

INSPECTION REPORT

SHARPS COPSE PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Havant

LEA area: Hampshire

Unique reference number: 133303

Headteacher: Mrs D Oastler

Lead inspector: Mr P Mann

Dates of inspection: 13th -16th October 2003

Inspection number: 257440

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	346
School address:	Prospect Lane Havant Hampshire
Postcode:	PO9 5PE
Telephone number:	0239 2484545
Fax number:	0239 2456550
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T Hart
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Sharps Copse Primary and Nursery School is a recently amalgamated school that has 334 pupils on roll, aged 3 to 11. The school serves a residential area on the outskirts of Havant and is surrounded by a large playground and a playing field; several building developments are yet to be completed. The school is a partner of a local action zone. The home circumstances of most of the pupils are very disadvantaged and the number of pupils in receipt of a free school meal is well above the national average. About 10 per cent of pupils either left or joined the school during the last academic year. At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 30 children under five in the reception classes. The attainment of children when they start school is well below average and 43 per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, of which half are in receipt of help from outside agencies. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is very high and well above the national average. There are currently two pupils with a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities is extremely small.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23219	Phil Mann	Lead inspector	Information and communication technology, Religious education
12289	Sue Burgess	Lay inspector	
32197	Mike Dukes	Team inspector	Special educational needs, English as an additional language, Science, Geography, History
1411	John Good	Team inspector	Mathematics, Design and technology, Physical education
24137	Gail Robertson	Team inspector	Children under five, English, Art and design, Music

The inspection contractor was:

Altecq Inspections Ltd
102 Bath Road
Cheltenham
GL53 73X

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	12
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	17
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	19
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	32

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is **satisfactory**. A strong sense of teamwork now exists within this recently formed school because the headteacher and senior staff provide clear direction for its work. The headteacher has been successful in uniting the staff, pupils and parents around her clear vision for the new school and in the establishment of a positive climate for learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall with much good teaching in evidence. All staff endeavour to provide a very caring environment where all pupils can learn basic skills. A strong focus has been placed in the development of the pupils' personal and social skills. There are, however, some inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' planning overall and the management of pupil behaviour. As a result, the achievement of pupils, although **satisfactory** overall, varies between different key stages and classes. Given the low starting point of many pupils, the standards being achieved and the level of resources available, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average for both seven and eleven year olds in science and music and the level of overall achievement in these subjects is good.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and these pupils are achieving at a faster rate than their other classmates.
- The provision for children in the nursery and reception classes is very good.
- The school provides very good levels of care and support for all pupils.
- Standards in English and mathematics are below average for seven and eleven year olds. They are also below average in information and communication technology, design and technology and religious education in the juniors.
- The quality of planning for learning opportunities is inconsistent across the infants and juniors and unsatisfactory overall.
- Governance of the school is unsatisfactory and some statutory requirements have yet to be fulfilled. The long term planning for the school is underdeveloped.
- Pupil attendance is unsatisfactory.

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	E	D
mathematics	N/a	E	E	E
science	N/a	D	D	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils based on free school meals*

The achievement of pupils varies across the school but is **satisfactory** overall. Children enter the nursery with very low levels of communication, early literacy and mathematical skills. However, the achievement of these children is **good**. This is further built on through the infant classes but standards in literacy and numeracy skills are still low for seven year olds. Achievement is inconsistent but **satisfactory overall** across the junior classes. As a result, standards for 11 year olds are below average in English, mathematics and several other subjects. The very high number of pupils with special educational needs **achieve well** in relation to their prior attainment.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. However, all teaching and learning in reception and the nursery are very good and about a quarter of lessons in other classes are also very good. There is a strong emphasis on the development of pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills in order to

support learning across the curriculum. In spite of this, many pupils still have difficulty in solving mathematical problems and writing confidently in other subjects. Many lessons are judged to be good but, in two lessons, teaching was unsatisfactory. The inappropriate behaviour of some pupils was not managed effectively and planning was not fully matched to the needs of these pupils. As a result the majority of pupils were not able to achieve in these lessons. The provision for pupils with special educational needs, however, is very good and high quality support is provided for these pupils in lessons and effective small group teaching.

Overall planning of learning opportunities is unsatisfactory and termly planning is inconsistent in quality across the school. The school has not yet successfully offered its pupils a curriculum that develops their learning year by year in all subjects. It is broad but not yet sufficiently balanced. There is very good planning in some classes but there is no coherent whole school approach to the development of skills, knowledge and understanding across all subjects. For example, elements of religious education, design and technology and physical education are not covered in sufficient detail.

The development of the pupils' personal and social skills has been a top priority for the work of the school and this work is now starting to have a positive impact on pupils' relationships and behaviour around the school. A notable success has been the establishment of a pupils' school council. This initiative provides very good opportunities for the development of citizenship skills and includes all pupils in the development of the school.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher has devoted much of her time to ensuring the amalgamation of the two schools was managed as smoothly as possible. This period of rapid change has been managed effectively and, as a result, relationships and teamwork between all staff are good. School leaders review the work of the school very well and plan satisfactory courses of action where this is required. However, the school does not yet have an effective plan for whole school improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning, although satisfactory overall, is insufficiently thorough. The school is aware of these weaknesses and has begun to address them. Senior managers form a strong team for leading the school. Middle managers provide good lines of communication but their monitoring role and that of subject leaders is not clearly defined. Governors contribute positively to the direction of the school through their very good informal relationships with staff and they are confident in questioning the headteacher's decisions. However, they do not yet have effective systems for ensuring that the school fulfils its statutory duties and some key policies required by law, are not in place. The governors have not adopted procedures that will give them a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they have not yet implemented the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents: Overall parents are satisfied about the school. They are confident that their children like schooling and are making progress. They feel that staff are very available and easy to talk to. They are, however, concerned about the behaviour of a minority of pupils in the lessons and playground. Parents are not fully aware about how the school seeks to improve pupil behaviour. The inspection team judges that behaviour in the playground is satisfactory but agree with parents' views that disruptive behaviour in some lessons affects the learning of other pupils.

Pupils: They enjoy school and feel that they have a good choice of clubs and activities. They also feel that other children do not always behave well but they know who to go to with any concerns or problems.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- continue to raise standards in English and mathematics;
- the breadth and balance of the curriculum for pupils in the infant and juniors;
- the consistency and quality of teachers' planning within the school;
- the monitoring of teaching and learning across the school;
- the governing body's level of involvement in the school;

