

INSPECTION REPORT

PRINCES RISBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL

Princes Risborough

LEA area: Buckinghamshire

Unique reference number: 133513

Headteacher: Mrs S Whitlow

Lead inspector: Andrew Clark

Dates of inspection: 28–30 June 2004

Inspection number: 257232

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:	4–11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	245
School address:	Wellington Avenue Princes Risborough Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	HP27 9HY
Telephone number:	01844 345251
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Paul Prebble
Date of previous inspection:	Not previously inspected

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a new school. It was formed on the site of a former junior school in 2002. It shared a split site with an infant school half a mile away for 2002-3. After extensive building work the school opened on the one site in April 2003. As well as creating several new classrooms, two classrooms were converted for the Foundation Stage (nursery and reception classes), a new ICT suite, library and other areas were built. The school grounds were also extensively modified and work was still being undertaken at the time of the inspection. Some of the teaching and other staff were from the amalgamated schools but ten new teaching staff were appointed during 2002-3.

The school houses a department for pupils with social and communication difficulties. (SCD) At the time of the inspection there were 12 pupils aged between 6 and 11 in this department. There difficulties include autism and communication problems. The pupils all have a Statement of Special Educational Needs. Pupils admitted to the department should be able to participate in mainstream schooling for approximately 50 per cent of the time. At the time of the inspection some of the pupils in the younger classroom did not fulfil this criteria. The pupils in the unit are disapplied from the National Curriculum.

There are 239 pupils on roll aged between 4 and 11 and a further 13 children in the nursery for mornings only. The majority of pupils are from white British families but approximately 14 per cent are from minority ethnic backgrounds. No pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition and none receive additional support for their English. Approximately 13 per cent of the pupils are eligible for a free school meal, which is broadly average. The proportion of pupils on the register of special educational needs is above average. This includes the pupils in the SCD department. The special needs of pupils in the main school include moderate learning difficulties, communication and emotional and social concerns. The percentage of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs is also above average because of the pupils in the department. The percentage in the main school is broadly average. The pupils come from a range of backgrounds. The majority of families are homeowners, but an increasing percentage is from local authority rented accommodation. The attainment on entry is broadly typical for the children's age. However, there are variations between the year groups.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21596	Andrew Clark	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology History Physical education English as an additional language
9079	Ann Moss	Lay inspector	
12116	Christina Morgan	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology Religious education
2866	Bob Battye	Team inspector	Geography Special educational needs
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a sound education. The leadership and management are satisfactory, and the creation of a new school on one site during the last year has been managed well. The headteacher has established a firm basis for future development. Pupils achieve as well as can be expected. Achievement is very good for the pupils in the department for pupils' with social and communication difficulties (SCD). The school is inclusive and pupils' personal and social development is good. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and the school gives sound value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Provision in the Foundation Stage (i.e. the nursery and reception) gives the children a good start to their education.
- The provision for pupils' personal development and their care is good and, as a result, pupils enjoy their work and try hard. However, attendance levels are too low.
- The role of key staff in raising achievement is not rigorous and focused enough.
- The quality and use of assessment do not ensure that pupils consistently make enough progress.
- The marking of pupils' work does not provide enough guidance about how to improve.
- The provision for the pupils in the social and communication difficulties department is very good.

This is a new school and has not been inspected before.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	N/A	E	A	C
Mathematics	N/A	D	B	D
Science	N/A	C	B	D

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. As the school has only been opened for two years, it is not possible to clearly identify a trend of improvement. Standards for the current Year 6 for English, mathematics and science are broadly at expected levels and the pupils' achievement from their earlier learning is satisfactory. There was a marked improvement in the results for national tests in the two years the school has been open. Standards are rising for pupils in Year 2, where they were well below national averages for reading, writing and mathematics in the last two years and are now at expected levels. The pupils get a boost to their learning in Year 6 through good teaching. The pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. Those in the SCD department achieve very well. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory. The children in the Foundation Stage achieve the goals children are expected to reach by the end of reception. **The pupils' personal development (including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development) is good.** As a result pupils have good attitudes and behave well. Attendance is below average however, because of prolonged absence by a few pupils. The school has good procedures that seek to address this problem.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The quality and use of assessment are unsatisfactory. Teaching is very good for pupils in the SCD department and good in the Foundation Stage. The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The expectations for pupils to present their work neatly and accurately are variable and sometimes too low and the marking does not provide sufficient or consistent guidance to the pupils about how to improve. In the best lessons, the teachers have a very good idea of what the pupils have achieved and have high expectations for the next steps they can take. The assessment procedures are not yet cohesive and sufficiently purposeful in several subjects, and are not seen by all staff as a tool for improving standards. Most pupils are willing to learn and work hard but sometimes opportunities for independent work are limited by the structured worksheets used. Although satisfactory overall, there is a lack of opportunities to use literacy and numeracy skills in a minority of subjects such as history and geography.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. The planning for most subjects provides sound guidance on which teachers base their lessons. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. It is very good for pupils in the SCD department. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. There is a good match of support assistants to the needs of the school. The quality and use of the accommodation are good. Standards of care and concern for pupils' welfare are good, and the school effectively seeks and acts upon pupils' views. There are good links with parents and the community, and satisfactory links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has successfully managed the establishment of the new school and, with the staff and governors, established a positive ethos for learning. The senior staff are not providing strong enough management of their subjects to secure improvements and to meet identified priorities sufficiently. The governance is satisfactory and the governing body fulfils its statutory requirements. A core of governors are actively involved in supporting and promoting the school, and monitoring procedures are developing well.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents' views are positive and they provide good support to the school. The pupils are happy at school, enjoy their work and contribute to the life of the school through the school council.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Ensure the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by senior staff are rigorous and have a positive impact on pupils' achievement.
- Improve assessment procedures so that pupils' achievement in all subjects is tracked and that teachers' expectations are raised.
- Use marking effectively and consistently to guide pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards seen are at nationally expected levels. The achievement of pupils in the Foundation Stage is good. It is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. The pupils in the SCD department make very good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Although achievement is satisfactory overall, the lack of clear guidance through marking and inconsistent use of assessment leads to some limitations in progress.
- The children get a good start in the Foundation Stage.
- Standards of reading are above national averages by Year 6.
- The standards of pupils' reading, writing and mathematics are improving by Year 2 and now match national expectations.
- Standards of handwriting and presentation are too low.
- The carefully planning and effective teaching methods in the SCD help pupils attain their targets.

