pupils reach above national standards. The systems which are in place and the good co-operation and support for year group planning enables new and overseas trained teachers to quickly implement the curriculum and national strategies in literacy and numeracy. These systems are beginning to have an impact on pupils' attainments as exemplified by the significant improvement this year in the Year 2 national tests. Unvalidated data suggests that the number of pupils reaching higher levels of attainment has increased by 27 per cent.

5. Lesson observations and scrutiny of work from pupils in the present Year 6 show standards in writing, mathematics and science to be below national averages. This is an improvement on the previous years' results and reflects the school's initiatives in placing a greater emphasis upon the teaching of the core subjects.⁴ Pupils have made very good progress in a short space of time. In religious education, standards of attainment are as expected in relation to the locally agreed syllabus, but there is limited coverage of the religious education curriculum

³ Art and design, history, geography, design and technology, music, physical education.

⁴ Core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

throughout the school. All other subjects are in line with national expectations, except in information and communication technology where pupils achieve above the national expectation.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning. They work especially hard in lessons that captivate their interest and where they are active. This was especially the case in a Year 6 lesson where 'The Big Fish Theatre Company' did a presentation on the effects of drugs and alcohol awareness. They listened with interest and discussed in a mature, adult way the impact of bullying, poor parenting and drugs. Pupils are willing learners and by Year 6 work well in lessons, giving their total concentration. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to talk about their work in pairs, but this is only fully effective when adults are present to help them focus on the tasks. Teachers and support staff emphasise the "4 Keys"⁵* at every opportunity. Through this effective method of teaching, pupils eagerly talk about and share what they learn. They are proud of their school and the part they play in its success.

7. Pupils behave well in lessons, because they know what teachers expect of them. They know and understand the school rules and in a discussion between teachers and pupils they were all able to chant these rules and said they tried to keep them. The acting headteacher and staff have worked hard to build an excellent relationship with pupils based upon mutual respect. The "You can do it" programme, introduced by the acting headteacher to pupils, staff and parents in the formation of the new school, has been a success in raising standards throughout the school. Teachers build continually upon this balance between clear expectations and the pupils' own responsibilities.

8. The school gives pupils many responsibilities from routine classroom tasks to helping pupils in 'Treetops', the specialist unit for pupils with autism, with reading. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect, for example, waiting patiently in class as a pupil tries hard to pronounce a word. They are polite to adults and visitors. Relationships between pupils of all ages are very good, as they are with all adults in school and those visitors who are linked to the school to enhance their learning. Governors responsible for overseeing a subject visit the school and report their findings back to the governing body. Pupils show interest in the topic presented in assemblies and are proud to accept their "Star of the Week" certificates. Staff appreciate the efforts made by pupils to improve their behaviour and display "Thank You" certificates for all to see.

9. Recent improvements in the surroundings have given pupils a pleasant place to work and play. As a result, behaviour outside of lessons is good. Older pupils look after the younger ones and take their responsibilities seriously. Increasingly, these opportunities to take on responsibilities are helping pupils to become mature young people. Older pupils run a tuck shop at break time. The school council, made up of children from each class, is always looking for ways to contribute to improvements to the environment.

10. Pupils from various ethnic and language groups mix well together throughout the day, and no incidents of a racist or anti-social nature were observed during the inspection. Pupils interviewed said that inappropriate behaviour is reported to an adult and it is dealt with quickly and efficiently.

11. Pupils make good progress in their personal development during their time in school. Their social skills are underdeveloped when they join the school, but by Year 6 they are responsible young people, who can show initiative and think deeply about life. As a result, they work to improve the appearance of the school and understand why this is important. This, alongside the "4 Keys" and the "You can do it" system, is making a significant contribution to improving attainment.

12. Attendance is below the national average, but since the formation of the new school it has improved as a result of closer monitoring and closer liaison with parents. However, too many

⁵ The 4 Keys' are from the You Can Do It programme is very comprehensive and very well implemented. The areas in the programme cover 'Getting Along Together', 'Organisation', 'Persistence' and 'Confidence', the latter being the focus for this half term.

parents are still taking family holidays during term time and this has a detrimental effect on the attendance figures. Governors will report these figures to parents in the first annual governors' report to parents this summer.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is good overall. Of the total of 72 lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good or better in 51 of them. It is good in the Foundation Stage, and throughout the rest of the school. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were observed. The quality of teaching and learning cannot be compared to the previous inspection, as the school is a new school. Support teaching for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who have English as an additional language is good.

14. Teachers' planning is good and one of the strengths of teaching. It is carried out jointly where there are year groups. The involvement and contribution of teaching assistants also support learning well. They regularly meet with class teacher colleagues to discuss work at the beginning of each week. Classroom management is another strong feature of teaching, and is often entwined with teaching methods, which aim for high levels of pupil involvement, interaction and collaboration. All of this ensures that pupils learn to the best of their ability. Where teaching and learning are less effective it is sometimes the result of a slower pace of work, or slight insecurity in teachers' subject knowledge in specialist areas, such as music and religious education.

15. The school has worked hard in the last year to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The professional development of staff has been a major focus since September 2002, with the main focus being on literacy and mathematics teaching in order to raise standards. The recently appointed acting headteacher and the newly appointed deputy headteacher are actively observing and monitoring teaching throughout the school and provide feedback to teachers to bring about improvements. Other recent teaching appointments have also contributed to raising standards in teaching and learning.

16. The good teaching in the Foundation Stage, in the two Reception classes and in the nursery, is well supported by two nursery nurses and teaching assistants. The child-centred, interesting activities are thoughtfully organised, not only to maintain high levels of concentration among children, but also to promote their skills in a variety of areas of learning. In one good session with a language and literacy focus, children took part in activities that included role-playing the story of The Three Bears. Other activities on this theme included making porridge out of sand, creating bear puppets and learning about items of different sizes. This really supports the development of pupils' speaking, listening and thinking skills.

17. The focus on activities that children really understand is maintained as a basis for the good teaching in the infant and junior classes.

18. Strengths in the good or very good teaching are:

- the effective management of pupils;
- an orderly and calm atmosphere allowing pupils to give their full attention to their work;
- good relationships between pupils, teachers and support staff;
- pupils listening attentively, so that behaviour is better and pupils take on new knowledge and understanding well;
- the reinforcement of prior learning and use of probing questioning to ensure that all pupils are actively involved in discussions;
- tasks carefully matched to pupils' ability;
- sound use of homework, resources and support staff to improve the quality of pupils' learning;
- good quality tasks that capture pupils' interest.

19. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented throughout the school. Teachers frequently demonstrate their good use of questions to encourage

pupils to think and thus extend their learning. Speaking and listening skills are consciously supported in other lessons when teachers generate discussions and provide opportunities for pupils to present ideas and listen to each other. For example, in a Year 6 lesson about art in religious education, pupils were given opportunities to explain their thoughts and feelings about some of the pictures they were looking at to their classmates. Their friends listened attentively and then contributed their own thoughts and ideas to the discussion sensibly.

20. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well through their individual education plans and the help they receive from adults. Teaching methods, commonly adopted throughout the school, ensure that all pupils are drawn fully into the learning activities.

21. Teaching and learning are also enriched by visits, and by having visitors in school. For example, a percussion music specialist has visited to support pupils' learning in music. There are good teacher links with the local high schools. For example; projects in which pupils are involved, enrich their learning in information and communication technology. This positive input has helped to raise pupils' achievements in information and communication technology.

22. Teachers make good use of ongoing assessment, and regularly refer to learning objectives within lessons. Often teachers invite pupils at the close of a lesson to think about how well they have progressed. This allows pupils time for reflection. Sometimes lesson plans are amended as teachers respond to recent assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils' work is marked regularly. Marking is used well as an assessment tool, but the practice of providing useful comments for pupils on ways of improving their work is inconsistent. Good use is made of homework to support pupils' learning.

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

23. The school provides good curricular opportunities by enriching the National Curriculum with a broad range of after-school clubs and activities at lunchtimes. There is a very clear policy for inclusion ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. This is understood by all staff who receive appropriate training for different aspects of their roles. Many of the learning materials, used to support the curriculum, reflect diversity. There is a comprehensive range of policies reviewed and updated very recently because of the new school status from September 2002. These ensure statutory requirements for religious education and information and communication technology are met, as are the National Curriculum, National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy requirements. However, there is work to do to improve the investigational aspects of mathematics and science in Years 1 to 6. The establishment of the new school means that there are gaps in learning in mathematics for some pupils in Years 3 to 6.

24. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) guidance is used alongside the National Curriculum core and foundation subjects' programmes of study. Commercial schemes are also used to support the curriculum. This enables teachers to assess and analyse individual and group progress in English and mathematics in order to target their resources for support accurately and raise standards of attainment. The systems which are in place and the good co-operation and support for year group planning enables new and overseas trained teachers to quickly implement the curriculum and strategies. These systems are beginning to have an impact on pupils' attainments as exemplified by the significant improvement this year in the Year 2 national tests.

25. The acting headteacher and parents report that behaviour was a major issue at the beginning of the academic year but has now improved enormously. Governors and parents concur whole-heartedly with this view. The pupils have had a very short time to absorb the values in 'You Can Do It' scheme, but in the main have improved their relationships with each other very well. There is no evidence of bullying or oppressive behaviour and they clearly demonstrate respect for each other's values and beliefs. In less structured circumstances it is still possible to see some negative attitudes to one another and staff work hard to pick these up very quickly so that pupils understand the consequences of their actions. Alongside other schemes, such as the borough's

'Healthy Schools' scheme, 'You Can Do It' has played a major role in the very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education

26. The 'You Can Do It' programme is very comprehensive and very well implemented. The areas in the programme cover 'Getting Along Together', 'Organisation', 'Persistence' and 'Confidence', the latter being the focus for this half term.

27. 'You Can Do It' has had a significant impact on the behaviour, learning and ethos within the school because of the total commitment to, and consistent implementation of, the project by all staff. The principles of 'You Can Do It' have permeated the school, not just in personal, social and health education, but across all curriculum areas including extra-curricular activities, displays and in pupils' work books.