- construct a long term strategic plan for the school;
- raise levels of pupil attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The achievement of pupils varies across the school but is **satisfactory** overall. The achievement of children in the Foundation Stage is **good**. This is further built on through the infant classes and the achievement of these pupils is **satisfactory**. Achievement is **satisfactory overall** but inconsistent across the junior classes. The very high number of pupils with special educational needs **achieve well** in relation to their prior attainment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The achievements of pupils in the Foundation Stage are good because of very good teaching and effective planning.
 - Planning for lessons in the infants is good.
 - The rates of achievement for junior pupils are inconsistent because:
 - teachers' termly planning varies from good to poor in standard;
 - activities are not always carefully matched to the needs of the pupils;
 - time is not always used well and as a result the behaviour of some pupils becomes difficult to manage;
 - the behaviour of pupils is not always managed effectively and learning is disrupted.
 - The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and these pupils achieve well.
1. *Commentary* The process of amalgamation has been rapid and demanding for both pupils and teachers alike. A strong focus has been placed in the development of the pupils' personal and social skills and much has been achieved in the first year of the new school. However, although the overall achievement of pupils is satisfactory, the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils in classes often disrupts the learning of other pupils; this is particularly so in the classes for Year 4 and 5 pupils. The quality of teaching for these pupils is inconsistent and sometimes too much time is taken up in managing some very difficult behaviour. This combined with a curriculum that is unsatisfactory overall is limiting the level of achievement being made across the school.
 2. It is recognised by the inspection team that a very large proportion of the pupils are on the school's special educational needs register and this factor has a detrimental effect on the overall standards achieved. The results in the 2003 national tests for eleven year-olds are well below average in English and mathematics. They are below average in science. When these results are compared with schools of similar circumstances and based on free school meals, they are below average in English and well below average in mathematics. They are above average in science. The results of pupils in Year 2 taking the 2003 national tests are well below average in reading and writing when compared with schools nationally and with those of similar circumstances. Standards are below average in mathematics using the same comparisons. The school has evaluated a wide range of data comparing it with other local schools of similar circumstances. This data clearly supports the argument that pupils overall make at least satisfactory achievement as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve particularly well. There are no significant differences in the rates of achievement of pupils according to gender or ethnicity.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	11.8 (13.8)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	10.2 (12.7)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	13.5 (15.9)	16.3 (16.3)

There were 52 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	24.1(23.5)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	23.7 (24.2)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	27.9 (27.5)	28.6 (28.5)

There were 46 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Assessments undertaken at the end of the reception year clearly indicate that the achievements of these children are well below the national average for that expected of five year olds. This is particularly so in their communication, early literacy skills, mathematical development and their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. Inspection evidence confirms these low standards but due to very good teaching and effective planning of learning experiences these children make good progress in all areas of learning.
- This good progress is built on through the infant classes and inspection evidence confirms that by the age of seven, standards have improved in literacy and numeracy skills but are still below average overall. Standards are satisfactory in science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. They are also satisfactory in all other subjects except in design and technology where they are below that expected. All teachers in this key stage plan lessons effectively. Assessment is being used to carefully match work to the needs of individuals and groups of pupils and this is ensuring that pupils continue to achieve well. Higher attaining pupils are supported well in this key stage through a carefully programmed set of support sessions. The parents of these pupils are fully involved in this programme and this represents a good example of how the school is making every attempt to establish good community links.
- In contrast, some inconsistencies exist within teaching and learning in the junior classes. This is sometimes having a detrimental effect on overall standards and the pupils' achievements. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are below average for 11 year-olds in English and mathematics but average in science. They are also broadly in line with national expectations for these pupils in all subjects except ICT, design and technology and religious education. The inspection team recognise that a significant number of pupils within this key stage exhibit challenging behaviour in both lessons and the playground. However, in two lessons for pupils in Years 4 and 5 the teachers' explanations were sometimes too long and, as a result, pupils with low attention spans lost concentration and behaved unsatisfactorily. When lessons are sharply focused, well planned and full of interest for all pupils, the level of achievement is good. These elements of good teaching were observed in several lessons within this key stage.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well. Although they generally start from a lower level of attainment than their classmates, they progress at a higher rate than other pupils do and this is a strength of the school. A highly skilled team of teaching assistants and a very

effective manager for inclusion bring about this very good progress; together, they all provide high quality support for these pupils. Assessment information is used very effectively to ensure that those with special educational needs learn very well. Teachers write good individual education plans. They include small, short-term targets to meet individual needs and details of special teaching arrangements. Staff review the effectiveness of these plans regularly to make sure that pupils with special educational needs sustain their very good progress throughout each term and each year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

7. Overall, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are **satisfactory**. However, the behaviour of some pupils can adversely affect the learning of others. Although pupils are generally punctual to school and to lessons, attendance is **unsatisfactory**. **Unauthorised absence is almost twice the national average**. Effective provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The unsatisfactory behaviour of a significant minority of pupils affects the learning of others.
- Attendance is unsatisfactory and the level of unauthorised absence is well above the national average.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Commentary

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	7.4
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.9
National data	0.5

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
Black or Black British – African
No ethnic group recorded

No of pupils on roll
319
1
2

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
15	

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

8. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in the infant classes and satisfactory in the juniors. All the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire said that their children liked coming to school and this was confirmed during the inspection in interviews with pupils. In general, pupils are interested in their work and sustain their concentration during lessons. Pupils enjoy the various clubs and activities on offer and willingly undertake responsibilities such as acting as school council representatives, class monitors and Lunchtime Friends. Pupils are polite and confident with adults and are happy to talk about their work and their views of the school.
9. Behaviour in class and around the school is generally satisfactory. It is good or very good in assemblies and in lessons where teachers inspire pupils' interest and enthusiasm. However,

when unacceptable behaviour from a minority of pupils is not dealt with effectively enough, the learning of others is disrupted. Pupils and parents feel that, although a minority does not always behave well and there may be isolated incidents of bullying, the school generally deals with problems effectively. Inspectors agree with this view.

10. Some parents were concerned about behaviour outside in the playground. Inspectors found that, although play does become boisterous, there are enough supervisors to ensure that it does not get out of hand. Several new initiatives are proving effective in addressing this issue. For instance, the school, together with the school council, is seeking ways to make playtimes happier and there are plans to provide extra activities with adult involvement and to create a more interesting environment. Detailed support systems, including anger management advice, are in place for those pupils with identified behavioural difficulties. With a few exceptions, these systems have proved successful in creating more positive attitudes and behaviour. Six pupils accounted for the 15 fixed term exclusions last year. These were for physical and verbal abuse of staff and putting other pupils in danger.
11. Attendance is unsatisfactory and is well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is almost twice the national average. This is largely because so many parents take their children on holiday during term time, which adversely affects the continuity of pupils' learning. Despite the regular involvement of the education welfare officer and the inclusion manager, the school does not as yet work closely enough with parents on this issue to effect an improvement.
12. Pupils with special educational needs thrive in the climate of the school, which is marked by positive attitudes and values. There are good relationships throughout the school. Staff encourage respect for the feelings of others and they deal with bad behaviour well. This creates an atmosphere, which greatly benefits the pupils with special educational needs.
13. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through aspects of personal and social education, circle time and assemblies, pupils are encouraged to reflect on ideas and principles such as effective listening, how friends help them and the importance of honesty and trust in a community. Teachers are often skilled in relating such themes to pupils' own experience to make the most of opportunities for discussion and the development of self-esteem and confidence. Pupils are also encouraged to consider others less fortunate than themselves and the school, through the Grassroots Trust, is involved in the active sponsorship of two Tanzanian children.
14. There is a clear code of behaviour, part of which pupils helped to devise at the start of the school year. The whole school 'We Can Do It' programme, colour coded for confidence, persistence, organisation and getting along, enables pupils to learn the importance of these attributes as they gain individual credits.
15. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils are taken to a good range of destinations to enhance their knowledge of their own local culture and heritage, although transport costs limit the frequency of trips. Pupils are introduced to the traditions and culture of the wider world through visitors such as African drummers and an Indian dance workshop. However, in general, the school does not take enough opportunities to introduce pupils to today's multicultural society.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **satisfactory** overall. Teaching and learning are **very good** in music; good in art, physical education and science; and satisfactory in English and mathematics. There is insufficient evidence to make secure decisions in other subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good subject knowledge in the Foundation Stage, art, history, physical education and science.
- Good relationships between pupils and the adults who support their learning.
- Very effective behaviour management in about two-thirds of lessons observed.
- Good teamwork between teachers and their assistants in almost all lessons.
- Procedures for assessment are good in English and mathematics. The information is used effectively to plan the next stages in learning in these subjects. Satisfactory procedures have recently been implemented in all other subjects.
- Planning is of variable quality and is unsatisfactory overall.
- Time is not used well in the weakest lessons because behaviour management takes up too much of the available time.
- Teachers and their assistants provide very good support for pupils with special educational needs.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 44 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	15 (34%)	16 (36%)	11 (25%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	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 were seen.