Commentary

1. In the short time the school has been opened, standards have varied in both Years 2 and 6. The standards of work seen during the inspection are at nationally expected levels in most subjects. The pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Achievement of pupils with special educational needs, against their targets in their Individual Education plans is satisfactory. However, not all teachers are modifying their teaching sufficiently to meet their pupils' needs fully. The most-able pupils make satisfactory progress overall. However, there are times when pupils of all abilities do not make the best progress because the teachers do not provide enough guidance in the marking, and assessments are not rigorously applied to match work to pupils' abilities. These weaknesses are evident to some degree in the work for all age groups. At present, the monitoring of teaching and learning does not sufficiently identify these inconsistencies. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds make similar progress to their peers. Those with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress. The school has made satisfactory progress towards targets set for pupils' attainment at the end of Years 2 and 6.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.2 (15.0)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	11.7 (13.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	14.8 (15.4)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.8 (25.5)	26.8 (27.0)

mathematics	28.1 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.7 (28.6)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 51 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The children get a good start in the Foundation Stage, particularly in the reception class. The majority of children are well placed to reach the early learning goals expected by the end of the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning. This is a direct result of good teaching and the effective use of assessment to plan the next steps of learning to ensure that work is well matched to pupils' learning needs. The teaching and teaching assistants effectively help a significant minority of pupils to overcome weaknesses in their speech and vocabulary.
3. Pupils' reading skills are above average by Year 6. They are fluent and confident readers who make good use of a well-stocked library and read for a wide range of purposes. The standards of reading, writing and mathematics by Year 2 were well below average in 2002 and 2003. This partly relates to the percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs who would not be expected to attain national standards. The work of the current Year 2 pupils is similar to nationally expected standards in all three subjects. This reflects improvements to teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2, and greater consistency in practice.
4. The pupils' handwriting is not fluent or careful enough. The pupils do not transfer their learning in handwriting lessons to other subjects effectively enough. This is because teachers do not always expect the pupils to do so. Although the standards of presentation are generally satisfactory, there are times when the pupils do not take enough care, for example in setting out sums in mathematics or recording science experiments.
5. The 12 pupils with special educational needs in the SCD department are making very good progress towards their expected goals. The teachers and teaching assistants have a very clear idea of the strategies and techniques to deploy to structure the pupils' learning and very good use is made of thorough and regular assessment of their achievement.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and are well behaved in classes and around the school. Their personal development is good. Pupils' moral and social development is also good and their spiritual and cultural development is sound. Attendance levels are below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils respond well to the good examples set by the adults in the school and co-operate well with them to ensure a positive climate for learning.
- Relationships among pupils and between pupils and staff are good. This is the result of the school's caring ethos.
- A range of after-school clubs and competitive sport with other schools promotes pupils' social and moral development well, but more could be done in assemblies to further promote pupils' spiritual development.
- Pupils are becoming confident members of the school because they are being given an increasing number of opportunities to take responsibility.
- Attendance levels of a significant minority of pupils are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

6. Pupils show good attitudes to learning in lessons. They listen attentively, are keen to answer questions and undertake tasks enthusiastically. This happens particularly when teachers maintain a high level of interest and set appropriately challenging tasks that ensure that pupils of all levels of attainment have the opportunity to achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs show good attitudes towards their work, behaving themselves and applying themselves

well to their tasks. Pupils in the SCD department show very good attitudes towards their work, behaving well and doing their best to apply themselves to their tasks. The children's personal development is promoted well in the Foundation Stage.

7. Standards of behaviour are good in the classroom and around the school. At playtimes, pupils play harmoniously together. All pupils discuss their social targets and agree class and playground rules. They are fully aware of the high standards expected and insisted upon by all staff. The caring ethos of the school results in pupils knowing right from wrong and showing consideration for others. No signs of aggressive behaviour were seen during the inspection period and pupils confirmed that bullying does not occur. They said that sometimes pupils become over-excited and boisterous, and that any instances of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with quickly and efficiently. Racial harmony is promoted very well. There have been 24 fixed term exclusions involving 10 pupils in the past year. The inspectors found that the exclusion process has been used as a necessary strategy for the sake of the whole-school community and has been effective. There are no indications that this level of exclusion is likely to continue.
8. Pupils are being encouraged to become independent and willingly take on a range of responsibilities appropriate to their ages. Responsibilities range from acting as monitors for general classroom and school duties to being representatives on the school council. They are confident that their ideas will be listened to and acted upon when appropriate. For example, they have recently organised a sponsored run to raise money for playground equipment. They take their responsibilities of living in a community seriously, and develop increasing levels of maturity as they move through the school.
9. Pupils play harmoniously together and work well in pairs and in groups. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson pupils collaborated well together when looking at how electricity passes through different materials. They show consideration and respect for the feelings of others, and enjoy their activities. Staff give a positive lead in engendering good relationships, for example by giving praise and encouragement at every opportunity as well as acting as good role models. All pupils are given equal opportunities to have a 'special mention' and they are very proud when they are rewarded for doing something worthwhile.
10. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. The good ethos of the school and subjects such as personal, social and health education and religious education make a good contribution. Pupils talk about the characteristics of leading a good life, such as being kind and helpful, and the concept of trust. However, although assemblies promote moral and social aspects well, opportunities for spiritual development at these times are missed. The school ensures that pupils experience the traditions of a wide range of cultures as well as their own, particularly through the multi-cultural week, art and design and music. However, the pupils have limited experiences of the multi-cultural nature of contemporary Britain.
11. Attendance levels at the school are below the national average. This is due mainly to the prolonged absences of a significant minority of pupils. The school is now making the promotion of better attendance a priority and has developed ways of monitoring attendance and rigorously and quickly following up any unexplained absence. Parents are now much more aware of the importance of the regular attendance of their children and the detrimental effect that unnecessary absence can have on their attainment. Punctuality of the pupils is satisfactory overall, although some pupils arrive after the start of school.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	6.3
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.1
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions

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	220	23	0
White – any other White background	5	1	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	7	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching, learning and the curriculum are satisfactory. Assessment is unsatisfactory. The care and guidance for pupils are good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In Years 1 to 6 assessment information is not yet effectively used to raise standards. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and very good in the SCD department.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The management of behaviour is good.
- Teachers' questioning skills are often good.
- The use of assessment is not consistent or thorough enough.
- The marking of pupils' work does not consistently promote high standards.
- The teaching in the Foundation Stage is stimulating and focuses on promoting children's literacy, numeracy and personal development.
- The pupils in the SCD department are often very well taught.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5 (14%)	18 (51%)	11 (31%)	1 (3%)	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

12. The school has placed a high priority on managing pupils' behaviour and establishing a positive and caring ethos. The teachers' management of behaviour in the classroom makes a good contribution to this aim. Teachers make good use of reward systems and set a clear framework for the pupils' behaviour. They are firm when required. As a result pupils are eager to please their teachers and settle to their work quickly and willingly. There is good support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties through the effective deployment of teaching assistants and the use of outside agencies such as the Pupil Referral Unit and behavioural and learning support staff.
13. In the best teaching, for example for low-attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teachers make very good use of careful questioning to guide and reinforce the pupils' learning. They build their questions on the pupils' previous answers with a clear purpose in mind. They provide good opportunities for the pupils to explain their thinking and to clarify any misunderstandings. There are also good examples of closed questioning to establish pupils' factual knowledge in subjects such as history. These lessons are often well planned with a clear purpose, which is explained effectively to pupils. The work set in the best lessons is thought provoking and challenges the pupils to think for themselves and organise their ideas, whatever their ability. Teachers do not make much use of ICT in their teaching except in lessons in the computer suite. In these lessons, teachers show satisfactory or better skills in using the audio-visual facilities effectively.
14. The day-to-day assessments made by teachers in too many lessons do not make sure that the next task the pupils undertake makes use of their earlier learning and provides enough challenge. This is sometimes because the teacher uses a scheme or programme without ensuring it is suitable for all pupils. In the best lessons, in mathematics for example, the teacher will suggest that the pupils miss out sections if they are able to do the first few questions and sets extension work for them. Sometimes the worksheets used demand too little from the pupils and do not make enough use of their literacy and numeracy skills. There have been recent developments in the assessment of key skills in numeracy which are helping teachers identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses. However, it is not yet sufficiently used to guide the next steps of teaching. Overall, assessment procedures are developing, but there are not yet sufficient links between pupils' prior attainment and the expected progress in classes, other than Year 6. The school has rightly focused on developing assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science. However, in other subjects the co-ordinators have not yet sufficient systems to measure individual and group attainment and to use this information as a tool for raising standards.
15. Most of the pupils' work is marked regularly. However, the marking is often a tick and praise which is sometimes unrelated to the quality of the work. There are very few examples of marking that engages the pupil and promotes higher standards by offering guidance and later reinforcing this. The school has introduced a new marking policy but it is still being trialled and monitoring is not sufficiently robust to ensure its speedy implication. One example of marking that does not have sufficient impact is in ensuring reasonable accuracy in handwriting and literacy skills, particularly although not exclusively, in subjects other than English.
16. The teaching and learning of the 12 pupils in the SCD department/unit are very good. They receive very good levels of support from their teachers, aided very well by support assistants. The staff work closely as a team to agree on the next steps pupils need to take in their learning. There are very firm and clear procedures for extending the pupils' basic language and numeracy skills. Assessment and its use are very good.

17. Assessment procedures are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and teaching and learning are good. Teachers and support staff focus carefully on promoting early literacy and numeracy skills, and pupils' personal and social development. Group and individual tasks are matched well to pupils' learning needs.

The curriculum

The school provides a good curriculum which meets statutory requirements. Enhancement of the curriculum is satisfactory. The accommodation and resources are good and support learning well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- The accommodation is spacious and there have been good efforts to make effective use of available space.
- There is too much reliance on published schemes which inhibit individual progress.
- There has been relatively little curriculum development and innovation.
- The curriculum in the SCD department is very good.

Commentary

18. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. This has been successfully established over a short period of time and meets the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities.
19. The school's accommodation and grounds provide an attractive learning environment that is enhanced by a variety of stimulating displays in most classrooms. The accommodation is generous, with a number of additional areas that allow for pupils to be withdrawn from their normal classes for specialist teaching. The school is well resourced and the well-stocked library is regularly used by pupils.
20. Differences of approach to the planning and teaching of English and mathematics between the original infant and junior schools have necessitated a concentration on these subjects. In English, despite efforts to create a unity of approach, initiatives such as the development of guided reading have not been consistently implemented across the school. Although writing has been a major focus, there is a heavy reliance on pre-published material that is not sufficiently adapted to the needs of pupils.
21. As a result of the emphasis on English and mathematics, the development of the curriculum outside these core subjects has not been a high priority since the amalgamation of the two schools. Although the basic guidelines are in place, the extent to which subjects are effectively taught is very much up to individual teachers. The use of information and communications technology to support learning across the curriculum is limited and cross-curricular links between subjects have yet to be built into teachers' planning. A successful multi-cultural week was useful in making effective cross-curricular links and it is intended that this will be a regular event.
22. The school provides a sound range of extra-curricular activities, mainly at lunchtimes. Parents provide valuable input into after-school activities. A range of visits within the locality supports the curriculum, but there is no residential visit to extend geography or history topics or to provide opportunities for developing pupils' personal and social skills.
23. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. The school's emphasis on inclusion ensures that pupils from the unit are successfully integrated into lessons whenever they can benefit from the mainstream curriculum. The curriculum provision for pupils in the SCD is very good. They are supported very well with the use of short-term targets in their Individual Education Plans. These are regularly reviewed by all staff and shared

with the pupils, other teachers and staff in the mainstream school and parents. The large number of skilled and dedicated support staff enable pupils with special educational needs to access the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

The care, welfare and guidance of pupils are good and support pupils' learning well. The guidance for pupils' personal development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils feel secure and well cared for in school, and work in a healthy and safe environment.
- Pupils have good and trusting relationships with all adults in the school.
- The staff know the pupils very well and provide good support and guidance, which underpins pupils' achievement.
- The school seeks the views of pupils and acts on them when appropriate.