28. Pupils demonstrate an obvious enthusiasm for school through their engagement in lessons, arriving early for breakfast club and attendance at after-school clubs. There are sports clubs including cricket, netball, football and Tae Kwan Do, as well as academic curriculum related clubs, such as the book club and the information and communication technology club, where pupils are developing a school website. Whilst there is a policy for both sex education and drugs awareness, the curriculum is still under development as part of the new school where the priorities have had to focus upon behaviour and standards in literacy and numeracy. However, there are some activities being undertaken, one of which was the visiting theatre group 'Big Fish' whose performance covered drugs, bullying and running away from home. Letters have gone out for consultation with the parents about the sex education provision.

29. The Special Educational Needs Code of Practice is fully implemented and staff across the school have a clear understanding of the needs of their pupils. Individual education plans are in teachers' planning folders and used to link up to the general class planning. Staff provide good strategies for pupils' learning to enable them to make progress in lessons. There are some good examples of peer tutoring linked to the very good 'You Can Do It' programme across the school. For instance, one girl wanted to volunteer to explain the process of the exercise they were doing, whilst her partner was reluctant. Her answer to him was 'Confidence!' which is the children's focus for this term in the 'You Can Do It' programme. A more able girl in an infant class was paired with a child who had difficulties with spelling and finding letters on the keyboard in an information and communication technology lesson. She demonstrated very good speaking skills through giving verbal instructions and options about the keys her partner needed rather than doing it for her.

30. Pupils have the opportunity to make their views known through the school council. This is still developing as the representatives have only had a short time to practise their roles. All classes from Reception to Year 6 are represented. Older pupils with special educational needs are involved in their reviews, but suitable methods for involving younger pupils need to be developed.

31. Other examples of accessibility for pupils were in the structure of tasks given, and the careful steps that teachers put in to ensure understanding before moving on. There is an identification system for able pupils and a policy is included in the school's comprehensive prospectus. A special abilities pro-forma is included in the planning file in classes but the approach to providing challenging extension activities for the more able pupils is not consistent. In Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to follow special interests in humanities subjects under the categories of transport, fashion and textiles, technology and sport.

32. The new governing body has had information about the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice from the special educational needs co-ordinator. Several of the governors have undertaken training through the borough's training unit and have begun a visiting programme in the school. Since the opening of the new school governors have become more active in their role, having allocated responsibilities for subjects and aspects of the running of the school. The governors were unsure of their ethnic representation and how to involve the parents of the majority ethnic groups. There are, however some good initial links on which this aspect can be built. The English lessons for parents who are at an early stage of learning the language take place in the school, in conjunction with the borough's adult education providers. Parents also learn about the

English education system, which enables them to participate more in the life of their children at school.

33. There are some useful links with Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist and Christian community groups, the Business Education Partnership and a national chain of shops that are helping with the school's environmental project. The school has developed links with Kingston University and there are four students on initial teacher training placements. The school is improving its capacity for providing training for both students and established staff. A private school in Wimbledon regularly performs drama productions for pupils and provides volunteers that help in the autistic unit. They also have good links with two borough secondary schools, one of which provides technical help for information and communication technology and the other for curriculum support in information and communication technology.

34. The school now undertakes day trips that pupils have not previously experienced. It also has a regular programme of visitors who contribute to and enrich the curriculum opportunities. The community police regularly contribute to assemblies, as do visitors from different faiths.

35. The assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual development and hold their interest. Ripples of anticipation and enjoyment can be heard during the stories, questions and giving of information. Pupils in the lower age ranges demonstrate most enthusiasm and staff employ successful strategies to engage Year 6 pupils. For instance, during the Celebration Assembly the acting headteacher enlisted the help of some willing Year 6 pupils to role-play in the story of Barabas. The structure of assemblies is good and gives pupils opportunities to participate actively rather as passive recipients of information. Good resources and artefacts are used effectively to capture interest and members of staff choose the music for the week. Related to the music, questions are displayed on the overhead projector, that require thought and reflection. One question poses an opportunity for pupils to carry out research during the week. Pupils have the opportunity to see staff trying new things as well, such as the teacher who had recently begun to learn to play the oboe. This underpins the 'You Can Do It' ethos, as do the few moments of reflection and quiet thinking time linked to their faith. As a final incentive, a singing judge decides which class is making efforts to sing well, and at the end of the week the singing cup is awarded. However, pupils' spiritual development is not as well developed as it could be since these good practices do not carry over sufficiently into the rest of the curriculum. One example was observed in a Year 6 class, when a boy read out a moving poem about the caring characteristics of his father.

36. The moral and social development of pupils in the school is a strength due to the commitment of staff and pupils to the 'You Can Do It' programme. The programme concentrates on promoting positive mind-sets to academic work and eliminating negative attitudes in social and emotional aspects. Lesson plans and strategies for staff to directly teach pupils support the four key areas of getting along, organisation, persistence and confidence. The 'getting along' aspect was the first to be taught, as this was an immediate priority at the beginning of the new school year. The staff have achieved very good results in only two terms. This is because of the consistency and regularity with which staff approach the subject, ensuring that the principles permeate the whole curriculum, both academic and social. Pupils are well on their way to developing a mature attitude to problems and are showing signs of being able to understand the consequences of their behaviour or think of strategies to cope with a variety of feelings. One Year 4 pupil was able to say that although she loved to dance, she was shy in front of an audience. Her strategy to overcome this was to think that she was at home in front of a mirror with no audience. Opportunities for pupils' to develop their initiative and creativity are not as well developed as their relationships with each other.

37. The cultural development of the school is good. Pupils are developing useful links with ethnic groups to enhance the understanding of pupils. One of the major representative groups is Korean and opportunities are created for other pupils to experience Korean culture. For example, a pupil was encouraged to tell a story from Korea containing a moral. There are a number of banners with Korean script, which have a positive impact on the school environment. There are also examples of pupils writing stories in Korean script. Cultural references can be seen in many of the curriculum displays; particularly in the humanities and art but also in mathematics, where examples of games are given, and references to mathematics across cultures are made. The governors and

parents have planned an international evening to encourage parents to participate in school life to support their children's education.

Special educational needs

38. A significant number of pupils in the school have been identified as needing additional support. The provision made for these pupils is good and is very well led and managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator. There are effective procedures for identifying pupils who are causing concern. The support planned and provided for them is very well co-ordinated. It ensures that pupils are fully included in lessons and provided with learning opportunities and work that enables them to achieve and make good progress.

39. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers plan learning opportunities that match their abilities. They effectively adapt work for pupils so that they are able to complete tasks successfully, which boosts their self esteem and encourages pupils to have positive attitudes to learning. Teachers provide good support for pupils during lessons and this enables them to participate effectively. For example, teachers adapt their questions to help pupils recall information: this enables them to contribute effectively to discussions. When pupils are given individual tasks to complete, teachers ensure that they receive enough support and encouragement to complete them successfully.

40. When teachers prepare lessons, they carefully consider the targets that have been identified for any pupils who have individual education plans. This contributes to the good progress that pupils make because teachers provide them with plenty of opportunities to rehearse their understanding and to practise their skills. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides very good support for teachers by monitoring the progress made by pupils on the special needs register and by providing advice for teachers.

41. Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and the monitoring of their progress are good. The targets identified for pupils who have an individual education plan or a behaviour management plan are reviewed on a regular basis so that the targets reflect their needs and promote improvement. The special educational needs coordinator has appropriate plans to widen the range of assessment materials used by the school so that it can improve the information it has about pupils attainment and progress through standardised tests.

42. The statutory procedures for a pupil who has a statement of special educational need are met well and the annual review of a pupil's statement is carried out effectively. The annual review report provides parents with good information about their child's level of achievement, and the range of learning experiences they have had. The type of provision needed by pupils, as outlined in their statement, is fully met by the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. There is very good provision for the welfare of pupils. Staff know the pupils well and enjoy good relationships with them making sure they feel safe and secure. The introduction of the "You can do it" programme helps to boost pupils' self esteem and gives them the confidence to express themselves in lessons; for example, in a mathematics lesson when the teaching assistant offered to help a pupil he whispered, "I can do it". The personal approach of the acting headteacher and the deputy headteacher play an important part in this because they offer much support to pupils and parents.

44. Pupils' welfare is well considered throughout the school day. The well secured and equipped playground makes play times happy occasions. There are very good arrangements in place for pupils' and staff members' health and safety. The well-designed foyer is decorated to the highest standard and is most welcoming. The manager and the local authority carry out regular risk assessments of the premises. Health and safety procedures both in the classroom and also throughout the school are very good.

45. Child protection is the subject of appropriate school policy and staff guidance. There is a designated senior member of staff with responsibility for co-ordinating arrangements and ensuring all adults in the school are aware of procedures. There is good regular in-service training for staff and new staff are informed about what to do as part of their induction. The school has effective links with outside agencies and social services.

46. There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance. Any unexplained absences are quickly followed up. Lateness is followed efficiently. There are close links with the education welfare services and registers meet statutory requirements. The school endeavours to dissuade parents from taking family holidays during term time, but it has not been as successful as it would wish.

47. Simple rules are clearly and regularly reinforced and pupils know what is expected of them. Pupils value reward systems, and the "Star of the Week" is on display for pupils and parents to see. Poor behaviour is very well managed in the classroom and by the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher. Circle time, assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons allow pupils to discuss issues that may lead to poor behaviour

48. Induction of new pupils with English as a second language is good. The school has successfully printed a welcome pack in six different languages that helps parents to understand the school routines and what their children are learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school is beginning to forge effective links with parents. The newly formed Friends Of West Wimbledon Association is making a significant contribution to this aspect of the school. The recent newsletter was well constructed and contained information about fundraising events, news, views and how the money raised is spent. The recent survey carried out by the school is being analysed to identify and target parents' strengths and where they may be better placed. The school is always seeking new and better ways to improve this partnership further.

50. The quality of information provided to parents is very good. The school has recently introduced a comprehensive newsletter and there is regular communication between staff and parents. Communication is effective and there are very good partnerships with parents of children who have special educational needs. For pupils from ethnic minority groups there is a welcome pack in their home language. The school prospectus is very informative. There has not been a governors' report to parents as this is the first academic year of the new school. The end of year reports due to be sent out shortly are informative and point out pupils' strengths and weaknesses: the annual parents' evening is used to discuss pupils' progress.