16. The consistently very good teaching of four and five year olds occurs because the teachers have a clear understanding of how young children learn. They work very well with their teaching assistants and provide the children with a safe, secure, and stimulating learning environment. Wherever possible children learn through hands on, practical and investigative activities that encourage them to talk to one another and share their thoughts and ideas. Relationships are very good and the children enjoy coming to school. The children are keen to learn and they co-operate fully with the adults who support their learning. The very good quality of the teaching enables these young children to make good progress in their learning and achieve well.
17. During the inspection, the quality of teaching and learning in the infant classes was always at least satisfactory and it was good or better in half the lessons observed. Teaching and learning in the junior classes varied from unsatisfactory to very good. However, although two lessons were of an unsatisfactory standard, approximately two-thirds of the other 24 lessons were good or better.
18. Where teaching and learning are very good, it most frequently results from a combination of the teachers' enthusiasm for the subject and their expertise, specialist knowledge and personal skills. They produce an environment in which pupils are eager to learn, acquire knowledge and develop skills. Introductory sessions build upon pupils' previous experiences and questions are used skilfully to check for pupils' depth of understanding of knowledge and to promote new learning. Positive feedback and constant praise ensures that pupils try hard and do their best. During the inspection 15 lessons containing most or all of these features were

observed. They featured most frequently in the Foundation Stage and in music. A visiting specialist teacher teaches music to infant and junior pupils, utilising challenging, hands-on, practical learning experiences. The very good quality of her teaching enables all pupils to make good progress in their studies. Other examples of inspirational teaching ensure similar levels of achievement. These include an Indian dance workshop.

19. During the inspection, teaching and learning in two lessons in the Year 4/5 classes were unsatisfactory, one in literacy and the other in religious education. In both lessons, planning was not effective and many pupils were uncertain of what is expected of them and what they have to do. As a consequence, some pupils lost interest, too much time was spent in correcting pupils' unsatisfactory behaviour and a significant number of pupils made little progress in their studies.
20. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory overall. The subject managers have successfully implemented the new strategies and the school has placed a strong focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Where teaching is good, pupils are presented with a suitable environment in which to develop basic skills. They co-operate, behave well and achieve to their full potential. However, throughout the school pupils do not yet write confidently to support learning in other subjects. Older pupils have trouble in problem solving and understanding some of the subject-specific language in mathematics. The latter problem has been successfully addressed in science and as a result, standards are rising.
21. Teachers' termly planning of learning opportunities is inconsistent in quality and is unsatisfactory overall. It is very good in the reception and nursery, good in Years 1 to 3, and unsatisfactory in Years 4 to 6. Where it is good or better there is a clear structure and consistent practice across the year group. Learning objectives are explicit. Plans are evaluated well and assessment information influences future planning. There is very detailed planning for literacy and numeracy and a good overview for all other subjects. Where planning is unsatisfactory there is no common format across year groups, key skills are not identified effectively, there is insufficient detail in medium-term plans to guide short-term planning, no evaluation of planning and little or no use of assessment data.
22. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very good. This is because staff carefully assess the individual needs of pupils and successfully plan their teaching to help these pupils reach small, short-term targets. The teaching within special groups is of very good quality because it reflects the needs of pupils contained in their individual education plans, covering a range of types of need. For example, there are special groups to support learning in literacy and numeracy. The pupils receive very good support, whether this is within the classroom or in a special group. As a consequence, they achieve very well.
23. The school has a good range of effective procedures for analysing statistical data from tests and assessments. The information is used very effectively to identify those pupils who need additional help and support. Pupils' performances in the external tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are analysed well and the subject managers adapt their development plans to focus upon any newly identified weaknesses. All teachers keep detailed and comprehensive records of their pupils' achievements and levels of attainment in English and mathematics. Good use is made of these details to track pupils' progress across the school in these subjects and to inform pupils' individual targets and end of year reports. However, in some classes, teachers do not use assessment information enough to prepare tasks that will extend pupils' learning, particularly the small group of more able pupils. Pupils' work is marked regularly but does not give any indication of the standard achieved or how the work can be improved.

The curriculum

The overall quality of the curriculum is **unsatisfactory** with **strengths** in provision for children in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs. The planned programme for personal, health and sex education is **good**. The extra-curricular provision satisfactorily enriches the curriculum. The accommodation is **satisfactory** now, but more building work is planned which will improve classroom provision for the Nursery.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- The range and quality of learning experiences provided for children in Nursery and Reception classes are very good
- Pupils benefit from the 'You Can Do It' programme for personal, social and health education
- Insufficient planning for work in subjects other than English and mathematics to support the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy
- All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught, but insufficient time is given to some subjects, for example religious education and design and technology
- Planning for learning opportunities is inconsistent in quality in the juniors

Commentary

24. The curriculum for the infants and juniors is unsatisfactory overall. Since the amalgamation, the school has not successfully offered its pupils a curriculum that develops their learning year by year in all subjects. All the necessary subjects are taught but insufficient time is allocated to some. For example, there is currently an imbalance of time spent on each subject on a weekly and long-term basis. As a result of this, some aspects of religious education, physical education and design and technology are not taught: for example, the planning and evaluation elements of design and technology. The school recognises this as a weakness and intends to carry out a time audit of its teaching programmes. The extra time given to English for reading has not resulted in a great improvement in standards and the majority of pupils do not value this time, as it does not interest them.
25. The curriculum planned for children in the nursery and mixed classes for reception and Year 1 pupils is very good. It is broad, balanced and exciting, comprehensively covering all areas of learning. The emphasis is constantly on very good quality experiences in children's learning. Appropriate parts of the literacy and numeracy strategy are planned for the Reception children; these are well linked to the Reception class themes and topics.
26. Teachers in Year 1 to Year 6 do not systematically plan to incorporate literacy and numeracy skills learnt in the teaching of other subjects nor do they plan to teach literacy and numeracy skills through other areas of the curriculum. Termly planning is unsatisfactory overall and inconsistent in quality across the school. The best practice is in the Nursery and mixed classes for reception and Year 1 pupils, where planning is very good and in Year 3 where planning is more focused on the key skills to be taught for each subject.
27. All pupils have satisfactory access to the curriculum, including those with special educational needs. The school has a good programme for promoting pupils' personal, social and health education partly through subjects such as science and 'You Can Do It' scheme. The arrangements for sex education and drugs awareness are well established and thorough. All pupils are well integrated into school life and most pupils enjoy coming to school. There is a satisfactory range of additional curriculum opportunities that enriches pupils' learning outside the classes.