Commentary

24. The school provides a happy environment that is conducive to learning. Attention is paid to health and safety issues, particularly during the recent building programme. Formal risk assessments take place regularly and are appropriately recorded. Pupils' healthy and safe living is promoted through the personal, social and health education programme. First aid provision is good, as are child protection procedures. There is good liaison with other agencies to support pupils as required.
25. Formal assessment arrangements for tracking the academic progress of all pupils is unsatisfactory and in need of development. However, teachers and support staff know the pupils and their families very well, are sensitive to their needs and provide good support and guidance. Social targets are well recorded and understood by the pupils. The good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically. Pupils say that the adults are 'nice and kind' and the vast majority of parents say that the school cares well for their children.
26. The school council meets regularly and understands its role in representing the opinions of their classmates. They take their responsibilities seriously and have discussed, amongst other things, the use of the field for football, school uniform and a healthy eating day. They also raise money for charities. They say that the headteacher listens to their views and acts upon them whenever possible. The teacher in charge of the SCD unit/department, aided by her staff, tracks the pupils' development very effectively. There is an excellent means of ensuring that each pupil has a very good and trusting relationship with adults in the department and in the school generally. Pupils' views are very well and actively sought, and membership of the main school council is being sought for pupils in the department.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is good. Links with the community are also good and make an important contribution to the pupils' personal and academic development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The majority of parents are very supportive of the school and they are kept well informed about the school and their children's standards and progress.
- The good contribution parents make to their children's learning at school and at home makes a positive contribution to their achievement.
- The good links with the community help to enrich the curriculum.
- The headteacher and her staff respond as quickly as they can to deal with any concerns or complaints.

Commentary

27. The vast majority of parents are very satisfied with the school. They feel comfortable about approaching it with any questions and are happy with the procedures to deal with any concerns or complaints. They feel that their children are well cared for, are encouraged to be mature and responsible, and that the headteacher has managed the changeover process well. The inspection team agrees with the parents views. Parents make a good contribution to their children's learning by, for example, providing road safety training and helping with the extra-curricular clubs. They also help in the classrooms with, for example, reading, cooking and ICT. They appreciate the curriculum evenings arranged by the school and the Parents' Association has raised significant funds to buy equipment to help in their children's learning.
28. Parents are well informed about the school through the prospectus, regular newsletters and frequent other correspondence. They are also well informed about their children's progress through consultation evenings and annual reports. Their views are regularly sought and acted upon. For example, they have discussed safety implications of dropping off and collecting children and are currently involved in a two-week trial to try to improve the situation. Some parents were not happy with the amount of homework given, but the inspection team found that the use of homework overall was good, and the homework diaries were a useful means of communication between school and home. Parents are very well informed on the progress of their child with speech and communication difficulties. They are supported in an excellent manner when they are in dispute with the local education authority regarding the future provision of their child after the age of eleven when they are about to leave the department.
29. However, a few parents do not fully understand the current policies and aims of the school. The headteacher and staff are working very hard to ensure that there is a much clearer understanding of these aims so that all parents are involved more fully in the education of their children and work more closely with the school.
30. Some parents were concerned about bullying at the school. Whilst the inspection team agrees that there are occasional outbreaks of inappropriate behaviour, there are very few incidents of real bullying. This is confirmed by the pupils who say that any instances of boisterous or inappropriate behaviour, if and when they happen, are dealt with quickly and efficiently by the staff.
31. The good links with the community include many visitors, such as the fire brigade and a 'Roman soldier', and involvement with the Church and Church groups. The school uses the local swimming pool and the library and they participate with other local schools in sporting activities. The pupils have designed jackets for the 'Hearing Dogs for the Deaf' and have entered a re-cycling competition run by the local district council. The school also uses the wider community for educational trips to places such as 'Hazard Alley' and Farmoor Reservoir. Some parents would like their children to participate in a residential trip, and the school is now aware of the need to look for venues that are not too far from the school and are not too expensive.
32. The school has satisfactory links with the local pre-school groups, secondary and grammar schools and there are mechanisms in place to ensure the smooth transfer of pupils to the next stages in their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are both satisfactory. The governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The establishment of a new primary school on one site, from the amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools, has been managed well.

- The school's improvement plan is appropriate but it is not clearly prioritised.
- Middle managers do not have a clear vision or sense of purpose; leadership of the curriculum is weak.
- The extent to which leadership has created effective teams is not yet fully established.
- The school's leaders have a strong commitment to inclusion, equality of opportunity, and to pupils' individual needs.
- The leadership and management of the SCD unit are very good.

Commentary

33. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership. She has successfully led the amalgamation of two schools and ensured there are sufficient staff to meet pupils' educational and welfare needs. She has been particularly successful in creating an inclusive school where all pupils feel they belong. She has a clear view of the future direction of the school but has not yet managed to establish a senior management team which works effectively towards the school's identified aims. The school improvement plan is usefully based on the OFSTED framework for evaluation. The areas for improvement are appropriate and based on sound self-evaluation processes. However, the way the targets are expressed is not always sharp and measurable enough and the activities for achieving them are not being robustly followed by all staff.
34. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body fulfil its statutory requirements. Governors worked well with the headteacher and staff to establish the aims and mission statement for the school, and this has contributed to the positive ethos. They are beginning to establish good procedures for monitoring the school's work and a core of governors play a particularly strong role in this. At present their role is supportive, but not yet challenging enough to ensure subject co-ordinators and senior staff are taking robust action to raise standards.
35. Management is becoming more effective. The school is beginning to monitor its own performance; up to now it has relied upon local authority advisers to identify areas requiring improvement. The school uses performance data well to set targets for pupils in Years 2 and 6 and to inform its planning. Arrangements for the performance management of teaching staff have been established and are beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching. The role of subject co-ordinators is satisfactory overall. They are not yet consistent in monitoring and promoting their subjects with sufficient rigour and clarity however. In-service training related to school priorities, such as ICT and investigative science, has already had a positive effect on pupils' learning opportunities. The school has successfully managed the appointment of over ten new members of teaching and non-teaching staff and their integration into the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	869,603
Total expenditure	877,361
Expenditure per pupil	2,886

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	51,498
Balance carried forward to the next	43,740

36. The financial management of the school is sound and best value principles are being applied to a satisfactory extent. The governing body and headteacher have effectively managed the available funds through a period of significant transition. In particular, they have been very rigorous in ensuring the new building work has been managed successfully and to time.