51. Parents think very highly of the school. A high percentage responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire, and over 90 per cent were happy with every aspect of the school's work. They appreciate the wide range of after-school activities available.

52. The home-school reading book provides parents with a high level of dialogue about their children's education and progress. The school is working hard to involve parents through a wide range of activities. These include workshops to explain the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and national tests. Opportunities for parents to view their children's work and become involved in their child's learning are satisfactory. The school actively encourages parents to use the school to enhance their own learning and at present runs classes on Fridays for parents with English as a second language. The well-structured school prospectus, effective newsletters and the home-school diary, which pupils and parents use, all make a significant contribution to the partnership between home and school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

53. The newly appointed acting headteacher has already made a significant impact within the two terms in which she has been in post. She immediately, and successfully, set about uniting the

two different teams of staff into one cohesive team. She has very quickly assessed the main strengths and areas of development within the school and significant improvements have already been achieved. This can clearly be seen in the new arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning and in improved behaviour. This in turn is starting to have a positive effect upon raising standards. She is restoring the confidence of staff in their teaching ability so that there is now a good commitment to improvement. A very positive aspect has been the introduction of 'You can do it', throughout the school. The four key elements of the programme, confidence, persistence, getting along and organisation permeate the ethos of the school. This in turn is creating a school which is rapidly improving and justifiably proud of its new achievements.

54. There was no long term strategic or school improvement plan before the current acting headteacher took over. The acting headteacher with the involvement of the staff has written a good and relevant school development plan and a school improvement plan. The school improvement plan is underpinned by plans devised by subject co-ordinators for their individual areas of responsibility. In English and mathematics, the coordinator's roles are well developed. In other subjects they are mostly developing well, although there is room for further development in monitoring teaching. There are good plans to develop curriculum teams from the start of the school year. This will ensure that curriculum development is fully instigated and will in turn help to raise standards.

55. Representatives of the governors interviewed during the course of the inspection showed that they really cared for the school. They are now fully staffed having had vacancies on the governing body for quite a while. They are beginning to become more proactive and involved in the school than they have been previously, this is happening through the encouragement and support of the current acting headteacher. The governing body is aware that it needs to become more reliant on itself and to develop the role of 'critical friend' to a greater degree. Governors have a planned programme of visits to the school drawn up by the acting headteacher and this allows them to develop a more detailed knowledge and understanding of the strengths and areas of development within the school. The governing body fulfils its statutory requirements.

56. The school has suitably qualified and experienced teachers to teach the demands of the curriculum. The acting headteacher worked very hard at the beginning of the year to unite the two separate staff. The use of a commercially produced scheme specifically to develop good working relationships has really united the staff and they work well together as a team.

57. The school's accommodation is good. Recent building works in order to accommodate the younger children have been successfully completed. The rest of the school has been newly decorated and good displays create an effective and stimulating learning environment. The grounds and school are well maintained.

58. The school's rapidly improving standards and the quality of teaching and very good leadership and management by the acting headteacher means that the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order for the school to continue to improve the acting headteacher, governors and staff should:

1. Raise standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science for pupils by the end of Year 6.
 - a) Raise attainment in writing in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - continuing to improve pupils' spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
 - developing further ways for pupils to know what they need to do to reach the next level of attainment.(paragraphs; 1-5, 72 – 80, 131)
 - b) Improve levels of attainment in mathematics in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - providing demonstration lessons and working with teachers for improvement;
 - consistently providing extension work for more able pupils;
 - assessing and providing for any gaps in learning, especially in Years 3 to 6;
 - developing pupils' greater understanding of mathematics through problem solving to encourage autonomous thinking and creative effort;
 - promoting pupils' better understanding of their progress by involving them in target setting and self evaluation of their work.(paragraphs; 1 - 5, 87 – 100)
 - c) Improve levels of attainment in science by;
 - developing pupils' scientific enquiry, so that they extend their scientific language and make more use of their own ideas in their scientific investigations;
 - ensuring that teachers plan work so that the more able pupils are sufficiently challenged;
 - increasing the knowledge and understanding and responsibilities of the coordinator's role.(paragraphs; 1 - 5, 101 – 107)

Minor issue

To improve attendance for the minority of pupils who are persistently poor attendees.
(paragraph; 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

71

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	0	11	39	19	2	0	0
Percentage	0	15	55	27	3	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 – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	29	270
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		54

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		17
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		88

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	83

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	40
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	8.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	33	18	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	14	14
	Girls	14	10	11
	Total	25	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	49 (70)	47 (69)	49 (81)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	16	14
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	25	30	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	50 (75)	59 (69)	55 (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	105	2	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	18	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	5	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	15	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	7	0	0
Black or Black British – African	11	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	6	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	8	0	0

No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0
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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 – Y7

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y7

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	247

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	13
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65
Number of pupils per FTE adult	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	1,070,218
Total expenditure	1,030,396
Expenditure per pupil	4,041
Balance brought forward from previous year	35,130
Balance carried forward to next year	74,952

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	17.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16.3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	280
Number of questionnaires returned	63

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	35	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	46	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	51	3	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	43	11	0	13
The teaching is good.	62	37	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	46	6	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	27	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	27	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	52	46	0	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	65	29	2	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	41	0	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	44	40	0	2	14

The main comments made by parents were to do with how much the school has improved since the commencement of the school year in September. Parents were unanimous in their views.

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

60. Children get a good start to their education in the nursery. They enter the nursery from a wide variety of backgrounds, with many at an early stage of their ability to communicate in English. Speaking and listening skills are varied, as are social experiences. All classes have a positive approach to including all children; children from 'Treetops' attend some lessons each day. The teaching is good overall in all the classes and this is having a positive effect on the children's learning. All the classrooms and the outside area provide the children with a stimulating learning environment.

61. The Foundation Stage is well managed. Teaching is regularly monitored and there is good teamwork. This means resources are effectively shared and attainments are regularly discussed. As aspects of planning are also shared, good continuity of children's learning across the two year groups is ensured. Perceptive assessments result in staff knowing the children's abilities very well and using this information to plan an appropriate curriculum. There are end of year teacher assessments in numeracy and writing. A tracking sheet is planned to be introduced for reading, writing and mathematics. Nursery nurses make a valuable contribution to children's education, although support staff are not always effectively deployed during class activities. Overall, children are likely to achieve in the six areas of learning, with the exception of communication, language and literacy. Although children make good progress in this area, overall their attainment is below national expectations. This is partly due to the increasing numbers of children with English as an additional language in the Foundation Stage.

PERSONAL SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

62. Children's personal and social skills vary considerably on entry to nursery. Staff from the nursery visit new children at home and use this information to ensure that children's needs are met to help them to settle quickly. Staff encourage children to feel confident about what they can achieve. They are sensitive to children's potential isolation; for example, a child with English as an additional language is encouraged by staff to join other children playing a game. This type of skilful teaching ensures children get a good start and by the time they leave Reception most are achieving the early learning goals in this area. In all classes, children are enthusiastic about their learning and keen to take part. Teaching is good and behaviour is usually good. Staff give children clear boundaries for behaviour and effectively focus on praising children for behaving well and trying hard. Relationships are generally good and children are learning to interact politely, for example, saying 'please' and 'thank you'.

63. Overall, there is a good balance of activities directed by staff and those the children initiate for themselves, particularly outside. When given the opportunity, children confidently select what they want to do and many concentrate for periods of time without supervision. This is supported by the way the rooms are organised, as many resources are easily accessible. Reception aged children show good self-care; they are able to undress and dress independently for physical education and take responsibility for collecting their clothes from the cloakroom. Displays and resources are attractive and reflect the experiences of the children. For example, children have made model bagels, pizzas and samosas for the role-play shop.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

64. By the time they start Year 1, many children are unlikely to achieve the expected standard in communication, language and literacy. However, they make good progress, because of good teaching, as a significant number of children enter the nursery with little or no English. Consequently some children listen to adults and their peers and show some understanding, but answer questions with gestures or just one-word answers. Staff place emphasis on developing children's skills by providing meaningful, practical activities, such as role-play, and model spoken

English accurately. Bi-lingual staff also support children's progress, for example, by taking them for story time. Progress in speaking and listening skills are evident. By the time the children get to Reception, they show increasing confidence. For example, during a story about Ananse children knew the names of the animals. Teachers take the opportunity to introduce new words, such as 'yam'. They listen well to the teacher's explanations and as they touch and smell a yam, they share their thoughts and discuss how Ananse might have felt at the end of the story. All children enjoy listening to stories and sharing them with adults. During a circle time session in the nursery, children listened well to the story of The Three Bears. Visual aids such as teddies, chairs and beds supported their learning effectively. Many children know familiar lines from stories, such as 'Who's been sleeping in my bed?' and enjoy using their voice to express the characteristics of the three bears.

65. Elements of the National Literacy Framework are introduced throughout the Reception year. They are used appropriately to meet the needs of the children. In some lessons, children were sitting for long periods, which affected the concentration of some. A good understanding of letter sounds is supported by the use of a published scheme. Higher achieving children identify the initial sounds of unfamiliar words; other children know some of the letter sounds, but find it difficult to link these to words or to write the letters correctly. Children of all ages are encouraged to experiment with their own writing in meaningful ways, such as writing menus or shopping lists in the role-play café. Similarly, reading is developed in a meaningful way; print around the rooms such as 'Café open' or 'Please pay here' encourages children to read as they play. A selection of different types of books is accessible and children often choose to look at them. Some older children recognise words such as 'the' 'a' and 'here' when shown on flash cards, although more can identify them when they are within a more meaningful context of a story.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

66. Children's mathematical abilities are very varied when they start the nursery. Some children, particularly those with English as an additional language, have difficulty using and understanding the language associated with practical mathematics. However, good teaching and an appropriate focus on the subject, in all the classes, results in children making good progress. Consequently, most children are likely to reach the expected standards by the time they enter Year 1. Teaching appropriately focuses on developing the children's understanding and use of mathematical vocabulary. Through listening to The Three Bears' story, nursery children begin to use new vocabulary, such as 'medium' and 'tall' and 'wide'. Clear explanations and good use of visual aids support the children's learning and motivate them. For example, more able children suggest a solution to the problem of the big teddy that cannot get into the model house. They suggest, 'make the door wider'. This shows successful problem solving skills and reflects children's application of new words.