28. In addition, there are nurture groups for pupils with special educational needs that successfully develop confidence and self-esteem. There are also further groups that are effective in training pupils in anger management and in developing social skills. In an anger management group with a small group of boys, for example, the teaching assistant used a board game as the basis for her very successful session. She displayed clear behaviour rules for the group and insisted they were followed as the pupils were helped to listen to each other and take turns in responding to personal and moral issues. She questioned the boys very sensitively as she explored their responses to questions such as, 'How do you react when things do not go as planned?' 'What would make your life easier?' 'Say something about keeping a promise.' As a result, the teaching assistant skilfully provided individual guidance, and the pupils made very good progress in developing their social skills.
29. The accommodation and resources provided are satisfactory overall. However, due to building work, the nursery is housed temporarily and there is no immediate access to the outdoor play area for these children. Reception children have no wheeled toys or fixed climbing apparatus for outdoor play. The computer suite is awaiting completion and the library is not yet open. These factors are impacting on pupils' achievement in English and information and communication technology.
30. The teaching staff levels are adequate and all teachers are suitably qualified. The allocation of support staff is good. They are well qualified and support pupils with behavioural and educational problems effectively.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **very good** provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. It offers them very good support, advice and guidance and involves them well in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides an attractive and secure learning environment in which pupils feel safe and confident.
- There are well-established systems of support, advice and guidance that ensure individual needs are accurately identified.
- Induction arrangements are good across the school.
- Pupils' views are taken into account through the school council.

Commentary

31. The school provides very good levels of health, safety and care for all pupils. The vigilance of staff, especially the site manager and the relevant member of the governing body, ensures that pupils are well looked after. Previous bouts of vandalism are now being addressed successfully with a range of initiatives.
32. Pupils with special educational needs are guided and cared for very well. Good relationships exist at all levels in the school and a highly caring ethos ensures that pupils with special educational needs feel confident, secure and achieve very well.
33. Staff work well as a team and know their pupils well. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory but full training of all staff has yet to be repeated. Pupils are confident that they would know who to go to with a problem or concern and the inclusion manager takes a prominent role in organising extra support for pupils who need it. Strategies include reduced timetables, individual behaviour plans and contracts, anger management courses, social skills groups and the site manager's popular lunchtime club for pupils who find it difficult to mix in the playground. By these and other methods, the school is working hard to change the attitudes of a significant minority of pupils whose poor behaviour is giving cause for concern. In some

cases, families are referred to FASST (The Family and School Support Team) so that outside agencies can also offer help. The achievements and personal development of all pupils is monitored by a detailed analysis by year group of the 'You Can Do It' scheme.

34. Induction procedures are well managed throughout the school. These include the mother and toddler group and induction evenings for Reception and Year 1 parents. Pupils joining the school in older age groups are carefully monitored to ensure that they settle in well. Pupils are carefully prepared for transition from Year 6 to Year 7 in secondary school, when they take with them 'My Moving On Passport', in which they record personal details.
35. The well-established school council successfully ensures that pupils have a practical say in school life. For example, in a meeting observed during the inspection, there was much discussion about how playtimes could be cost effectively improved. Other examples include sensible alterations to the provision of drinking water in classrooms and the purchase of a 'friendship bench' for the playground.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with the community are **satisfactory** and developing well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Several parents have expressed a lack of confidence in the way the school is dealing with bad behaviour.
- Links with the community and some parents are developing well.
- Productive links with parents are as yet limited to certain groups.

Commentary

36. Relatively few parents expressed a view about the school either by coming to the pre-inspection meeting, writing to the registered inspector or by returning the questionnaire. Those that did were supportive of the school, but a significant cause for concern was whether the challenging behaviour of a minority of pupils was having an adverse effect on the learning and enjoyment of playtimes of others who behave well. This concern was echoed by several parents spoken to in the playground during the inspection. There was generally some misunderstanding about the ways in which the school seeks to improve behaviour, although the policy is included in the prospectus. Inspectors judged that behaviour in the playground was satisfactory but agreed that its management in class was not always successful.
37. The school has yet to establish formal ways of seeking parents' views but briefings and individual interviews were held to explain the grouping of children into mixed-age classes. Annual reports contain clear descriptions of attainment and achievement, with satisfactory targets for improvement. Newsletters are sent out half-termly and much information is exchanged informally.
38. The school is committed to improving links between home and school and a home-school link worker, already well known to everyone in the school, has recently been appointed. The Family Learning programme, run in conjunction with Southdown College, provides good opportunities for parents and children to work together and to gain in confidence. It was this project that first kindled the involvement and interest in children's learning of several parents who are now members of the support staff team. Following a briefing meeting, parents of a more able group of Year 2 pupils are working with them at home on the design and construction of a game to be played later together in school. Parents of very young children are pleased that the weekly Caterpillar Club offers them the chance to become familiar with the Early Years Building before

they start in the Nursery. As confidence and self-esteem increase, all these initiatives benefit the learning of both the parents and the pupils involved.

39. The school's community manager takes a very active role in promoting the school's ambition to be at the heart of a learning community. There are already thriving links with other schools, especially through drama, art and physical education. Competitive sporting activities include football, hockey, netball, cricket, athletics and tag rugby and pupils take part in an annual Festival of Sport. As part of the government-funded Leigh Park Education Action Zone, the school benefits from an additional range of organised events and projects, such as the dance-based Rock in the Park, in which groups of pupils take part.
40. Links with other local schools and the community have led to positive developments for pupils with special educational needs. Through the school's active involvement in the Education Action Zone Partnership, staff have worked with other schools and colleges, with business and industry, with county and borough councils, and with health, social services and police to attract additional funding. As a result, pupils with special educational needs now benefit from a greater number of teaching assistants, an additional behaviour support group, a home-school liaison worker and groups for improving reading and encouraging good behaviour in the playground.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The quality of leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall with some good features. School governance is currently **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has managed the amalgamation of the two school communities very well.
- The school provides a very good learning environment for effective staff development.
- The school evaluates some aspects of its work very well.
- There is no structured plan for the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- A detailed strategic plan is not yet in place.
- The governing body is not yet effective.
- The management of special educational needs provision is very effective.

Commentary

41. The recent school merger could have been a major barrier to the work of the school in raising attainment. However, the headteacher has been very successful in uniting the staff and parents around her clear vision, and in establishing a productive climate for learning. Good relationships and teamwork mark the positive ethos, which has been created. The headteacher has ensured that the new school gives high priority to meeting the needs of all pupils and the inclusion of all groups, especially the high numbers of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, a firm foundation has been laid for raising standards.
42. The headteacher and senior staff have implemented the national scheme for managing the performance of teachers very well. Unusually, the scheme has been extended to all sections of staff to good effect. For instance, the headteacher has extended performance management activities to teaching assistants, leading them to become very well trained. This innovative practice has been valuable in identifying training needs for all staff and in linking them to the school vision and to raising standards. In turn, the quality of teamwork is enhanced and staff morale is high. Thus, these procedures provide a very good climate in which staff can develop.
43. The headteacher and key staff have created a strongly professional culture where the school regularly evaluates its effectiveness in important areas. For example, the school has

conducted self-evaluations on such issues as the mixed-age classes, school amalgamation, the management of pupil behaviour, the effectiveness of learning and improving attendance. The middle management team has played a vital role in the success of the school merger by providing good lines of communication between all staff. The headteacher has placed a strong emphasis in consulting widely across the school in order to involve all sections of staff. This very good work has led to the school agreeing on where they have been most successful, and what the school needs to do in order to improve.