37. The management and leadership of the small SCD department are very good. The teacher in charge and her staff work exceedingly hard to very effectively provide for the needs of their pupils both within the department and when included within the mainstream school. There is excellent team work amongst all staff and pupils within the department. There is a good inclusion of these pupils in the day-to-day life of the school. The department benefits greatly from the services of a speech therapist.
38. Overall, the school has come along way in a short period of time. It has only been on one site for a year and staff are working alongside each other effectively. The headteacher has established a firm basis for future development.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

There are a nursery class and a reception class in the Foundation Stage. Children are admitted to the nursery in the term after their fourth birthday, and to reception as rising fives. At the time of the inspection there were 14 children attending the nursery part time in the mornings, and 27 children in the reception class. Both classes have a learning support assistant.

The majority of children enter the nursery and reception with attainment in all areas of learning which is broadly in line with what is expected for their ages. The language skills of some children are less well developed than other areas of learning. Teaching is good and children achieve well but the proportion of children reaching the standards expected nationally on entry to Year 1 is dependent to a considerable extent on the amount of time they have spent in school. Nearly all the children who entered reception at the beginning of the autumn term will achieve most of the goals. Those entering in the summer term have not had enough time to cover many of the stepping stones towards these goals; nor are they all mature enough to do so.

Teaching in the lessons seen was good, and sometimes it was very good. The nursery and reception teachers plan well together to ensure children have appropriate experiences in the six areas of learning. They are developing a two-year programme so there is no topic repetition; planning for the term's work is thorough, weekly plans are well thought out, and lesson plans are sufficiently detailed to promote progression in children's learning. In the reception class, assessment of children's progress towards the expected standards in all areas of learning is comprehensive and meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage Profile. Regular individual observations of what children are able to do are noted and used to inform planning for the next steps in their learning. Assessment is less well developed in the nursery but the school has plans to improve the information provided by pre-school settings, and to take the stepping stones towards the early learning goals into account to a greater extent and at an earlier stage.

The accommodation in the amalgamated school building is good. The nursery has spacious accommodation for the number of children and could easily accommodate larger numbers. The reception class, too, is quite a good size, and there is an adjacent annex, often used as a role-play area, and access beyond to a kitchen. The new school has an attractive, secure and enclosed outside area which is spacious enough for both classes to use together. Children are able to use wheeled toys, sand and water, and grow flowers and vegetables. A well spread tree provides shade but there is no covered area so that learning can take place outside when the weather is inclement. The area has been identified in the school improvement plan as requiring further development, partly because the space lacks the climbing equipment needed to promote physical development.

Teachers and learning support staff co-operate well with each other, are committed and thoughtful, and are leading developments in an ad hoc way. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is lacking at present and there is no separate representation on the senior management team.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's personal development is effective.
- The children in reception are very well behaved.

Commentary

39. The personal, social and emotional development of the children when they enter both the nursery and the reception class is broadly in line with what is expected for their age. Children make good progress and, by the time they enter Year 1, most children are likely to have achieved the early learning goals in this area of learning.
40. Children are provided with a range of well focused activities which contribute well to their personal and social development. In the nursery, children sit together for snack time and this becomes a pleasant social occasion in which they talk with confidence to each other and to adults. In both classes, staff are very sensitive to children's needs and they feel secure. They part from their parents or carers with confidence, sit still and listen attentively for increasing periods of time, and concentrate well when they are given tasks to complete. In the reception class, a significant proportion of the children apply themselves very well for sustained periods of time, without close supervision, demonstrating increasing independence. They co-operate well with each other in pairs and small groups. In the reception class, particularly, behaviour is very good during whole-class and group sessions because the teacher has high expectations to which children respond very well.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's progress in speaking and listening is good.
- Regular reading to an adult encourages good progress in early reading skills.

Commentary

41. Children are taught well in both classes and make good progress. Attainment on entry is broadly average in this area of learning although a few children have a rather limited vocabulary. The majority of children are likely to attain the early learning goals. Almost all speak with confidence and can be clearly understood. To a considerable extent, attainment of the early learning goals is related to the length of time in the reception class rather than to ability. Only the autumn-born children have three terms in reception; almost all these children will attain the goals, as will some of those entering in the spring. Able summer-born children also do so.
42. The lesson seen in the nursery was good. The story about 'Jasper's Beanstalk' was used very well to promote enjoyment and develop understanding of a sequence of events, for example, reinforcing knowledge of the order of days of the week.. A subsequent re-enactment of the story maintained interest and reinforced this learning but children spent too long sitting still. Children are beginning to show an interest in books and to write their names independently.
43. The lesson seen in the reception class was good. The teacher used her voice well to maintain pupils' interest in the story of 'Jack and the Beanstalk'. The story was familiar to the children and they liked to join in with some of the repetition. During group activities, a third of the class wrote about a part of the story they particularly liked, using their knowledge of initial letter sounds and sight vocabulary well. Children take books home to share, the home/school records are well maintained, and children read regularly to an adult at home and at school. As a result they are making good progress; three children who were heard to read did so with interest and confidence, using picture clues, phonics and, in one case, context clues to help them read unknown words. All children handle books with care and turn pages correctly, using pictures as they begin to think about the sequence of the story.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the reception class is very good.

Commentary

44. Most children are likely to attain the expected standards in the number aspects of mathematical development, and some will also achieve the goals related to shape, space and measures. In both classes, the registration times are used routinely to consolidate children's developing number skills, including their number recognition and knowledge of the order of days of the week.
45. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory overall, and aspects of it are good. The main focus in the lesson seen was ordering objects by size. The teacher used various colours and sizes of pairs of Wellington boots very well to develop the concept of larger than, smaller than, and ordering by size. In the related group activities, children learned well as they enjoyed printing with 'wellies', pegging pairs of socks on a washing line, and taking longer or shorter strides to print on a roll of wallpaper.
46. Teaching in the reception class was very good in the one lesson seen. Children's interest was sustained by ensuring they were all actively involved so their attention to the tasks was good and they learned well. In the oral part of the lesson, children used number fans to show the teacher numbers smaller, greater/ more/less than a given number. During the main activity children showed that they could recognize and name a range of two- and three-dimensional shapes, describing them for others to identify. Related group activities were well organised and appropriate to children's learning needs.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The classrooms are bright and stimulating and encourage children's interest in the world around them.