67. In the nursery, children are introduced to numbers and counting through rhymes and stories and by counting objects as they play. In the Reception classes, more formal activities for mathematics are effectively introduced. These lessons are well taught and children make good progress. Practical activities support learning; for example, by dividing up spots onto two sides of a ladybird picture. Children learn about number bonds up to six, or up to ten depending on their ability. Good teaching reaffirms these concepts as children are supported in writing what they have learnt in the form of sums. Most children can find one more or one less than a number from one to ten. More able children confidently count objects up to 12 and can write, recognise and order the numbers independently. In Reception, most children create repeating patterns of two colours, with the more able extending this to four colours.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

68. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is, overall, below average when they enter the nursery. They make good progress so that they are on target to meet recommended levels for their age by the end of the Reception year. The good curriculum offers them a wide range of experiences to extend their knowledge of the world around them. For example, children from 'Treetops' show curiosity as, together, they stir the ingredients for making salt-dough. In this

activity, staff support children's learning through reiterating what is happening and encouraging them to observe. In the nursery, children's curiosity is developed as they show interest in what is going on around them, for example watching closely as adults' plant and water tubs in the garden. Children use all their senses as they play with soapsuds and attempt to make ice-cream cones. These types of experiences are built upon in the Reception classes. For example, children handle and explore how objects work, including egg slicers and tongs. They learn about the properties of everyday objects and can sort them depending on whether they are made from metal, wood, plastic or fabric. Such activities develop curiosity and observation. Older children are beginning to record some of their activities, for example, how to make toast. Good consideration is given to developing children's understanding of the wide range of cultures and backgrounds that are represented in the school and its community, through listening to stories from around the world and by providing resources in role-play that reflect a variety of cultures.

69. Children's skills and understanding of information and communication technology are particularly good. Children from the Reception classes have regular access to the computer suite. They try and identify objects placed under the microscope that is linked to the computer and shown magnified on a screen. This generates some discussion and children are beginning to make connections with their learning. For example they identified a paperclip and recalled what it is made from, having learnt this in a previous lesson. In Reception classes, children independently use the computer, showing well-developed control of the mouse. For example, a child was observed using an art package and changed the colour and type of paintbrush independently. Some of the pictures are displayed in the room. Most Reception children are able to write their name using the keyboard. These activities reflect good independent learning, the fostering of which is a strength throughout the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is good, lessons are well planned and children develop their knowledge and understanding by taking part in practical activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

70. Children are likely to achieve recommended levels by the end of the Reception year. The new outside area attached to the Reception and nursery classes provides a challenging and interesting learning environment where children can gain confidence and skills. Nursery children confidently steer scooters and tricycles around a painted track. As they do so, they show an awareness of space as they try and avoid collisions. The fixed climbing equipment provides a challenge for all the children as they climb, balance and jump. Progress is evident. In Reception, children use equipment in the hall. After they warm-up they recognise the changes that take place in their body with exercise as the teacher refers to their hearts beating faster. Children safely put out equipment. They are able to travel in different ways using different parts of their body, showing confidence and control. Effective use is made of the children's ideas and efforts. Many opportunities are provided for children to gain experience in handling a variety of tools and they are developing confidence in cutting, sticking and controlling paintbrushes and writing equipment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

71. Children start in the nursery with average creative ability, but make good progress through good teaching, so that by the time they leave Reception they are in line with standards expected nationally for children of their age. This is due to the good opportunities staff provide, particularly in the nursery. Activities provided encourage children to respond with different senses; for example, observing and feeling soapsuds transfixes them. They explore the texture as they try pouring the suds and squeezing them through sponges. Staff encourage responses and children use their imagination, pretending to 'mix a cake' or saying the suds are like jam. In the nursery, children join in with songs using musical instruments and spontaneously move to the beats. In Reception, children explore colour and shape through marble painting, printing with different objects and using computer art packages. They have made food for the role-play area using different textured materials, such as papers, cards and salt dough. A good emphasis is placed on role-play in all the classes. This successfully supports learning as it is related to children's own experiences, such as a café, or familiar stories, for example, the Three Bears' house. Adults successfully model how to play in these areas and so children take on roles and begin to communicate their ideas. By the

time they are in Reception, most children can co-operate in imaginary play using the equipment provided.

ENGLISH

72. In National Curriculum tests in 2002 in English, seven-year-old pupils attained below average standards when compared with schools nationally. Their results were closer to average in writing and well below in reading when compared to similar schools. Test results for 11-year-olds for 2002 show pupils are well below average when compared with schools nationally and when compared with similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are average at the end of Year 2. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. School records over the last year show good improvement, and that individuals are achieving well, especially in reading. The National Literacy Strategy and the work that the school is doing on assessment and target setting have contributed to this improvement in standards. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make good progress. This is because the school promotes an inclusive policy that recognises the distinct needs of individual pupils and has very carefully and systematically worked out what needs to be done to support these pupils' learning. The higher attaining pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 6.

73. Standards in speaking and listening are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. One of the reasons for this is that teachers are skilful at questioning pupils. They elicit extended speech and language when requiring pupils to explain their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to engage in discussions about their work. In Years 1 and 2 pupils listen attentively to their teacher and each other. A good proportion speak confidently about their ideas. For example, after listening to the story 'Funny Bones' pupils were keen to discuss the characters in the story and suggested many interesting words in their responses. Although those pupils who are learning English as an additional language do not always communicate their ideas well, they listen carefully to their teacher and contribute to the discussions that are a central part of the English curriculum. A circle time in one Year 1/2 class demonstrated the progress made by all pupils in speaking and listening as each one spoke with confidence about their thoughts and feelings of what they like about their friends. From Year 3 to Year 6, pupils make good gains in the range of vocabulary they use when they talk. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils listen well and make appropriate contributions based upon their understanding. Teachers provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to speak and listen in a different setting to a different audience. For example, putting forward arguments for and against the playing of football in the playground. In a Year 6 poetry lesson, the good teaching resulted in pupils enriching their use of imaginative language to produce a class poem. They were particularly enthusiastic and developed their ideas well, volunteering phrases such as, '*My skin may be brown and bruised and I bend like a boomerang. But inside I'm safe and tender.*'

74. Standards in reading are average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. However, the school's current focus on reading is beginning to pay dividends and pupils are achieving well. In Year 2, pupils' basic reading skills, such as the use of phonics and knowledge of key vocabulary, are well established. Teachers take every opportunity to extend and consolidate pupils' reading skills and as a result many pupils can read simple texts competently. Big-book sessions are used effectively. For example, pupils in one Year 1/2 class were beginning to compare the different stories written by Allan Ahlberg and because the teacher asked pertinent questions they were able to discuss their preferences. Reading is appropriately fluent and higher attaining pupils, in particular, read with expression. Most pupils talk readily about the books that they are reading and also voice opinions about other books they have enjoyed. Home-school reading diaries are used well by teachers and parents to improve pupils' reading.

75. By the end of Year 6, most pupils accurately read an appropriate range of texts, have a broad understanding of the main points and can discuss some aspects of characters and plot. However, few pupils have the skill to make use of inference in order to understand subtleties in texts. Most love reading and express some preferences about authors and their personal reading. Guided reading sessions in each class are used extremely well to introduce pupils to a sufficiently challenging range of reading materials and to assess what pupils need to do next in order to

improve. Pupils know that contents pages and indexes are a means of finding information quickly but in general their library referencing skills are insufficiently developed. Their skills in retrieving information from a variety of sources, such as reports, magazines, and articles and through the Internet, are satisfactory.

76. In writing, standards are average by the end of Year 2. Pupils enter Year 1 with limited writing skills. They make good progress and by the end of Year 2, most pupils write simple stories with accurate spelling of simple words and correct use of capital letters and full stops. Most pupils have developed a good idea of structure, with stories having a beginning, middle and end. They achieve well in developing imaginative writing. Most pupils are developing a good range of interesting vocabulary and descriptive words are used particularly well when writing poems. For example, as part of a poem based around the theme of bubbles, a child wrote, *Bubbles with loads of sparkling beautiful lights, Lovely, gorgeous, wonderful, tiny sparkly lines*. Through well-planned work in the literacy hour they write for a variety of purposes. Handwriting is usually well formed and legible. Presentation is satisfactory.

77. By the end of Year 6 attainment in writing is below average. However, writing has significantly improved since the start of the school year. Achievement is good because a strong and appropriate emphasis is placed on writing in each class. Higher attaining pupils understand how to plan a story and make a good beginning that engages the reader's attention and then build up interest. For example, when writing a story entitled 'Honest' a pupil began, *Chloe was on her way to school. As usual the wind blew her mousy hair everywhere and forced her to close her small brown eyes. Chloe was a lonely girl who desperately wanted to make friends*. They are using writing for a range of purposes, such as letters, personal experiences, instructions, play scripts and poetry. Higher attaining pupils use paragraphs, correct punctuation, and sound grammatical structures and good quality vocabulary to enrich their writing. However, work sampling indicates that there are few pupils who use complex sentences and, whilst their choice of vocabulary is improving, it is not rich enough to reach the higher standards. Handwriting is joined but not always as neat as it could be and there are considerable variations in pupils' spelling and the consistent use of basic punctuation. The development of literacy skills across the curriculum is good. An effective range of opportunities is provided for pupils to write in other subjects such as science, history and information and communication technology, which enables them to apply the skills they have learned.