44. Procedures for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, however, are not yet sufficiently focused on raising pupil standards. Procedures for performance management are good but there is currently no systematic programme in place for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, thus limiting the school's overall effectiveness.
45. The school does not yet have an overall strategic plan for whole school improvement. This has led to some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Work has begun on the start of such a plan. Action plans exist for some subjects but as yet there is no clear focus on whole school priorities and the raising of standards overall.
46. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is very effective. School leadership places a high priority in providing well for pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher has created a caring ethos in the school where there is a strong emphasis on the principles of inclusion and this is reflected in budget spending. The inclusion manager provides very good leadership. She has high aspirations and a very strong commitment to inclusion, which she communicates well to her team of teaching assistants. She has led staff to support the formation of a number of innovative practices, for example groups to address anger management, promoting self-esteem and developing social skills.
47. The work of the governing body is unsatisfactory overall. This is because statutory policies for race equality and meeting the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Commission for Racial Equality code of practice are not in place. Also, governors do not yet have effective procedures for systematically keeping well informed about the work of the school. As a consequence, governors do not have a sufficiently clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they are therefore hampered in their ability to provide effective support. Although the governing body's formal systems for conducting its work are underdeveloped, governors' informal relationships with staff are very good. This has enabled governors to make valuable contributions to shaping the direction of the school and to having the confidence to effectively question the decisions of the headteacher. However, the lack of an adequate structure to committees and meetings has led to governors having significant gaps in their knowledge of the school and to some of their roles not being carried out. For example, the principles of best value are not followed.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,100,084
Total expenditure	1,087,248
Expenditure per pupil	2,615

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	6,885
Balance carried forward to the next	17,322

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

48. This is a **strength** of the school's work. The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**. Teaching is of a **high quality** in the nursery and in the Reception classes. The teaching challenges and excites children's curiosity and desire to learn. Children love coming to school and say that they like 'everything'. The curriculum offered is now **very good** and the balance between adult and child-selected activities is very carefully planned and resourced. Induction procedures are very good and good links have been established with parents and carers.
49. The leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good and the management is strong. The leader has developed her role well in terms of monitoring and evaluating the work. She is fully aware of the principles that underpin successful early years curriculum through the High Scope Approach. The three classes are well staffed; teachers and support staff work extremely well together. The nursery accommodation inside and outside is satisfactory, and the two Reception classes inside and outside are satisfactory. Resources throughout the Foundation Stage are good in quality, plentiful in quantity, well organised and are effectively used to support creative, imaginative and exciting learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL EDUCATION

Provision in personal, social and emotional education development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong emphasis on this area of learning
- Children are encouraged to work independently
- Staff have great respect for the children

Commentary

50. Most children enter the Nursery class and Reception classes with poor skills in personal, social and emotional development and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, many will have reached their Early Learning Goals¹. Children's development in this area of learning is critical to the school's ethos and forms the best part of its work. Children make very good progress and their satisfactory attainment is due to every child being treated as an individual, and the staff's expertise in developing every child's potential. Children are confident and happy, and they know and understand the routines very well. Making decisions about the tasks for the day means that they can concentrate for extended periods. Children show developing consideration for each other, showing signs they can share and take turns. They are very good at tidying up at the end of sessions and responding quickly when told to do so or music is played. Staff are successful in developing excellent relationships and share a common view of how children can learn effectively through play.

¹ EARLY LEARNING GOALS

Early learning goals - these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They mainly refer to achievements children make in connection with: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical and creative development. There are many goals for each area of learning; for example, in language and literacy pupils should be able to write their own name and other things such as labels and begin to write simple sentences.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's listening and speaking are developing well
- Vocabulary develops well through role play
- Children learn to recognise and write their names in various imaginative ways
- Staff encourage a love of books

Commentary

51. A significant number of children will not reach the Early Learning Goals by the time they leave the Reception classes. Staff give a very high priority to communication, language and literacy and ensure that all activities have a strong language focus. The quality of teaching is consistently very good and the high level of support given ensures that children make good progress.
52. Staff are skilled at providing an exciting and stimulating range of activities for children to enjoy and talk about. All children are treated sensitively; for example, in the nursery, children are not forced to respond if they do not want to. In consequence, children's confidence grows and they talk unselfconsciously about the exciting activities. Reception children are hesitant speakers, talk in simple sentences at best and do not like to contribute in group discussions. They find difficulty in using language to clarify their thinking and creative and imaginative role-play is immature.
53. Children are encouraged to think of themselves as readers and writers. Children are very familiar with a very good range of stories with repetitive passages and rhymes which enables them to develop a sense of the patterns of language. Staff read stories, rhymes and poems with a great amount of expression, which captures the children's attention.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide many specific activities to develop mathematical skills
- Children enjoy counting and rhyming songs

Commentary

54. Children's achievements are good and although some will achieve the Early Learning Goals none will exceed them. This is because teachers take opportunities throughout the curriculum to strengthen mathematical thinking. Teachers have a good awareness of each child's current level of mathematical understanding. They plan work to consolidate and extend concepts through the wide range of tasks that children tackle. The quality of teaching is consistently good and children make good progress.
55. All children enjoy counting and in the Reception classes they count from one to the day's date. More able children identify the numerals.

56. Throughout the activities children are encouraged by the staff to use the terms *bigger*, *smaller*, *taller*, and *same size* as they compare objects, build towers and play for long periods of time in the sand and water. In the nursery, during singing rhymes, children gain an awareness of basic mathematics.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan a wide and exciting range of experiences
- Children are very curious and inquisitive because of the exciting planned activities
- Extra-curricular visits enrich the curriculum

Commentary

57. Children make good progress and some will reach the Early Learning Goals. The teaching is very good. The activities teachers provide have major emphasis on 'hands on' experiences such as the leaf walk on the school campus. Because of this, children make observations based on careful handling or watching closely. Short walks are used effectively to further enrich and extend their learning experiences beyond the school.
58. Very good teaching provides the children with a range of stimulating experiences. Staff plan good opportunities to reinforce the children's sense of time and season. Practical investigation activities encourage children to predict what might happen next and begin to form a simple hypothesis, for instance when they build with the bricks, balancing different sizes, and counterbalance additional weights to make towers stay upright!

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Creative play is well organised and enjoyed by all children
- Children enjoy expressing creative ideas with a wide range of materials and media
- Making music is fun.

Commentary

59. The majority of children make good progress towards meeting the Early Learning Goals and many are in line to attain them by the time they complete the Reception year. Teaching is very good. The very good achievements in creative development stem from the rich variety of activities provided. Opportunities to paint, make models, work with a variety of materials and to play creatively in a range of environments are available everyday so children are able to extend their knowledge, skills and understanding steadily.
60. Children have opportunities to explore various medias and materials; they love mixing their own colours. In all respects the provision for creative development is very good. Very good use is made of a wide range of materials and staff plan very carefully to ensure that all children have opportunities to explore and develop their creativity. All children love music; they can play instruments and sing a variety of songs.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff provide very good daily opportunities for children to develop skills using equipment
- Children have good body control

Commentary

61. Children make good progress in development of their physical skills and most attain Early Learning Goals when they leave the Reception Class because of the high quality of teaching and the imaginative exciting and stimulating resources. Children are supported carefully in handling small equipment such as scissors. Every day there is a good range of activities to develop and improve children's physical control and ability with satisfactory opportunities for physical play in the playground.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment is below the national average for seven and eleven year olds.
- Achievement is satisfactory overall.
- The progress of pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall.
- Management and leadership are good and the subject manager is a knowledgeable role model for other staff.
- Analysis of data is thorough and a satisfactory plan of action has been constructed.

Commentary

62. Standards are **below** national averages at the end of the infants and juniors. The pupils' skills in listening and speaking are unsatisfactory in the infants but satisfactory in the juniors. Infant pupils need continual encouragement to talk in sentences and to use the new words that have been introduced to them throughout their lessons. Pupils in the juniors respond well when they have been well prepared and have the opportunity to rehearse the technical language required by the different subjects of the curriculum, for example in science.