Commentary

47. Most children are likely to achieve the expected standards in this area because, both in the nursery and in reception, they are given a wide range of opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. Wall displays in both classes showed children had learned about Australia, including Rolf Harris' didgeridoo and wobble music, and had used ICT to make aboriginal pictures. They have made drawings and labelled them, completed ICT portraits and, in the nursery, made papier-mâché masks of themselves. Currently they are growing tomatoes, and beans in a variety of conditions. They understand what plants require to grow well. Teachers have created a stimulating learning environment in both classes, with the nursery having the advantage of more shelf space on which to set out displays with which children can experiment.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children's work is respected and displayed well.

Commentary

48. The nursery and reception classes plan their lessons well and ensure good coverage of this area of learning. Attractive displays in both classrooms, related to most areas of learning, indicated that children are given a range of appropriate artistic opportunities, using a variety of media including ICT. During an art lesson related to growing plants, reception children made observational drawings of a sunflower in considerable detail; they also applied water colour carefully to drawings. Early understanding of tempo and dynamics was taught well in a singing lesson in the nursery.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

49. Provision for physical development is satisfactory. No lessons related specifically to physical development were seen during the inspection. At playtime, and in using wheeled vehicles during 'free choice', children showed they could use the available space with due regard for the needs of others. The outdoor area is spacious but there is a lack of appropriate equipment for children to develop their abilities to climb, scramble, slide and swing. Children have opportunities to use one-handed tools of various kinds, explore malleable materials and use small equipment to further develop fine motor control. Most children in reception hold a pencil appropriately.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reading standards are above average in Year 6.
- The quality of teaching is too variable because monitoring is having too little impact.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes make a positive contribution to learning.
- The quality of ongoing assessment is unsatisfactory.
- Handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work are not good enough.
- Provision for pupils in the SCD department is very good.

Commentary

50. Pupils enter the school with broadly average language and literacy skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and speaking and listening remains broadly average. In the current Year 6, attainment in reading is above average and nearly all pupils are confident, independent readers of a wide range of text. Pupils have a wide knowledge of a range of children's literature and read regularly for pleasure at home. The well stocked school library is used on a regular basis. Pupils' writing skills are less well developed. Although a few pupils are beginning to find an individual authorial voice and use a range of interesting vocabulary, the work of pupils of all abilities is marred by technical inaccuracies.

51. Learning in nearly all classes is underpinned by the good behaviour and attitudes of the pupils. They listen well to their teacher and to each other. They know classroom routines, settle quickly to tasks and concentrate for appropriate lengths of time. The high levels of support ensure that pupils with special educational needs are enabled to access the curriculum and make a positive contribution to lessons.
52. Overall achievement is satisfactory, but is not consistent across the school. This reflects the variability in the quality of teaching. Although the overall quality of teaching is satisfactory it ranges from very good to unsatisfactory, and is best in Years 5 and 6. Much of the teaching seen during the inspection was good but the scrutiny of pupils' work indicated that over time some of the teaching is unsatisfactory.
53. Characteristics of the good teaching include a brisk pace to lessons, good relationships and high expectations of what pupils can achieve. For example, in Year 5, the teacher of a group of pupils with special educational needs constantly challenged pupils and drove their learning forward. She used a range of interesting strategies including performance to ensure that they understood the difference between poetry and prose, ensured they understood and used a range of technical language and challenged them to create their own performance poem. The results were impressive. At the end of the lesson, she did not rely on a simple 'thumbs up' to indicate whether the learning objective had been achieved but challenged the pupils to explain their learning.
54. In the less effective lessons, there is a reliance on published lesson plans to structure learning, without necessary modification. In particular, this over-reliance on pre-published material does not meet the needs of higher-attaining pupils. Teachers spend too long talking and the introductions are insufficiently interactive. On occasions, this results in frequent interruptions to the lesson to deal with restless behaviour and the pace slows even further. There is variability in the extent to which support staff are used to good effect throughout the lesson. In some lessons, support staff have little interaction with pupils during the introduction, although they are used well to help pupils access the curriculum through follow-up tasks.
55. The overall quality of marking is unsatisfactory. In Years 5 and 6, the marking is evaluative and remarks help to indicate how pupils can improve. However, even in these year groups too little regard was paid to spelling and punctuation and mistakes are repeated in subsequent pieces of work. In most other year groups, there is unmarked or cursorily marked work. Teachers do not mark with the learning objective of the task in mind and basic technical errors are ignored. Marking is not focused on raising individual pupils' attainment and no reference is made to the targets pasted in pupils' books. Praise is often indiscriminately awarded without reference to whether the learning objective has been achieved.
56. Teachers' expectations of presentation and handwriting are low. Regular lengthy handwriting sessions which take up a disproportionate amount of curriculum time are having minimal impact on the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation, either in English or across the curriculum.
57. Leadership and management of English are broadly satisfactory. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning that has taken place has been insufficiently rigorous and has had too little impact on learning. The action plan for English lacks clear priorities and is insufficiently evaluative. Although, in consultation with the literacy advisor, various initiatives have been introduced, there has been too little monitoring of their impact or indeed whether they are being implemented at all in some classes. For example, guided reading does not happen in all classes, which in some it is included as part of the literacy hour. The 'quality marking scheme' is implemented at the discretion of individual teachers. A significant amount of money has been spent on resources but the rationale for this is frequently to make planning easier for teachers rather than their impact on learning.

58. Across the SCD the pupils achieve very well and make very good progress in English in particular for their speaking and listening skills and their reading. In the one lesson seen, covering Years 2 to 6, the pupils responded very well to their reading of the Big Book, 'Bear Hunt'. Supported by very good teaching they learnt very well. They all clearly read parts of the text, responding appropriately to the very skilful use of questioning, to answer questions showing their understanding. More able pupils, with more advanced comprehension skills, read the whole text accurately and they successfully structured their own story, which the support assistant wrote for them, adding words of their own. In a library lesson pupils in Years 5 and 6, with very levels of interest, communicated with a very good adaptation of speech to listeners' needs showing a very good understanding of the main points discussed. Three out of five of the pupils read accurately with a good understanding and interpretation of the main points. The quality of teaching and learning was very good. An excellent team approach from all staff, teachers and support assistants, supported by a very good use of assessment contributes to the very good progress of all pupils in the SCD department in their English work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. This is satisfactory. The school is beginning to use other curriculum areas as a focus for work in literacy lessons. There are too few opportunities for the development of pupils' literacy skills through extended pieces of writing in history and geography.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are developing good problem-solving strategies in Year 6.
- Marking does not provide enough guidance for pupils. New assessment procedures are beginning to raise teachers' expectations.
- Provision in the SCD department is very good.