78. The quality of teaching is consistently good with some lessons very good. There are particular strengths in the ways teachers use their knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy to plan and adapt work that motivates pupils to work hard. Teachers are skilful at asking questions to extend the pupils' ideas and help them to think imaginatively. At the beginning of lessons teachers help pupils to understand what is expected of them by discussing what they are going to learn. They engage pupils' interest and sustain motivation throughout the session by the choice of resources and the good use of the whiteboard. Strengths of the teaching of English and its impact on learning were well illustrated in a Year 6 poetry lesson. The teacher quickly engaged the pupils' interest and attention by her confident presentation of a poem entitled 'This Cake'. A sense of fun and enjoyment was introduced which promoted the pupils' learning well. Resources such as jelly and crisps were used effectively to draw out pupils' responses and activities were sharply focused to meet the lesson's objectives. The teacher's clear explanations and infectious enthusiasm maintained a lively pace and motivated the pupils to learn. In the parallel Year 6 class the teacher effectively used the poem 'Orange and Pineapple' to develop pupils use of metaphors in their poetry writing. All pupils understood the task because of the careful teaching and skilful questioning, which led pupils' thinking into extending their ideas. As a result, one child produced a very moving poem about his father:

*My dad is the start of a growing apple
fresh, smooth and living apple,
He is ready to go out there and live,
My dad is like a playing harp,
Kind, helpful and whorming (warming) to everyone,
His feelings is like an angel
Kind helpful and caring.*

79. The quality of marking is good. This and the individual targets set for pupils that are reviewed regularly ensure that they know exactly what they must do to improve their work. Good records are kept of the pupils' progress that ensure that work is planned in the light of these records. Learning support assistants are in general well deployed and provide particularly good support to pupils with special educational needs so that the progress that they make is good. However, there are occasions when they are not always deployed efficiently at the beginning of literacy lessons.

80. Leadership in English is very good. The literacy co-ordinator is committed and conscientious and has worked extremely hard to raise standards throughout the school. Her monitoring role in classroom observation, planning and sampling pupils' work is sufficiently well developed to enable her to have a good overview of the subject and give professional guidance to other teachers. Assessment is thorough and teachers now track and analyse pupils' progress systematically. The analysis of tests and pupils' work resulted in the school prioritising the need to improve pupils' reading. This resulted in the school taking guided reading out of the literacy hour and giving it more focus in a separate slot on the timetable. This has been successful and reading across the school has shown a significant improvement. Resources in English are satisfactory overall and each year group is adequately equipped with a range of books to support the literacy hour. The school library has undergone a complete overhaul and is now bright, spacious and offers a real invitation to read. A comprehensive audit of books was undertaken and although it found that there were some gaps in the provision, the books that are available are of good quality. The computerisation of the library is well under way. The subject is enhanced by visits to the theatre, book week, puppet shows and a poet visiting the school. Overall, the school is well placed for further improvements.

Provision for Pupils who are learning English as an Additional Language

81. More than a quarter of pupils come from family backgrounds where English is not spoken, and a few are newcomers to English. Provision for children with English as an additional language is good.

82. In the Reception classes, the rich learning environment helps pupils make good progress in speaking and listening. Staff encourage pupils to talk with each other and to other adults through lots of different practical activities, for example, playing with a wide range of imaginative role-play activities and talking about construction tasks. These allow pupils to make good progress in speaking and listening.

83. Working with partners and in small groups is well established in classrooms throughout the school, and this also supports bilingual pupils who are working alongside their English-speaking classmates well.

84. Teachers' planning pays good attention to detail of specific vocabulary which is needed for all pupils to have equal access to the curriculum. This is clearly explained during lessons so that pupils develop a clearer understanding of subjects and new topics.

85. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. The part-time Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant teachers (EMAG) give good support to the small number of pupils who are in the initial stages of learning English. The acting headteacher has overall responsibility for the monitoring of differentiation in the curriculum to help support the learning of bilingual pupils. The school uses the local educational authority's recommendations of assessing the different stages of language development which their bilingual pupils are at. This is initially done by the class teacher and pupils receive support from the EMAG teachers within classes in small groups and with individual support when it is deemed necessary.

86. Parents at the parents' meeting who speak English as an additional language were full of praise about how supportive the school is in helping their children to learn English and to support

them in having access to the National Curriculum. The school also runs⁶ESOL classes for parents and children which not only supports their learning of English but also teaches parents about the education system so that they can support their children's learning as well.

MATHEMATICS

87. Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 are satisfactory overall, which represents an improvement on the previous year's results. Pupils' skills on entry to school are slightly below average. However, the school documents show a significant improvement in the number of higher attaining pupils in Year 6 compared to last year, rising from 13 per cent to 39 per cent.

88. At the end of Year 6, pupils are achieving below expected standards. The school assessment documents show that at the end of Year 5 more than half of pupils were working well below expectations and results were very poor, whilst only about 10 per cent were assessed as able to achieve higher attainment. There is a high proportion of pupils who receive support for their learning either because they are on the special needs register or they are at the early stages of learning English.

89. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are grouped for numeracy to form a Year 1, a mixed Year 1 and 2 and a Year 2 group of higher ability, the latter made up mainly of girls. They are secure in their knowledge of numbers, and are making good progress in their use of different methods including the ability to explain them. Pupils have good knowledge in most of the areas in mathematics, word problems as well as number problems. Pupils demonstrate good mental arithmetic, including pupils with English as an additional language.

90. Because of low attainment, arrangements were made at the beginning of the school year to implement extra classes, immediately for Year 6. Four ability groups were formed from the two classes and by the spring term, teachers recorded significant progress against pupils' predicted attainment. At the time of the inspection, pupils were back in their mixed ability classes.

91. At the beginning of the year, teachers analysed the previous Year 6's tests to determine the extent of pupils' knowledge about the different aspects of mathematics. This showed that pupils had most difficulty with word-related problem solving and was linked to their low attainment in literacy. For instance, Year 6 pupils could accurately add decimals in the form of money calculations at the beginning of the lesson but had greater difficulty when applying their knowledge to word problems. The more able were challenged to feed a family of four from the Chinese restaurant menu for under £30 then calculate 15 per cent discount and add another item to the bill. Whilst they managed to find the correct dishes to add up close to £30 and calculate 15 per cent, some did not know the word *discount* so were unable to complete the problem. Pupils follow instructions very well but show little initiative and creativity that will deepen their mathematical understanding. This is linked to insufficient attention to the investigational aspects of mathematics and gaps in some pupils' learning.

92. Clear evidence of progress in a Year 6 mathematics lesson was seen when a more able pupil explained to his less able partner that 7.3 on the calculator meant £7.30 because the calculator does not show the zero and they were working with money. When the class teacher also picked up on this with other pupils later and asked the class, the partner put up her hand and was able to explain correctly. This same pupil was motivated to volunteer to explain her processes for the exercise and was inspired to tell her partner, 'Confidence!' the 'You Can Do It' focus for the term.

93. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, with some examples of very good teaching amongst older pupils. Teachers throughout the school mostly develop work for the majority of different groups appropriately. There was a very good example of challenging work in a class at the lower end of the juniors when the class teacher presented pupils with two step

⁶ ESOL – English as an additional language

word problems. Many could carry out the task well due to the very clear step by step teaching. Less able pupils were very well supported by this approach whilst the more able pupils were given extra tasks to extend their thinking. The group activities complemented the whole class teaching very well and the more able group demonstrated their abilities by completing a number of word problems accurately. However, whilst pupils with special educational needs and those who are less able across the school have work presented to them which matches their abilities and helps them progress well, those with higher ability are not consistently challenged. Whilst all teachers have a system of identifying potentially high attaining pupils, further development in providing challenge for them is needed.

94. The pace of learning is appropriate and teachers vary this according to circumstances. A good example was seen in a Year 5 class where the pupils were responding slowly to each task initially, linking fractions, decimals and percentages. After careful explanation of what they had to do, the teacher increased the rate of questioning to speed up their thinking.

95. Throughout the school mathematics is presented very positively. There are very good displays in classes and corridors, which give pupils opportunities to participate in puzzles, research and questioning, including mathematical fact of the day and brainteasers. Teachers use games and logic puzzles in class to increase motivation and thinking skills. For instance, a puzzle was posed for a class where they had to guess the number the teacher was thinking of by asking questions to which she could only answer yes or no. They started with 'Is it odd or even?' but quickly understood that it was only necessary to ask if it was one of them.

96. The National Numeracy Strategy is well presented throughout the school. The mathematics co-ordinator worked with the strategy consultant at the beginning of the year and priorities for support were drawn up. Infant classes were targeted initially and subsequently Years 5 and 6 had support. This was especially important for Year 6 who had four teachers during their previous year with consequent difficulties in achieving appropriate standards. Good support is given to overseas-trained teachers, particularly where it is possible to plan across year groups.

97. Teachers execute the three-part lesson well. Lesson objectives are explained and available for pupils to see. Most pupils have personal targets in their books but there is little development of their own target setting and self-evaluation to help them gain a better understanding of their progress. Where teaching is good, whole-class lessons feature clear explanations, open questions leading pupils through stages to build on their understanding and time to allow pupils to explain how the answers are arrived at. The whole-class session at the end is used well to check pupils' understanding against the learning objective.

98. Weekly planning is structured well, with individual education plans supplementing where necessary, and supported by medium and long-term plans. School improvement planning features mathematics as a major priority because of the need to raise standards in the subject. A mathematics resource base supplements class resources. Teachers use a good balance of commercial schemes, workbooks and sheets alongside the numeracy strategy and National Curriculum programmes of study. Other resources such as number fans and whiteboards are used well and the co-ordinator is building up a bank of software to support the subject. Information and communication technology was used regularly during the week of the inspection to support the topics being covered.

99. The management of mathematics is of good quality, particularly in the monitoring of planning and analysis of statutory and non-statutory test materials to track pupils' progress. Observation and demonstration lessons in mathematics are less well developed and need to be planned for, particularly for new and overseas-trained staff to continue improvement in teaching. Whilst assessment processes are good they need refining to identify gaps in teaching and learning.

100. There are clear signs that standards of attainment are beginning to improve by the time pupils are aged seven and eleven. Although results remain below average at the end of Year 6, there has been rapid progress since September from a very low base. This progress is due to the

good teaching, planning and assessment but can be further improved by regular demonstrations and observations of the subject by lead mathematics teachers.