63. Standards in reading are below average for both seven and eleven year olds. Teachers place a satisfactory emphasis throughout the school on reading. They effectively help older pupils to experience different types of literature and encourage them to talk and write about it. The work of pupils with special educational needs is carefully focused and is effective in developing these pupils' reading skills and attitudes to books. Pupils do not know how well they read or what they have to do to reach the next level. The school does not have a standard for the monitoring or recording of pupils' reading progress. Most older pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the features of reference books, but their understanding of how the library classifies books and how to search for a book is unsatisfactory. The opening of a school library will help to redress this weakness.

64. The standard of writing for both seven and eleven year olds is below average. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge and their writing is at a basic level. They find it difficult to spell and punctuate correctly and the poor standard of spelling is a concern. The quality of handwriting is inconsistent. Pupils learn to write in a cursive style but many pupils across the school are unable to form letters correctly and consequently are slow to develop a fluent style.
65. Considering the higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs and the very low starting point of many pupils, achievement is satisfactory overall. However, pupils do not have much chance to discuss their views and listen to the opinions of others in debates or drama. The absence of a scheme of work for speaking and listening means that teachers do not plan enough to develop vocabulary and increase pupils' levels of spoken English.
66. Pupils' rate of achievement in reading is also uneven but satisfactory overall. It is best in the juniors where it is good. Younger pupils are introduced to a wide range of books and print and show a love of stories and rhymes. They are introduced to phonics at an early age and try to apply these in their reading. Many pupils do not enjoy a culture of reading at home and this limits their level of achievement.
67. Pupils make slow progress in writing throughout the school and this has been an area of weakness for some time. Their limited vocabulary results in writing that lacks imagination. The subject manager has quite rightly identified the quality of pupils' writing as an area for improvement.
68. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. All teachers make good use of teaching assistants in the classrooms to assist groups of pupils. The literacy strategy is not having sufficient impact on standards because some lessons start with long teacher inputs. As a result, pupils become bored, inattentive and behave in an unsatisfactory manner. Sometimes teachers do not always take into account the full range of abilities in their class. The quality of teachers' marking is also inconsistent and is sometimes just ticks or remarks. These methods do not help teachers with their monitoring of pupils' progress or help pupils to be aware of what they should do next to improve. Where teaching is best, as seen in Years 3 and 6, it is lively and enthusiastic. Features of these lessons include good use of questions to determine prior attainment and ongoing assessment to modify the direction of lessons. Sessions at the end of lessons to assess pupils' learning are sometimes too short to be effective and pupils do not have time to reflect on what has been learnt.
69. The subject manager provides good leadership. Her work provides a very good model for colleagues to follow in the way she teaches English, critically analyses data, and talks to pupils about what they know and can do. Her knowledge and understanding of strengths and weaknesses in standards is good as a result and data has been used well to identify action for improvement.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

70. Pupils' low standards in understanding subject-specific technical language and in speaking, reading and writing are undermining their standards in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils display a limited range of vocabulary when discussing particular ideas in mathematics and in art and design. However, a specific focus has been placed in teaching subject-specific vocabulary in science with the result that standards have improved. Literacy makes very little contribution to other aspects of the curriculum throughout the school. For example, there is very little evidence of pupils writing for different purposes in subjects such as science, history or design and technology.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is very good support for pupils with special educational needs which enables them to make very good progress.
- Good assessment procedures are in place for tracking pupils' progress across the school. However, in some classes pupils are not sufficiently aware of what they need to do to improve.
- The subject manager gives a good lead to the subject. She has a clear picture for future development and is working to improve standards.
- Standards are below the national average in both Year 2 and Year 6.
- The pupils experience a curriculum that has too much emphasis upon developing number skills with insufficient attention to using and applying mathematics.
- Higher-attaining pupils are frequently given insufficient challenge to achieve to their full potential.

Commentary

71. About two-thirds of Year 2 pupils attain as expected for their age. They have a satisfactory knowledge of addition and subtraction facts to 20 and use this information in solving mental problems. Most of these pupils use their number skills accurately to solve simple problems involving money and length. Many of the remaining pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs. Although they are reaching standards that are below expectation for their age, they are achieving well. Teachers and their assistants give them very good support and this enables these pupils to make very good progress in developing numeracy skills.
72. Just over half of the pupils in Year 6 are currently reaching the standard expected for their age. They have a good grasp of place value and are confident in using numbers to 1000 and to two decimal places. In an observed lesson, these pupils confidently used their numeracy skills to order fractions. Most of them quickly identified the lowest common denominator and successfully carried out the necessary multiplications to be in a position to complete the ordering. In conversation, the higher attaining pupils explain how they are using their knowledge of the 2 and 3 multiplication tables to multiply by 6, 8 and 12. Although the school has identified problem solving as an area for development, it is still the weakest area for all but the high-attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and they are achieving well.
73. Throughout the school, insufficient attention is given to identifying and meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils. In most classes, extension work is planned for pupils who quickly complete the set tasks. However, it most frequently consists of further work at the same level and not additional tasks that challenge and extend these pupils' learning. A weak area in most of the lessons observed during the inspection was the unsatisfactory planning of tasks for the most able pupils.
74. During the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory overall but it was very good in one Year 6 lesson. In this Year 6 lesson, the teacher made learning fun. She adopted a practical approach and actively involved the pupils in their learning. Pupils who needed help in solving a mental problem during the plenary session could 'phone a friend' and this created much excitement and enjoyment. The good quality of the teaching created a learning environment in which pupils of all abilities made good progress in their studies. Generally, teachers have sound subject knowledge and this enables them to explain new knowledge simply and in a way that is understood by the pupils. In all lessons, the teamwork between

teachers and their assistants is of a good quality. They are fully aware of their individual roles and they give very good support to pupils. This results in the majority of pupils trying hard and attitudes and behaviour being at least satisfactory. Currently, teachers make insufficient use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning. This issue will be addressed when the newly established computer suite is fully operational.

75. Pupils' work is marked up to date but the quality of marking is variable. Too often it consists of a series of ticks with no identification of the standard of the work. Although pupils have individual targets, they are given insufficient information of how they can achieve a higher grade. The presentation of pupils' written work varies in standard from good to unsatisfactory and is generally in need of improvement.
76. The National Numeracy Strategy has been sensibly introduced but in adapting it to meet the school's needs too much emphasis has been placed on developing number skills. As a result, pupils experience a curriculum programme that lacks variety and has minimal time allocated to other areas of the National Curriculum. Insufficient opportunities are provided for all pupils to develop their own strategies and try out their own ideas in a practical situation.
77. The subject manager gives a good lead to the subject. She is aware of what steps need to be taken in order to raise standards and she is adapting the development plan in order to focus upon these. One of the outcomes of this is that teachers are placing an emphasis upon identifying and using the correct mathematical language in their teaching. The aim is to improve pupils' literacy skills and help them to become more competent in solving problems. There are good systems in place for collecting and analysing assessment data. This data is used effectively to track pupils' progress across the school, identify pupils who need additional support and set individual targets for improvement.

Mathematics across the curriculum

78. Numeracy skills are not being developed or used well in other subjects, with the exception of science. Analysis of pupils' previous work, lesson observations and talking to pupils shows that in science they interpret scales, graphs and use appropriate units. In a physical education lesson, linked to a science topic on health and fitness, pupils in a Year 4/5 class counted their pulse rate before, during and after periods of intense physical activity. They successfully recorded their results for further analysis in the next science lesson. Other examples of pupils using their numeracy skills are limited to timelines in history.

