

INSPECTION REPORT

CUERDEN CHURCH SCHOOL

Bamber Bridge, Preston

LEA area: Lancashire

Unique reference number: 133645

Headteacher: Mrs D. Sanderson

Lead inspector: Mr G.R. Logan

Dates of inspection: 4th – 6th November 2003

Inspection number: 261622

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	200
School address:	Wesley Street Bamber Bridge Preston
Postcode:	PR5 6NN
Telephone number:	01772 335033
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr A. Gillies
Date of previous inspection:	N/A – new school

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Cuerden Church School serves a challenging inner-urban community close to the centre of Bamber Bridge. The school, opened in September 2002, is an amalgamation, in part because of falling rolls in both schools, of the former Bamber Bridge Methodist School and St Saviour's CE Primary School. The school is operating in two buildings, approximately half a mile apart, pending the construction of a new school on the site nearest to the town centre. The younger pupils are in the former St Saviour's building. The school is of similar size to many primary schools. Most of the 200 pupils live in the immediate locality, though some come from greater distances because of the religious affiliations of the school. Almost all pupils are from White European backgrounds, with only one mixed-race pupil. No pupils are learning to speak English as an additional language. An average proportion of pupils (19 per cent) have special educational needs, for mainly moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. Seven pupils have statements – a relatively high number. This is a fairly mobile community – around 20 per cent of pupils leave or join the school over the course of the year, other than at the end of Year 6. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals (15 per cent) is around the national average (19 per cent). The profile of pupils' attainment when they enter the school is well below average overall, though with some spread. The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11810	Mr G.R. Logan	Lead inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; design and technology; music
13395	Mrs J. Illingworth	Lay inspector	
21816	Mrs B. Thomas	Team inspector	English; geography; history; English as an additional language
19765	Mrs P. Shannon	Team inspector	Science; art and design; physical education; the Foundation Stage; special educational needs

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Cuerden Church School is **an effective school**, with a very supportive, caring ethos. It is strongly committed to meeting the needs of the challenging inner urban community which it serves. It is very successful in including all pupils in its activities. Teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and of their behaviour and manage pupils very effectively. Support staff play a key role and are highly effective. Though standards are currently average overall, pupils achieve well. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent. She has very high aspirations for the school, provides a very clear educational direction and has the full support of her staff. They work closely with governors to ensure that the school has a clear agenda for continuing improvement. The school provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Children have a good start to their education in Foundation Stage.
- Pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs receive very good support and also achieve well.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well, overall. Their personal development is good. The programme for personal, social and health education is very good.
- Teaching is good and pupils learn well. The support staff are excellent. Assessment is used well in the core subjects to promote progress.
- Pupils benefit from a rich curriculum. There is a good extra-curricular programme.
- Pupils are cared for very well and are very well supported by the school.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership. The governing body is very effective.
- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are not high enough.

The school has not been inspected previously. However, the progress made in the short time since the amalgamation of the constituent schools has been **very good**. The two communities have integrated very successfully and a distinctive ethos is emerging. This owes much to the hard work of the headteacher and governing body and the commitment of the staff. The only significant constraint at present is the challenge of working on two sites. The school gained a School Achievement Award in 2003.

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	n/a	B	B
Mathematics	n/a	n/a	B	B
Science	n/a	n/a	C	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

- Children who have recently entered Reception have made a good start and are already making good progress.
- Standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics and science are average overall for the current pupils. Pupils achieve well and make good progress as a result of the good teaching.
- Standards are not high enough in ICT.

Pupils achieve well. Those with special educational needs achieve as well as they do because of the very good support they receive.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are good. Their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Relationships and behaviour are good. Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is good, with some very good features.

Teaching and learning are good overall. Just under three-quarters of the teaching was at least good. There was a significant proportion of good teaching in almost all year groups, indicating consistency of experience for pupils across the school. Teachers know their pupils well and have a good understanding of how to move learning forward. Expectations are high. Teachers' skill in behaviour management and the consistency of their approach are key strengths in creating a positive climate for learning. Even so, at times the quality of learning does not always fully reflect the quality of teaching, when pupils find it difficult to control their behaviour or to sustain attention. Good assessment procedures are used effectively, particularly those relating to social development targets. The quality and rigour of marking varies between subjects. Pupils are encouraged to develop the skills to work co-operatively with others. Teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. Learning support staff are excellent. They are very well prepared and proactive and respond skilfully to the needs of pupils, so making a significant contribution to pupils' learning. **The curriculum is rich and interesting.** It is broad and balanced, with a good extra-curricular programme, which is increasingly well-supported. The personal, social and health education programme is very good and a significant strength, tailored closely to the needs of the pupils. Class music and physical education are enhanced by activities such as instrumental tuition, football and swimming. **Pupils receive very good care and support.** Very good induction procedures help the youngest children to settle quickly. Child protection procedures are very good. **The school has a good partnership with parents. Links with other schools are good. Links with the community, particularly the churches, are very good.**

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the school is excellent and the management is very good.

The headteacher has been highly successful in drawing together a cohesive and committed team which shares her vision. In spite of the difficulties relating to a split site, progress has been rapid in the last year. The school evaluates its work rigorously and makes very good use of available data and expertise. Governors are very knowledgeable, extremely supportive of the school and are highly effective partners in shaping its ethos and direction. School administration is very efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Not all parents seek a close partnership with the school in spite of the school's best efforts. However, **the majority of parents are very happy with the school** and the progress it has made. The demand for places is increasing steadily. Parents feel that the school is very well led. Their only concern is the proposed new building is not yet available. **Overall, pupils enjoy school.** Not all find it easy to conform, but have faith that adults will be available to help them if things go wrong.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has achieved a great deal in its first year. To raise standards further the school should:

- Ensure greater priority is given to the development of pupils' ICT skills;

Minor areas for development are:

- Extending opportunities to use literacy skills across the curriculum;
- Achieving greater consistency and quality in marking;
- Further development of assessment practice in the foundation subjects;
- Improving outdoor provision in the Foundation Stage.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement is good. They make good progress across the school.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are average by the end of Year 6. Standards are below average in information and communication technology (ICT).