SCIENCE

101. Attainment in science is below the average found nationally for pupils at the end of Year 6. This is an improvement; before the amalgamation of the school the attainment at the end of Year 6 was judged to be well below national standards and in the bottom five per cent of all schools nationally. Currently, the overall attainment of pupils at the end of Year 2, based on teacher assessment, is broadly in line with the national average. Inspection evidence also indicates that standards for pupils currently in Year 2 are similar to those expected nationally.

102. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress. Throughout the school science makes a contribution to other subjects; literacy skills are improving as pupils write about methods of experiments and report their results. Numeracy skills are supported as tables and graphs are used to display results of scientific experiments. The use of information and communication technology to support science work is also good. For example, pupils use computers to record and compare results, record scientific events with digital cameras and use computer-based microscopes in the information and communication technology suite.

103. Pupils in Year 2 know that living things need certain conditions in which to thrive. For example, they know that frogs grow and reproduce. Pupils are able to make an accurate chart of the life cycle. Scientific words such as 'lungs' and 'frog spawn' are introduced in lessons, although few pupils use these in discussion about their work. In a Year 1/2 lesson pupils make observations of sunflower seeds that are growing. They know the conditions that plants need to grow; they explain why seeds kept in a cupboard and those given no water do not thrive. Previous work shows pupils can group different materials according to their properties. They understand how batteries, bulbs and clips work in circuits. There is evidence of pupils making predictions and doing experiments to test these. For example, pupils built model cars and compared their speeds on ramps of varying gradients.

104. Most pupils in Year 6 have acquired sound knowledge and understanding in the areas of science they have been taught. For example, whilst exploring absorbency, pupils are able to predict the outcome of their experiment and record and compare their results. Pupils are able to explain, in everyday terms, what constitutes a fair test and why this is important. In a Year 4 class, pupils plan their own tests for circuits although they were less able to explain why. Previous work shows pupils understand about life processes, for example, they have learnt about the circulatory system in the human body. Pupils know the difference between reversible and irreversible changes and higher attainers are able to explain this. Pupils have learnt how to change electrical circuits with switches and record the reasons why they succeeded or failed.

105. Scientific enquiry is a relative weakness in the curriculum. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are not sufficiently confident in making predictions or in suggesting their own ideas about how they might find out answers to scientific questions. Throughout the school, pupils' ability to use scientific vocabulary to describe and explain their ideas and results is below average. For example, some Year 6 pupils cannot correctly use scientific vocabulary such as 'absorb', 'variables' or 'circuit'. Throughout the school more able pupils are not always consistently challenged. Although in lessons teachers often adapt their questions for different abilities, the same level of work tends to be set for all. In Year 2, work scrutiny shows less evidence of investigative work and use of pupils' own ideas.

106. Teaching is satisfactory or better in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 to 5 teaching is good and in the Year 6 classes it is very good. Pupils have made good progress over the last two terms. All lessons observed were well planned and learning objectives were shared with the pupils. Teachers give good support to pupils and the use of questions to recall and reinforce pupil's knowledge works well. It ensures that pupils meet the learning objectives for lessons. Teachers take pupils' past learning into account and identify gaps in their learning. For example, Year 6 pupils are encouraged

to use relatively simple scientific words that are new to them. Although some pupils, especially the lower attainers, still find this difficult, this reflects intuitive, supportive and sensitive teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and lively teaching makes the subject accessible and interesting. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. They are interested in the subject, behave well and work hard.

107. The quality of teaching and learning in classes has not been monitored by the co-ordinator. This means areas for improvement, such as the need to develop aspects of scientific enquiry, have not been highlighted. The co-ordinator is not sufficiently familiar with the curriculum for pupils in Years 3 to 6. All aspects of the National Curriculum are being taught and long-term plans show how each year group will ensure progression in the schemes of work. The system of assessment is being developed. Currently, at the end of Year 2, teachers assess pupils' progress. At present there is no analysis of the data from the national tests this year although it is planned in order to identify areas for improvement. Half termly science assessments, and developing pupils' own self-assessment in science are also not currently undertaken but there are plans to do so in the school improvement plan. An interesting 'School Science Week', where Year 6 pupils used digital cameras to record activities, raised the profile and interest in science throughout the school. Since the amalgamation, developing an appropriate resource area has been prioritised. This is now in place and there is a system for maintaining relevant resources.

ART AND DESIGN

108. No lessons in art and design were taught in Years 1 and 2 during the inspection. However, from the analysis of pupils' work, standards are generally in line with levels expected nationally and achievement is satisfactory and these indicate that teaching is also satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, standards of work covered are also broadly average. Art and design has not been the focus for development and the range of work upon which judgement is made was restricted.

109. In Year 2, pupils have produced a limited range of work, but that which has been completed includes charcoal rubbings taken from a range of surfaces and printing with objects to make formal patterns. Pupils have examined the work of Monet and experimented with mixing and matching colours to produce their own paintings in his style. They explore ways of extending pictures cut from magazines by looking carefully and showing good attention to detail and work with coloured pencils to produce drawings.

110. Older pupils use their knowledge to produce attractive illustrations to support their work in other subjects. Year 5 pupils, for example, make collage pictures of Greek amphora as part of their study of Ancient Greece and experiment with pencils and textiles to design a storyboard based on the legend of Theseus and the Minotaur. They have also produced some good pictures in the style of Marc Chagall, where they used wax crayons and pastels to good effect to pictures of line and tone.

111. In Year 4, a project on designing and making a chair for a famous person gave pupils the opportunity to make simple structures using paper construction techniques. Their final models, inspired by such diverse characters as David Beckham, Jennifer Lopez and Henry VIII, were of a satisfactory standard and demonstrated careful rolling and joining skills to ensure the chair was well supported and balanced. There was evidence of pupils writing appropriate evaluations of the chairs, for example, *The hardest part was making the legs, because of the shape, and I think it's good because it balances.*

112. The quality of observational drawing is satisfactory by the end of Year 6. Sketchbooks have only recently been introduced and pupils are beginning to explore the ways in which movement can be shown in art. They have produced drawings of athletes in action that show good emphasis on line, human form and facial expression. They have also used coloured chalks effectively to produce colourful observational drawings of flowers.

113. The quality of teaching and learning and progress made by pupils is broadly satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The work is well planned with suitable regard for the scheme of work and resources

are in general used appropriately by teachers to provide interesting activities for pupils. Pupils enjoy art and are motivated because teachers are very positive in the support they give and encourage them to do their best. As a result, they work hard and extend their learning about different techniques. However, where teaching is weaker, insufficient attention is placed on the development of pupils' skills and the provision of inappropriate practical tasks leaves few opportunities for pupils to select materials and make decisions about their own work. Teachers' management of pupils is good and their consistent expectations of behaviour ensure that pupils make the best of the time available.

114. The leadership of art and design is satisfactory, as the school's emphasis has been on English and mathematics over the last year. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the post and aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. She has a suitable understanding of the developments necessary. The school has a scheme of work for art and design based upon the nationally recommended guidelines. Information and communication technology contributes to the breadth of the art curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 5 have produced colourful computer-generated pictures based on the work of Matisse. However, there was little evidence of pupils exploring art from the wider culture in society. Plans are in hand to have an art week towards the end of this term when a visiting artist will be working with the pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. Design and technology is taught through a suitable programme of learning opportunities, which alternates art and design with design and technology. This ensures that the teaching time available is used effectively to support learning. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Teachers' plans, discussions with the subject coordinator and limited samples of pupils' work indicate that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment is satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress because the programme of work, which is based on the national guidance, ensures that they have suitable opportunities to build on past learning. Pupils with special needs and those with English as an additional language make the same progress as others because teachers adapt work to reflect their abilities and provide good levels of support for them during lessons.

116. In Year 2, pupils understand that puppets are made of different parts and materials. They can name a number of different types, such as glove, string and stick puppets and after examining them can say how the parts were fixed together, for example, pupils look carefully at the finger puppets they are given and identify that they have been sewn. By Year 3, pupils investigate how air pressure can be used to make a controlled movement for a model.

117. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall although an example of good teaching was observed for pupils in Year 2. In this lesson, the teacher shared the objectives for the lesson with the pupils so that they understood what they were learning about and this helped them to recall past experiences and apply their understanding to new tasks. Good explanations ensured that pupils knew what they had to do and effective use of questioning enabled the teacher to check their understanding and it helped pupils to contribute what they knew to the discussion. Pupils participated enthusiastically because the teacher provided interesting resources, which they were keen to investigate. The task was explained well and because pupils listened attentively they were able to organise themselves and get on with the activity showing a good degree of independence. The teacher provided good opportunities for pupils to use computers to draw the sample puppet they had been given and there were also good opportunities provided to reinforce their literacy skills when they labelled the different component parts. In the Year 3 lesson, there were good links with science when pupils investigated the use of air pressure to make model monsters move.

118. Teachers plan an appropriate balance to their lessons with a suitable emphasis on investigation and opportunities for pupils to learn about design, construction and evaluation. The curriculum is satisfactory. The school has established an appropriate cycle of topics through which pupils can acquire and improve their understanding and skills. There has been little subject development during the short time the school has been open, but the co-ordinator has identified appropriate priorities for improving the subject, which include developing her own subject

knowledge and introducing 'Design books' for pupils. These will provide a good record of their progress.

119. Assessment is satisfactory but does not yet provide enough information about pupils' achievement or their level of skill, which means that it is difficult for teachers to plan to improve learning and is reflected in satisfactory standards overall. This has already been identified as an area for improvement by the co-ordinator. Leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject has not yet been audited and the co-ordinator does not monitor planning or teaching and learning so currently she does not have enough information about how effectively teachers are planning and teaching the subject across the school.

GEOGRAPHY

120. Overall, in Year 2 and Year 6, attainment is in line with that expected nationally. During the inspection, geography was not timetabled and so no lessons were observed. Evidence was gathered through scrutiny of pupils' work, the long-term curriculum plan, displays and discussion with the coordinator.

121. During Years 1 and 2, pupils develop an awareness of the area around them and begin to make comparisons with environments beyond their locality. For example, they have compared their house or flat with those of people living on an island in Bangladesh. There is evidence that the curriculum is practical and relevant to the pupils. They have explored their local area and made careful observations of mini-beasts that they collected, linking science and geography. They made labelled diagrams of what they found, some of which were computer generated.