SCIENCE

Overall, the school's provision for science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils have positive attitudes to the subject.
- Most pupils achieve well and those with special educational needs achieve very well.
- Teachers' marking and assessment are used inconsistently.
- The subject is not yet monitored with sufficient rigour.

Commentary

79. Pupils enter the school with very low standards, particularly in language. This poses a significant barrier to learning in other subjects. However, the pupils are attracted by the practical nature of science and they quickly develop a love of the subject. These positive attitudes are sustained throughout the school and, as a result, the pupils are motivated to learn well. From a low starting point, pupils make good progress so that, by the end of Years 2 and

6, they reach standards, which are in line with national expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.

80. Although whole science lessons could only be seen in the junior classes, evidence from teachers' plans, pupils' work and discussions with staff and pupils shows that the quality of teaching in the subject is now good throughout the school. Until recently, teachers' planning gave insufficient emphasis to developing in pupils the skills of scientific enquiry, which held the pupils back from attaining higher standards. The school now follows national recommendations for the balanced planning of all aspects of science. A strong focus has been placed on teaching subject-specific vocabulary and, as a result, pupils have quickly caught up on the knowledge and skills they were lacking.
81. The skills of scientific enquiry were taught well in a Year 3 lesson about teeth. For example, whilst pupils were given apples, chicken legs and jelly to eat, their friends took turns at developing their skills of observation and recording. The pupils watched very closely and discovered which sorts of teeth bite, cut or chew. When the pupils were given the names of incisors, molars and canine teeth, they recorded their findings using correct scientific vocabulary.
82. None of the science lessons seen was less than good. For example, in a Year 4 and 5 lesson on pulse rates and heartbeats, the teacher used his good knowledge of science to make clear and simple explanations. He made the learning fun and ensured that a teaching assistant supported pupils with special educational needs. He used questioning well to stimulate interest with a friendly, encouraging and supportive teaching style. Pupils responded well by showing a keen interest and sensible behaviour. By the end of the lesson, all pupils had made good progress. Almost all pupils could explain what the heart does, why it is important to have a healthy diet and know the functions of the ribs. A few pupils had a strong understanding of the link between the pulse and the heartbeat.
83. Teachers do not yet use consistent forms of assessment and marking in science. Consequently, some teachers are insufficiently clear about the gaps in pupils' learning. Also, most teachers miss the opportunity to use their marking to explain to pupils what they need to learn next or to set learning targets. However, the school has recognised this weakness and has produced a marking policy, which, if implemented fully across the school, will represent good practice.
84. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, relatively new to the post and provides satisfactory leadership. She has led a substantial increase in the level of teaching resources and has made a good start in using the pupils' results in national tests to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in teaching. However, she has not yet been able to monitor standards in her subject, observe science being taught or to sample the quality of pupils' work from all year groups. As a result, she is unable to have a sufficiently thorough knowledge of the subject's strengths and weaknesses.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision is currently **unsatisfactory overall** but improvements are now taking place in the quality of resources and planned opportunities for learning.

Main strengths and weakness

- Standards are below average at eleven and average for seven year olds
- There are insufficient opportunities for Year 6 pupils to develop the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding in all areas of learning
- The subject manager is providing good leadership in the overall development of the subject

- Good use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in Year 3
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to use computers

Commentary

85. There was insufficient opportunity to observe the teaching of ICT across the school for a variety of reasons during the inspection. The allocation of time devoted to ICT for each class varies considerably and does not yet feature in the timetables for pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6. It is, however, identified within the timetables for Years 1, 2 and 3 and teachers make good use of computers to support the teaching of ICT skills and enhance their own lessons in these classes. This is particularly so in Year 3 where the interactive boards have been fully installed and linked to the Internet. Teachers in these classes make very good use of these resources to enhance their teaching, making lessons interesting for the pupils and minimising difficult and challenging pupil behaviour. As a result of this, pupils' achievements in these classes are at least satisfactory and standards are in line with those of similar aged pupils.
86. A new computer suite was recently built during the summer term. However, due to technical problems in linking it to the local authority's network, the computers have not yet been installed. This is therefore putting pupils at the upper end of Key Stage 2 at a disadvantage and the situation is not satisfactory. The absence of any planned experiences for these pupils within the curriculum is a further handicap to the raising of pupil standards in this subject.
87. The subject co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the use of ICT throughout the school and she has a clear vision of what needs to be done next. Monitoring of teaching and learning is at an early stage but considerable emphasis has been placed in the development of the teachers' individual skills with some success. All staff now have access to a laptop and these have sometimes been used collectively to provide whole class teaching experiences. However, this good practice was not observed during the inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

88. Teachers are becoming more confident in using ICT in other subjects. For example, teachers in Year 3 use the interactive whiteboard confidently to teach new skills to the whole class or access pages on the Internet to support their class teaching. Teachers of pupils in Year 1 and 2 use computers to provide satisfactory opportunities for pupils to practice literacy and numeracy skills. As yet, there is very little evidence to suggest that older pupils are given opportunities to develop their skills through a range of applications and experiences.

HUMANITIES

Geography and History

Commentary

89. Pupils' standards in history and geography are broadly in line with those expected of seven and eleven year olds.
90. There is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching throughout the school in these subjects, but the two lessons seen were both good. In a Year 4 and 5 lesson, the teacher created a good learning environment, giving the pupils confidence and enthusiasm to compare living in Havant to living in India. In another successful lesson, a Year 3 class worked in small groups using their research skills to find information on the Romans and the Celts. All the pupils increased their knowledge and understanding of the topic as they gathered information from books, CD-ROM and the Internet. In Year 6, a music lesson was used to make a useful link with history as they sang the street cries of Victorian London. Attractive, colourful displays

on India, Barnaby Bear's travels and photographs and maps enhance the pupils' learning in geography.

91. The school is aware that insufficient teaching time has been devoted to history and geography because of the emphasis given to literacy and numeracy. However, the planning of future teaching is to be based on national guidance to ensure a proper balance in the timetable and avoid the repetition of topics. Assessment is at the early stage of development and the coordination of both subjects is not yet effective.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is inconsistent and **unsatisfactory** overall. Judgements are based on the observation of a lesson in a class of pupils from Year 4 and 5, discussions with Year 6 pupils and scrutiny of planning and displays around the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planned curriculum for pupils in Year 6 is not sufficiently broad and balanced
 - Pupils in the infants are making satisfactory achievement; it is currently unsatisfactory for the oldest juniors
 - A comprehensive scheme of work has been completed by the new coordinator
 - Procedures for the assessment of pupils' achievements are currently unsatisfactory
92. There were only limited opportunities to observe the subject being taught during the inspection and included a lesson for a class of Year 4 and 5 pupils. No overall judgement therefore can be made on the quality of teaching throughout the school. Scrutiny of displays of Year 2 pupils' work on Judaism indicates that standards for these pupils are in line with that expected locally. Discussions with a group of Year 6 pupils indicate that their knowledge of the Old Testament stories is good. This is because the school uses the services of a local Bible group to teach these stories to the pupils during the first half of the autumn term for an hour per week. No further teaching of religious education topics is scheduled until the latter half of the summer term when a topic on Islam will be studied. This is unsatisfactory as insufficient time is allocated to the subject over the year and pupils are not able to fully develop their knowledge and understanding of a wide range of religious issues during the interim period. The subject manager has recognised this fact and is confident that the newly produced scheme of work will provide the necessary guidance for staff in order to rectify the situation.
93. The coordinator is providing satisfactory leadership for the subject and has completed an effective audit of resources. The new scheme is now being implemented but as yet there are no effective procedures for assessment of pupil progress in place. The monitoring of standards is at a very early stage of development.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Creative arts