Commentary

60. Standards are at the nationally expected levels for the current pupils in Years 2 and 6. The achievement of pupils of all abilities is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls. Standards for the current Year 2 pupils show a marked improvement of that for the previous two years. The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but is often good in Years 3 to 6.
61. There is an increasing emphasis on problem-solving throughout the school and this is developing effectively in Years 3 to 6. In Year 2 pupils use too many worksheets that do not give them enough opportunity to explore and investigate. In lessons seen in Years 5 and 6 there is a good emphasis given to pupils solving problems for themselves. For example, pupils in Year 6 explore the relationships between angles and the length of regular shapes. They use an appropriate vocabulary to express their reasoning. The less-able pupils and those with special educational needs in Years 5 and 6 make good progress in tackling number problems. This is a direct result of high quality questioning by the teacher and teaching assistant. In Year 3, pupils are given good practical opportunities to compare and contrast weights and measures. Some opportunities are missed to challenge the most-able pupils. For example, the teachers sometimes suggest further areas for investigation, but do not follow these up.

62. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are planned well and the mental and oral sessions at the start of lessons are well paced and challenging. Teachers often make good use of time at the end of lessons to refresh ideas and check on pupils' progress. The quality of marking is unsatisfactory however. Teachers do not often guide pupils sufficiently through the comments they make. They do not regularly ensure that weaknesses identified are sufficiently addressed. For example, weaknesses in the pupils' understanding of division are not addressed in several age groups. Where suggestions are made by the teacher, they are not always followed up by the pupils. The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership and, through the primary leadership programme, has established suitable schemes of work and resources for the new school. However, the management procedures are not yet sufficient to monitor standards of teaching and learning effectively to ensure consistent high expectations. The pupils have positive attitudes towards mathematics and are eager to work hard. The presentation of their work is not always careful enough and can lead to inaccuracies in calculations.
63. In a mathematics lesson in the SCD unit/department, pupils in Years 5 and 6 achieved very well, making very good progress. Supported by very good teaching they learnt very well. They showed a very good recognition of number sequences by counting on or back in 10's and 100's from any two- or three-digit number. The pupils showing very good attitudes with high level of interest, and enthusiastically gave of their best in rising to the high level of challenge.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. This is satisfactory. The pupils make use of their numeracy skills and data handling in science and design and technology. They use spreadsheets in ICT to perform calculations. The pupils do not always take enough care when drawing graphs or other tasks which require accurate measurements.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Science is not taught in Year 2 on a regular weekly basis, no teaching was seen during the inspection, and a judgement about standards was not possible.
- Planning for the development of pupils' scientific knowledge, skills and understanding is not consistent throughout the school.
- Leadership and management of the subject lack focus and rigour.
- The school has begun to develop pupils' investigative skills well.
- Teachers' expectations are not high enough for pupils' presentation of their work.

Commentary

65. Standards in the work seen at Year 6 were at the expected level for the pupils' age. The one lesson seen in Year 1 was satisfactory but there were too few opportunities for pupils to discuss and extend their ideas, and their understanding was not assessed during a plenary session. Discussion with a small group of able Year 2 pupils indicated they had a growing understanding of fair testing. All classes in Years 3 to 6 were taking part in investigative work during the inspection; recent whole-school in-service training in this aspect of science teaching has resulted in greater teacher enthusiasm and confidence. During the inspection, pupils set up experiments to find out the difference in the growth of plants if they were given varying amounts of water, heat and light; looked at how electricity travels through different materials; measured how well different materials muffle sound; and investigated what

happens to shadows if the distance from the light source is changed. Nearly all the lessons seen were good because teachers' lesson planning was thorough, there was a high level of effective adult help, and pupils were actively engaged in their learning and concentrated well.

66. Over time, teaching is satisfactory, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Evidence from the samples of pupils' work throughout the school year shows an over-reliance on teacher-produced worksheets which are rarely completed with care. The programmes of study in the National Curriculum require that pupils use a wide range of methods to communicate data in an appropriate and systematic manner; this aspect is not currently being addressed. Tasks are not often differentiated for the range of abilities in a class; less-able pupils sometimes produce incomplete work, and pupils with special educational needs are supported to fill in the same worksheets as the rest of the class.
67. The science curriculum is planned making use of a national guidance. This ensures that the coverage of life processes and living things, materials and their properties, and physical processes is thorough. A weakness is that teachers modify the plans so that continuity and progression in knowledge, skills and understanding over a period of time become unclear. Greater consistency in planning formats throughout the school would address this, and assist with the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. The school has appropriately identified investigative skills as a significant area of science which was being neglected. Steps are being taken to address this weakness and some good practice in this aspect was seen in lessons.
68. The co-ordinator is beginning to have a greater understanding of her leadership role but her monitoring and evaluation have been limited, issues identified have not been adequately addressed, and, with the exception of the recent science investigations, there has been insufficient focus on improving pupils' learning opportunities. Resources are adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum but they are not easily accessible.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The new computer suites are having a positive impact on standards.
- The teaching seen in the suites was good.

Commentary

69. Standards are at the expected levels for pupils in Years 2 and 6. The quality of teaching and learning seen in the computer suites was good, but there is limited use of computers in classrooms. Pupils with special educational needs are making good use of programs to develop basic skills.
70. The school has two suites as a result of the extensive building work and they are well resourced. The teachers teach the pupils ICT skills in the suites and are beginning to use the suites for other lessons such as history and English, although this is not yet fully established. The school follows national guidance and offers a broad and balanced curriculum. However, the school does not yet provide pupils with sufficient opportunities in control technology. By Year 2, pupils use word processors appropriately. They can blend text and pictures with minimal support and understand how to tell a story through different PowerPoint slides. Their basic skills are good with pupils able to log on and off the computer, and print their work. They are beginning to use the computer for simple research tasks. By Year 6 the pupils have a sound understanding of multi-media presentations and Year 5 pupils

prepare their own series of slides about their visit to 'Hazard Alley'. Both boys and girls have sound skills in handling data through spreadsheets and graph programs. They experiment with background effects and colour features to good effect.