122. Pupils in Year 5 begin to develop an understanding of environments in different parts of the world. Pupils are taught to use correct geographical terms. They have learnt about the formation of mountains and how animals and plants adapt to living in low oxygen levels. The work is well presented with photographs, diagrams and accurate maps. There is little evidence that the pupils offer their own reasons to answer interesting geographical questions. Pupils in Year 6 have a good knowledge of rivers and have learnt geographical terms such as 'tributaries' and 'rapids'. Some marking in pupils' books is inaccurate, which does not support pupils' understanding.

123. There is evidence that geography provides opportunities for cross-curricular work. Pupils use information and communication technology to support their learning, accessing the Internet for research and using digital cameras to record findings or events linked to the curriculum. The project on mountains developed literacy skills as pupils finished the project with 'A Mountain Story'. Year 6 pupils have written poems about rivers. Visits are successfully used to enrich the curriculum. For example, Years 5 and 6 recently learnt about the preservation of their local environment when they visited a specialist centre to plant trees.

124. The role of the coordinator is not yet fully developed. Although attainment is satisfactory, the subject lacks breadth and challenge, although the curriculum is appropriately covered. A published scheme that is based on the National Curriculum is used throughout the school. The co-ordinator has produced a curriculum overview that maps out when units will be covered over the year. Some basic assessments on pupils' understanding are made. Teaching is not yet monitored, so training needs have not been identified. An audit of resources is taking place this term and a budget has been identified for new purchases.

HISTORY

125. Attainment in history by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is average. All pupils, including those who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils' historical skills are improving steadily and they are gaining a sound understanding of historical interpretation and enquiry.

126. The analysis of work shows that by the end of Year 2, pupils have an emerging sense of chronology by placing events in order. For example, they sequence the main events of the Great

Fire of London correctly. They know why the fire started, what happened and why it spread so quickly. Pupils know about significant people who lived at that time such as Charles II and Samuel Pepys and are beginning to understand the value of first hand accounts such as in the diaries written by Samuel Pepys. They are developing greater knowledge about famous people but in general it is limited to people within their own living memory, such as David Beckham, Tony Blair and pop stars. In the lessons observed, pupils were beginning to learn more about the main events in the life of Florence Nightingale.

127. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound understanding and knowledge of the periods they have studied such as the Ancient Greeks, Tudors, Victorians and Britain since 1948. Overall, pupils' work shows steady progress in their knowledge and understanding of the characteristic features of these times. They are beginning to understand that there are many representations of a period in history. For example, pupils in Year 5 find out about the differing ways of life in Victorian times and write an extract from a factory report in role as a Victorian child, describing the work. They understand that the work of individuals can change aspects of society, by finding out about the work of Dr. Barnardo and how he helped children. The analysis of work produced by pupils in Year 5 also indicates that they have a satisfactory understanding of chronology, use dates accurately and effectively describe features of Ancient Greece, such as the differences between living in Athens and Sparta. In Year 4, pupils are beginning to find out about aspects of life in Ancient Egypt from looking closely at and drawing objects from that period of history. Their work on Tudors is presented well and shows a secure knowledge and understanding of the life of Henry VIII. Much of the work completed by pupils in Years 4 to 6 contributes well to the development of their literacy skills, including good use of research skills to extend their knowledge.

128. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils' work shows that teachers have a secure understanding of what is appropriate for pupils to know. They plan lessons carefully and create varied and interesting opportunities for pupils to develop their skills and to record their work. Strengths in the teaching of history and its effect on learning were evident in a very good Year 6 lesson about the lifestyle of young people in Britain in the 1950s. The teacher made very good use of recorded music from that era, which she used skillfully to capture the pupils' imagination. This lesson was particularly successful because the teacher planned and organised it extremely well and allowed sufficient time for discussion while constantly probing pupils' understanding with skilful questioning. Once assigned to a task all pupils applied themselves diligently. Regular recapitulation of previous work, including relevant vocabulary, reinforced pupils' factual learning so that their recall was consolidated. By the end, all pupils had enjoyed the lesson and had made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the characteristic features of the 1950s.

129. The school makes appropriate use of the units of work in the nationally recommended curriculum guidelines and has recently introduced a commercially produced scheme to support teachers in their planning. History often provides useful cross-curricular links with other subjects, such as geography, literacy, art and design and information and communication technology. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but do not systematically record pupils' progress in acquiring historical skills. Leadership in the subject is insufficiently developed. The co-ordinator's role does not extend to monitoring teachers' planning or evaluating the work produced by pupils. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their understanding of the legacy of ancient civilisations to modern society and through the opportunity for group work in researching information.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. Overall, standards in information and communication technology skills are good throughout the school having improved at a rapid rate since the new school opened in September. The computer suite, installed during the middle school period, is now fully utilised and contributes significantly to the pupils' acquisition of technological skills. There are computers in each classroom, which contributes to pupils' skills in using information and communication technology in other curriculum areas. Pupils are taught the full range of skills specified by the National Curriculum including using 'roamer' technology. As a result, pupils at the end of Year 2 are

demonstrating above average attainment and at the end of Year 6 pupils skills have significantly improved since September, demonstrating some elements of above average ability.

131. At the end of Year 2 pupils are able to find their way around a word processing document using appropriate techniques for retrieving and saving work, organising their ideas, changing font and size, highlighting words for redrafting and using the mouse to place the cursor in the correct place. Pupils share ideas and work well in pairs, whether ability matched or more able pupils paired with less able pupils. The range of ability across the infant classes is wide as they are mixed Year 1 and 2 classes. This means that there is a very wide range of abilities that need to be catered for. For instance, the range of writing ability from a less able Year 1 pupil to a more able Year 2 pupil was observed:

- Prc I Plady on the swg (Pupil read out 'In the park I played on the swings')

- I went to the dentist and had to have an injection in my gum to make it num. so as I don't feel the two drills in my mouth when my new dentist called Emily drills my tooth to make it better. (All spellings and punctuation were made by the pupil in her first draft)

132. This results in a very busy lesson for teachers, trying to make sure all pupils receive attention at the appropriate times. No teaching assistance was observed in the sessions.

133. At the end of Year 6 pupils can use information and communication technology for a variety of purposes other than word processing. One Year 6 class was seen designing a web page using a PowerPoint programme. Animation was introduced as a new concept and pupils were excited by the demonstration and teaching. There was a ripple of excitement when the teacher showed them the animation, commenting 'wow'; 'it's cool'. The engagement of the pupils in the activity was complete and all abilities benefited from the well-structured teaching, which allowed them to make good progress in the lesson.

134. The teaching of information and communication technology is at least satisfactory and mainly good, all teachers have completed New Opportunities Fund training and the National Grid for Learning funding has been well used. Further training is planned so that teaching assistants can contribute to information and communication technology fully. Teachers use the hardware with confidence; having checked that everything is ready before the lesson starts, consequently there is no time wasted at the beginning of the lesson. Lessons are planned carefully and structured so that there are three parts as in literacy and numeracy lessons. This means that pupils have an appropriate and consistent routine for behaviour in what can be an over-exciting different environment. Expectations for behaviour in moving to and from the computer suite are high, necessary because some classes are a distance away from the computer room. The pupils' good behaviour means there is a snappy start to the lessons and no time is wasted. Pupils make good progress in classes because of the good teaching. They have progressed rapidly in the short period that they have had full access to information and communication technology. The displays in classes and around the corridors demonstrate pupils' good use of the information and communication technology facilities. There is good evidence of use across the curriculum, particularly for literacy and numeracy. There are examples of 'Clip Art'; well-executed pictures by pupils in the 'Treetops' classes. Digital camera photographs are very well used to support displays, ranging from after school club to humanities subjects. Mathematics problems and word processing are extensively displayed. There was a particularly good example of a story opening word processed by a Year 3 pupil and put on a board designated as 'Our best information and communication technology work': -

The Wicked Teacher

The furious teacher shot right through the classroom. She was obviously incensed. She was pointing to Hannah who was wearing very, very long, silky golden plaits. She marched right up to Hannah, grabbed her plaits and swung her around. Poor Hannah went flying right through the open window!

135. The 'You Can Do It' programme is represented in many of these displays, supporting well the ethos of the school by creating appropriate reminders and enhancing the environment.

136. There is an after school information and communication technology club, which is well attended. Year 6 pupils use Friday lunchtimes for the development of the school website which is now up and running. The Family Literacy programme run by the adult learning tutors also use the facility to supplement their English as a second language sessions.

137. The subject is managed well by a new co-ordinator in place since February who has developed the systems with help from the head teacher and valuable assistance from two consultants from local secondary schools. One assists with software and curriculum links; the other provides technical support. There is a very thorough information and communication technology development plan, which covers policy development, hardware and software audit and suitability for different groups, links to the curriculum, assessment systems, training for teachers and assistants, the place of information and communication technology in raising standards, finance and maintenance. Planning and pupils' work is monitored effectively but the quality of teaching in the subject is not yet consistently observed to provide feedback for further improvement. In classes in Years 3 to 6, pupils have an effective self-assessed skills audit form in their information and communication technology folders which contains examples of their finished pieces. In Years 1 and 2, they have similar folders and skills audit forms but, equally effectively, this is assessed by teachers.

MUSIC

138. Pupils' attainments in music are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6 and progress is satisfactory. Older pupils have a reasonable understanding of musical language and terminology, although there are missed opportunities on occasions for teachers to use the correct terminology to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding still further. Singing is enthusiastic but does not always demonstrate sensitivity to expression. There were examples of developing competence at keeping a steady pulse using their voices and by clapping.

139. In lessons observed, teaching and learning were satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers' energetic and enthusiastic approach motivates pupils to apply effort to their learning. A scheme of work has been adopted to ensure pupils' musical knowledge and skills build up systematically as they move through the school. This is supporting teachers who are not as confident in the teaching of music that is often a specialist subject. It is, however, a very recent addition and the full impact of its use is still in the early stages. Teachers use the scheme consistently across the school. Procedures for assessment are secure in both infants and the juniors.

140. Pupils enjoy their lessons, and have fun! This really supports their learning. In one lesson, pupils demonstrated positive attitudes to music, becoming quickly involved in the activities. No activities were seen which allowed pupils to compose their own music.