The provision for the creative arts is **satisfactory** and contributes **modestly** to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy music and art
- Special music teaching enables pupils to achieve well
- Only limited assessments are made of pupils' work

Commentary

94. Standards in music throughout the school and art and design in the juniors is satisfactory. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement for art and design for pupils in the infants.
95. All pupils thoroughly enjoy their music lessons; this is due to the very good teaching of an enthusiastic, knowledgeable, specialist music teacher. She is able to give pupils confidence to try the carefully planned tasks developed specifically for topics being taught in the classroom. For example, Year 6's next history topic will be the Victorian era. They listened to street call songs from the Victorian era and successfully identified words of three callers when played. Pupils worked in teams and went on to compose and play their own street cry. Expectations of behaviour and work are very high. Lessons are snappy and full of interest; consequently pupils are very keen, learn quickly and show great disappointment when the lesson finishes. Pupils enjoy going to the special music room and treat the resources with great respect. Their singing is of a good standard and contributes well to the spiritual element of school life.
96. Art and design work covers a wide range and pupils make sound progress. Teachers plan lessons very closely to the national scheme for art, but as yet this has not been evaluated and adapted to suit the pupils of Sharps Copse. Pupils' artwork is displayed in classrooms, corridors and in the hall. It helps to make these areas more appealing and interesting. However, displays are not exciting and adventurous enough to make those who pass by want to look and reflect. Pupils have a good attitude to art, although the school in the past has not promoted their awareness of different types of art as well as it could.
97. The subject manager is excited about new links being developed with a local secondary school. She has quite rightly identified that pupils need to develop their basic skills in all medias and build on them year on year. The manager has arranged for many professionals to visit the school to enrich this aspect of the school's work.

Design and technology

Provision in design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Insufficient allocation of time for teaching the subject.
- A narrow curriculum experience on offer to the pupils.
- No formal assessment procedures in place for tracking pupils' progress and attainment.
- Much improved range of resource materials to support pupils' learning.
- No monitoring of classroom practice.

Commentary

98. During the inspection, no lessons could be seen. As a result, it is not possible to report on the overall quality of teaching and learning in design and technology. However, evidence from looking at pupils' work and displays, and talking to pupils and staff show that the majority of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 reach standards that are below those expected for their age.
99. Pupils experience a narrow curriculum experience because there is currently insufficient time allocated to enable all aspects of the subject to be taught fully. The majority of completed tasks have a focus on either food or textiles. Pupils currently in Year 6 have not constructed mechanical models or used an appropriate range of tools and materials. However, the curriculum-planning grid for this academic year does detail topics that will give pupils a wider

curriculum experience. If this plan is delivered, the school will be meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum.

100. Pupils in Year 2 are better at making than designing and evaluating. The majority of them successfully use card and textiles to make a puppet. Some of their finished models form an attractive display in the corridor outside their classroom. In most cases the finished models bear little resemblance to the original design and there is no evidence of simple evaluations being made at the end of the project.
101. In Year 3, pupils have investigated the properties of different types of bread and made sandwiches with a range of different fillings. This topic has good cross-curricular links to both science and health education. Scrutiny of pupils' work shows that evaluation is weaker than planning and making.
102. The subject manager gives a satisfactory lead to the subject. She has worked hard to carry out an audit of resource materials and purchase additional items so that a broader curriculum can be on offer to the pupils. At present, she has no opportunity to observe classroom practice to find out what needs to be done to raise standards. Currently there are no whole-school procedures in place to track pupils' progress and attainment. However, a draft scheme is in the process of being finalised and it is to be introduced during this school year.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**, and improving.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils generally achieve well in physical education lessons.
- There is a good range of extra-curricular sporting activities.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The subject manager gives a good lead to the subject.
- There is a clear plan for the development of the subject.
- Pupils enjoy lessons because they are given some responsibility for their own learning.
- There is no planned provision for outdoor and adventurous activities in the programme for older pupils.

Commentary

103. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the majority of pupils attain standards that are expected for their age and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress in developing a range of key skills. Pupils in junior classes are achieving well. For example, pupils in the Years 4 and 5 classes achieved good standards in an Indian dance workshop that was expertly led by two visiting specialist instructors. Almost all of them successfully linked hand, arm, foot and leg movements to the music. They had good attitudes, co-operated fully and were spellbound by the experience. Learning is fun and they are delighted with their own and their peers' performances. These sessions make a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
104. In the lessons seen during the inspection the quality of teaching was good. Lessons are well planned and the available time is used positively. Teachers receive good support from their assistants and they provide pupils with a good learning environment. There is a clear focus on developing skills through practical experiences. Warm-up sessions are well led and teachers and their adult helpers join enthusiastically in all activities. Pupils are constantly reminded of the need to work safely and observe the rules when collecting, using, or returning apparatus.

Pupils in Year 2 gave an impressive performance when collecting and returning mats and benches during their gymnastics lesson.

105. Pupils have good attitudes and they enjoy physical education lessons. They respond positively to the freedom given to them to develop their own small-sided games or alter the rules suggested by their teacher in order to make it more challenging. For example, in a hockey lesson for a class of Year 4 and 5 pupils, eight boys played a small-sided game fairly, competitively and in a good spirit with minimal supervision. They agreed to make the goal smaller in order to make it more difficult to score a goal. In all classes, they are given opportunities to comment on their own and their peers' performances. Whilst doing so they show considerable thought for other pupils' feelings. Physical education lessons make a good contribution to the pupils' personal development.
106. Swimming is included in the curriculum for all pupils in Year 5 and Year 6. Standards are satisfactory with almost all pupils able to swim 25 metres by the time they transfer to secondary education. There is a good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities that includes football, cricket, hockey, netball, athletics, dance and skipping. Some of these activities give pupils opportunities to participate competitively and develop the skills necessary to be a successful member of a team. The extra-curricular activities are supported by teaching and non-teaching staff and some parents. The activities are an important vehicle for fostering links with parents and the wider community.
107. The new subject manager gives a good lead to the subject. He has a detailed plan for the development of the subject that is clearly based upon forging strong links with other schools through the Sports Partnership. He has expanded the range of activities on offer to the pupils and broadened the curriculum. He is in the process of revising the scheme of work to give a more practical approach and a clear focus on developing team skills, self-discipline, and care, support and thought for others.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The strong focus placed on personal and social development is having a positive effect on the behaviour of pupils throughout the school overall.
- The school council provides good opportunities for the development of citizenship skills.
- The coordinator for personal, social and health education is providing effective leadership for this aspect of learning.

Commentary

108. Since the amalgamation the school has implemented a good strategy for personal, social, and health education. This includes satisfactory elements on sex education and drugs education. As a result the school meets statutory requirements in this respect. Good links have been established with other agencies to support this work. The school council is now in place and this is providing good opportunities for all pupils to develop a greater understanding of citizenship and have a say in the development of the school. The coordinator provides clear direction for the development of this aspect of the school's work and has successfully evaluated the introduction of the 'You can do it!' programme.

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	4
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	N/A
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
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	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	5
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	5
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).