71. The quality of teaching is satisfactory because. There is limited use of computers in classroom with inconsistencies in practice. In the two lessons observed in the suite for Year 2 and Year 6 it was good. Pupils make sound use of the Internet in some subjects. In the lessons seen the teachers made effective use of the projector and laptops to demonstrate key points. The tasks were planned well and provided challenge for all abilities. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides a supportive role and has ensured staff receives appropriate training. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are at an early stage of development, and assessment procedures are not yet in operation in all classes although they have been developed.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. This is satisfactory. There are sound links with English and mathematics through newly introduced programs. The teachers make links with other subjects to teach skills. For example, the Year 6 pupils used their learning in personal and social development to develop multi-media skills. The pupils undertake investigations in history and geography on the Internet.

HUMANITIES

73. Work was sampled in geography and history with only two lessons seen in geography and one in history. It was not possible to give an overall judgement on provision. Evidence was gathered from a scrutiny of available work and discussions with pupils and staff.
74. From the two lessons were seen in **geography**, one in Year 2 and one in Year 6, the evidence indicates that pupils' standards of work match national expectations. In addition to observing these lessons, inspectors spoke to teachers about their work and looked at samples of pupils' work and displays around the school.
75. The subject is suitably supported with the use of two commercial schemes. These aid the planning and teaching. Samples of pupils' work show that in the absence of a co-ordinator for the subject, work is not yet being monitored and evaluated. There are some occasions when teachers in different years follow the same or similar topics as in preceding years and this adversely affects pupils' standards and achievement. In Year 2, the good teaching resulted in pupils learning successfully to use maps and an atlas to identify and name seaside places, although the lesson did not give the pupils enough opportunities to explore the physical and human features of the places being identified. Year 6 pupils satisfactorily described the human activities that take place in coastal areas, identifying how these activities may improve or damage the environment. Standards, achievement and learning were average.
76. The work seen in **history** indicates that standards are broadly at expected levels at Year 6. The work seen shows that a broad curriculum is taught and that pupils are taught historical skills as well as knowledge. For example, the Year 6 pupils have a sound knowledge of primary and secondary sources and know that first-hand information is of the most value. The teaching seen in Year 5 was good. The teacher's questioning skills and good subject knowledge ensured that the pupils recalled many interesting facts about life in the Indus Valley. The pupils in Year 5 understand how an archaeologist researches his subject by comparing known facts with their discoveries. They write well about the role of an archaeologist. However, the pupils' sense of chronology is not well established. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils study the Great Fire of London and write their own diaries in the style of Samuel Pepys. The pupils make use of ICT for research and in presenting their results. There seems to be a satisfactory range of visits and visitors to support the subject.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by Year 6 are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus
- Pupils have positive attitudes to the subject
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and social education
- There is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning
- Pupils do not keep a regular record of the work they have studied.

Commentary

77. The planning follows the locally agreed syllabus which is being supplemented from national guidelines. Teachers are beginning to be more confident in teaching the various aspects of the subject and it makes an appropriate contribution to pupils' cultural development. Religious education is taught regularly in all classes. However, there is an emphasis on discussion in lessons, there is very little recorded work in all classes.
78. Of the lessons observed, only one made a significant contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Links between the religious education syllabus and the school's provision for personal and moral education are explicitly made. Work in religious education is often used as a focus for discussions in circle time. For example, in Year 5, pupils tackled the difficult issue of what is meant by 'Having a faith in God'. The class teacher and the local vicar communicated openly and honestly with pupils. The very good opportunities for asking questions, underpinned by very good relationships between adults and pupils, resulted in effective learning. A final session of contemplation gave pupils a further insight into how and why people pray. Pupils showed great interest in the subject and respect for other people's beliefs.
79. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and committed, and provides good support for colleagues. However, she has had no opportunities for monitoring provision. The lack of written work makes it difficult to assess how pupils' knowledge is built on progressively as they move through the school. Assessment and recording procedures are built into the local syllabus.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

80. Only one lesson was observed in music and physical education and no lessons in art and design and design and technology. It is therefore not possible to give judgements on provision in these subjects.
81. In **art and design** and **design and technology**, portfolios of pupils' work and classroom displays indicate satisfactory coverage of the main curriculum elements. However, the extent of coverage is largely dependent on the interest and initiative of individual teachers and there is insufficient monitoring to ensure the progressive development of discrete subject skills as pupils move through the school. Not all classes have displays of pupils' art work.
82. Art and design and design and technology are used appropriately to support learning in other curriculum areas and the subject makes an acceptable contribution to pupils' cultural development. Pupils look at the work of significant artists and the work of artists from different cultures. Displays of the work from the school's multi-cultural week included vivid art work by Year 5 pupils that was inspired by Africa. Current work in Year 5 is an exploration of native American art.

83. The school has rightly identified teachers' knowledge and understanding in **music** as an area for development in the school improvement plan. Pupils' singing during assembly was in line with national expectations.
84. In the one music lesson seen, insufficient time was taken to introduce the use of graphic symbols so pupils could use them to aid their group compositions. Pupils showed little understanding of elements such as tempo, dynamics and duration.
85. In a music lesson in the SCD department, the pupils from Years 2 to 6 making excellent progress. Supported by excellent teaching, they were able to recognize and repeat musical sequences and, in naming a range of percussion instruments, they explored the range of sounds and repeated short patterns very effectively. More-able pupils showed a very good recognition of the ways sounds can be arranged, and sang songs with very good intonation and phasing. Excellent attitudes abounded with all the pupils trying very hard, and rising to the high level of challenge from the teacher.
86. Only one **physical education** lesson was observed during the inspection because of the priorities of the inspection. The teaching observed was satisfactory and pupils' athletic skills were at expected levels. The subject has a new co-ordinator who has quickly formed a view of the overall planning and resources, and has prepared a purposeful plan of action for development. Standards of swimming meet the expectations of the National Curriculum and possibly exceed them. There are good opportunities for pupils to go swimming from Year 2 and good inclusion for the SCD department. The co-ordinator has identified a need for staff training in dance and this is being undertaken. The school has established good links with local and national initiatives in physical education.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

87. The development of provision for pupils' personal and social development has been a major focus since the amalgamation of the two schools and the provision underpins much of the school's work. Pupils' personal and social development has taken on an added importance as a significant number of pupils join the school during Years 3 to 6. Circle time is planned regularly and extra sessions are occasionally fitted in to accommodate particular circumstances. Education about relationships and sex and the misuse of drugs together with links with the local police are firmly established and the school is taking part in a 'healthy schools' initiative

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	n/a
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4

The effectiveness of management

4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).