141. There is a music room that has only very recently been created. The extra space gives pupils the opportunity to move around in time to the music and not stay confined in their classrooms. Resources are adequate. There is a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and a supply of books suitable for the needs and age range of pupils.

142. Pupils have the opportunity to play musical instruments but at present there is no regular choir although the school does stage productions and takes part in church services, such as carol concerts. The music co-ordinator has recently introduced the teaching of recorder for pupils in both the infants and the juniors. This opportunity is proving very popular and the demand for places is high. There is an action plan to ensure areas of weakness in the musical curriculum are addressed. This area of the curriculum is very well led by the enthusiastic and knowledgeable music co-ordinator. Monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work at present is underdeveloped, although the school has plans for all foundation subjects to have a higher priority from next year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

143. Standards in physical education are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The planning shows a balance of indoor and outdoor work though there are some difficulties with one of the outdoor spaces where teachers and pupils have to compete with a busy road and a railway line close by. There is no significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.

144. Younger pupils work well at acquiring skills such as using bats and balls and worked hard and enthusiastically during their outdoor sessions. They co-operated well during partner work and showed increasing skill over the period of the lesson. Despite the close proximity of the nursery outdoor play area, the Year 1 and 2 pupils were sensible in their use of the bats and balls and did not go too near or hit so hard that they lost their equipment in the nursery area.

145. The teaching of younger pupils was good and there was good use of teaching assistants to help pupils acquire skills. The teacher demonstrates the key skills and postures for the different activities and helps them further by physical modelling when they have difficulties, for instance in getting the correct hold on a bat for bouncing a ball.

146. With older pupils in the juniors there is variation in pupils' application to the tasks. Where teaching is good, pupils work hard and listen carefully to safety aspects emphasised by the teacher.

147. In a Year 4 lesson, precision and control were features of the circuit training exercises. Pupils co-operated well, using pencils and small notebooks to count and note the number of repetitions their partner did in the specified time. However, in another lesson observed outside, the lack of precise instruction and safety discussion accounted for unsatisfactory learning. Although the lesson planning specified discussion about the importance of warming up, this was not carried out and the different parts of the lesson lacked the linking that was necessary. There was no mention of the specialist equipment for the speed, agility and quickness routines and how they should be treated. As the lesson progressed, pupils used less application and began to use equipment improperly. Supervision was too patchy resulting in pupils not achieving according to their capabilities.

148. The co-ordinator for physical education leads the subject well and has introduced a number of changes to enhance the teaching of the subject. However, whilst much work has been carried out in resources and curriculum planning, there needs to be observation of teaching in the subject, especially for new and training teachers, in order to ensure that the standard of supervision remains high.

149. The previous physical education scheme was reported to be not teacher friendly and so staff have adopted the national guidance supported by a scheme called TOPs training. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 have undertaken TOP play, a skills based programme, and teachers in Years 3 to 6, have taken part in TOP football. Planned for next year is TOP athletics training. The co-ordinator herself has further undertaken the courses for gymnastics, TOP start, play, football and country dancing. She has also ensured pupils have opportunities to link with the Lawn Tennis Association and Merton Sports Association. They are also shortly to take part in a 'Supa Schools' sports event. After school activities include football in the autumn and spring, cricket in the summer, Tae Kwan Do, 'Skip to Keep Fit' and 'Run for Fun'. The netball team, run by a parent, is taking part in a local league. Years 3 and 4 go to a local swimming pool for lessons. There are links with a local secondary school for use of their playing fields.

150. The co-ordinator regularly checks equipment and ropes had to be removed recently because of the need to replace them. Gaps in resources are known and fundraising helps to supplement the school budget allocation. The re-marking of the school's playground is a recent example of this effort. Plans are underway to launch a house system and run a sports day.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

151. In religious education, pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are working at average levels in relation to expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Attainment is mainly satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 but there are few examples on which to make judgements. This is mainly due to the fact that much of the pupils work in religious education is done orally. It is only very recently, since the amalgamation of the two schools, that religious education has been given significant time in the curriculum.

152. Standards of attainment are satisfactory in the speaking and listening aspects of the subject. In one lesson in a Year 1/2 class when pupils were asked to report back on what place was special to them, they were confident enough to stand in front of the class and talk about their reasons for choosing their special place. Older pupils for example, in Year 3 when learning about Muslim prayer mats in the Islamic religion, worked hard and achieved satisfactory standards of attainment. When recording their work in books, standards are just satisfactory.

153. The main world religions are represented within the school. Pupils are learning about the main religions and are eager to talk about their own religion. For example, in an assembly led by a Muslim visitor to the school, one pupil in Year 1 was very excited when she started talking about Islam and shouted out, *I'm a Muslim too and I do that*. Pupils are developing the confidence and pride in their own religious belief and cultural belief enough to be able to share it with others.

154. Teaching overall is good. Lessons are well planned and related to the locally agreed syllabus, and schemes of work. A very good lesson, seen in Year 6, about how art is used in religion, was led very well by the class teacher. Good subject knowledge and a sensitive approach to the subject encouraged pupils' learning. The good use of questioning encouraged pupils to think carefully about their ideas and to give examples of what God might look like. One pupil described his ideas of what he felt God might look like by saying, *He definitely has a big heart in the middle of him so that he can love everyone*. Another pupil said, *When I see him in my mind I see him with a light all around him because that's what makes him special*. Planning for the subject in Years 1 and 2 often intertwines with the personal, social, health education programme and circle time.

155. Arrangements for teaching religious education fully meet statutory requirements and time given to the subject is appropriate. The coordinator has only had responsibility for the subject for two weeks. She is aware of the need to build up resources as these are still in the early stages of development. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment.

Autistic Learning Centre (Treetops)

156. The resourced provision for pupils with autism is good. The school has 20 places for pupils aged between five and 11. At the time of the inspection there were 17 on roll. The department has four classes and pupils are grouped with others of similar age, for example, children of Reception age and those in Year 1 are grouped together. The department has a good number of teachers and teaching assistants. The accommodation is good and there are a good level of specialist resources to support teaching and learning.

157. The school has a strong commitment to inclusion and is effective in supporting many pupils from the department to join in with lessons alongside their peers. The support provided for pupils when they participate in these lessons is good. Class teachers are beginning to consider their needs effectively when they plan learning and this is enabling pupils to participate well in activities. Teaching assistants, who accompany pupils to lessons, are effective in reinforcing the teachers' explanations and they prompt pupils to behave appropriately and to use the learning skills they have been taught so that they make good progress. The special educational needs co-ordinator effectively monitors the experiences that pupils have and the progress they are making and she provides very good support for colleagues to ensure that these inclusive experiences are meaningful for pupils and successful. Pupils with autism are clearly considered part of the school and they benefit from whole-school procedures such as the rewarding of good work with certificates. Whenever appropriate, teachers ensure that pupils join in with the activities that are planned for their peers.

158. Lesson observations, teachers' plans and examples of pupils' work indicate that they make good progress in language, literacy and communication, numeracy and personal and social development. Pupils make satisfactory progress in all other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below the national average for pupils of the same age; however, they achieve well and make good progress in relation to the targets set for them in their individual education plans and in lessons. This is because teachers who work in the department have, or are developing, good knowledge and understanding of pupils' special needs and of their individual abilities. Few of the pupils currently in Year 6 will transfer to mainstream secondary school as their attainment remains significantly below the national average.

159. Assessment is good, but the special educational needs co-ordinator is aware that it needs further improvement. The school uses the Qualification and Curriculum Authority's 'P' Level assessment materials effectively to identify pupils' level of attainment in areas such as language, communication and literacy and numeracy. The school also uses assessment materials developed specifically for pupils with autism. Teachers consider assessment information carefully when they plan work and this ensures that learning is planned effectively to match pupils' abilities and it enables them to be successful. The special educational needs coordinator has already identified that there are inconsistencies in the way teachers apply the assessment criteria when they make judgements and this is reflected in a small number of inaccurate levels of attainment being given to pupils' work. The special educational needs coordinator has identified a suitable way of addressing this. The school is considering improving teachers' understanding of the criteria they use by comparing pupils' work with that of pupils in special schools locally as well as comparing it with that of pupils across the school. The school has effectively implemented recognised and approved strategies for managing any extreme behaviour exhibited by pupils. All staff have had appropriate training and the monitoring systems used to support these strategies are good.

160. The curriculum opportunities provided for pupils with autism are good. They have full access to the National Curriculum and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. The curriculum is adapted well to meet pupils' needs on a group and individual basis. The school has also implemented a number of internationally recognised teaching methods and strategies, which have been developed specifically for pupils with autism and communication difficulties. For example, TEACCH, Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicapped Children, and PECs, Picture Exchange Communication System. These methods are being used effectively by teachers to promote the development of pupils' social skills, to teach them the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and to help them develop strategies for learning and the ability to cope with the demands placed on them in the classroom.

161. The time allocated to the subjects of the curriculum for pupils in the department is good and ensures that there is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The learning opportunities provided for pupils in the area of language, communication and literacy are enhanced well by effective support from the speech therapy service. Pupils make good progress in developing their communication skills because the speech and language therapist works closely with teachers to set targets for individual pupils. The therapist works with individual pupils to improve their communication and she works with each class group leading activities that effectively promote the development of communication and turn taking.

162. The curriculum is adapted well to make it relevant to pupils' needs because it provides opportunities for them to take part in activities that are focused on developing their life and social skills. Pupils are provided with good opportunities to use the understanding they have developed in the classroom in real life situations, for example, using money in the local shops. There are also good opportunities for pupils to take part in activities such as Riding for the Disabled. These effectively support pupils' progress in subject areas such as physical education, communication and personal and social development.

163. The department has established good relationships with parents and provides effective support for families. There has recently been a successful session for parents to familiarise them with the PECs system and materials and a few parents now have the symbols for use at home. More opportunities such as this are planned for the future.

164. Leadership and management of the department are very good and a number of effective improvements have been made in a very short space of time. The special educational needs coordinator has a very clear vision for the future of the department and has identified appropriate priorities to continue improving what the school offers.