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage (the Reception class). They make particularly good progress in personal and social development and in language and literacy.
- As a result of good teaching and effective planning, pupils achieve well across the school; from a well below average starting point, standards are average in most subjects by the end of Year 6.
- Provision in personal, social and health education is a strength and contributes significantly to pupils' positive attitudes towards learning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well, particularly by the support staff, and achieve well.
- Standards in ICT are below average, although there are satisfactory opportunities to use ICT in subjects across the curriculum.
- Individual target-setting is not as well developed in mathematics as in English; this affects progress.

Commentary

1. The current intake of the amalgamated school is similar in characteristics to the intake of the constituent schools. The nature of the area from which most pupils come has not changed. Children have typically entered the school with standards which are well below average, although there is a minority of able children. The key strength of the school is the progress which it enables pupils to make. By the end of Year 6, pupils are, overall, achieving average standards in English, mathematics and science. This represents progress which is at least good. In 2003, Year 2 pupils achieved below average standards in reading and mathematics and well below average standards in writing in relation to schools nationally. However, this group had a very high proportion of pupils (75 per cent) with identified special educational needs and many more girls than boys. For them, progress had been good, given their individual starting points. Year 6 pupils, exceeding the school's expectations, achieved above average standards in English and mathematics and average standards in science both in relation to schools nationally and to schools with similar characteristics. In Year 2, boys, a minority, performed significantly less well than girls in reading and writing. The gap was less pronounced in mathematics. This situation was reversed in Year 6. Here boys were the dominant group by gender and achieved much better than the girls across all subjects - and better than boys nationally. On the evidence available, higher-attaining pupils are supported well – an above average proportion of Year 6 pupils achieved the challenging Level 5 across the three subjects in the national tests. No formal targets were set for Year 6 pupils in 2003.
2. Although a significant number of pupils enter the school with behavioural issues and negative attitudes to learning, the school's success owes much to the skill of teachers and support staff in managing that behaviour effectively. This creates a positive climate for learning in which almost all pupils make progress.

Foundation Stage

- Children usually enter school with standards which are well below average in the key areas of language and mathematical awareness. Social skills are often limited and their knowledge of the world is restricted. Good induction procedures have enabled current Reception children to settle well. They benefit from good teaching and the skilled input of the support staff and are making good progress, particularly in their personal and social development, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Although, by the end of Reception, the majority are likely to achieve the expected learning goals only in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development, almost all are set to make good progress across all areas of their learning. This lays secure foundations which are built upon effectively in Years 1 and 2.

Key Stage 1

- Although standards (as shown below) were below average in the national tests in 2003, inspection evidence suggests that standards by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science are likely to be slightly more secure in 2004 (though still marginally below average overall). Pupils attain average standards in history, music and physical education, but below average standards in ICT. By the end of Year 2, many children with special educational needs are below the national average in their literacy skills. However this represents good progress and achievement as they start with very low literacy skills. As in Years 3 to 6, the provision for personal, social and health education is a key strength, enabling pupils to think carefully about relationships, rights and obligations, self-discipline and the importance of taking responsibility. This well-managed programme contributes significantly to the positive climate for learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	13.9 (n/a)	15.9 (15.8)
Writing	13.1 (n/a)	14.8 (14.4)
Mathematics	15.8 (n/a)	16.4 (16.5)

There were 23 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Key Stage 2

- Although standards in Year 6 were above average in 2003, inspection evidence and discussions with teachers suggest that standards are likely to be closer to the national average for current Year 6 pupils, in spite of the effective teaching in that year. By the end of Year 6 most pupils with special educational needs remain below the national average in literacy and numeracy. For many, this represents at least good and for some very good achievement from the end of Year 2.
- Standards in work seen during the inspection were average in English, mathematics and science, but below average in ICT. Most pupils become fluent readers by Year 6. While their speaking skills are similar to those expected, partly as a result of the good planned opportunities for discussion in other subjects, their listening skills are less good and not all find it easy to sustain attention. Though they make steady progress, not all pupils achieve such secure standards in writing, where some weaknesses are evident. Not enough opportunities are identified for pupils to practise their writing skills across the curriculum. Support for the development of numeracy skills is satisfactory and there is a good breadth of experience within the mathematics curriculum – particularly for the oldest pupils. There is insufficient focus on allowing younger pupils to develop independent recording skills. More opportunities for pupils to experience practical mathematical activities or to undertake investigations could be usefully developed. There is good support for the use of investigative approaches in science and these

are effectively implemented in almost all classes. The development of ICT skills is unsatisfactory, largely because of the difficulty of guaranteeing that pupils have sufficient time on the computers. Support for specific skill development is inconsistent and achievement is patchy. There is increasing, planned cross-curricular use of ICT. However, opportunities are missed for pupils to use ICT to record their work or to extend their learning skills.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.7 (n/a)	27.0 (27.2)
Mathematics	27.8 (n/a)	27.0 (27.0)
Science	28.7 (n/a)	28.8 (28.6)

There were 36 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards in history are satisfactory. Pupils have some worthwhile experiences that enable them to learn about events in the past – for example, the *theme weeks* provide a range of cross-curricular learning opportunities. A significant number of pupils are achieving above average standards in art and design. The level of challenge provided for the higher attaining pupils is variable in the foundation subjects. Weaker assessment structures in these subjects contribute to a lack of focus on the needs of the potential higher attainers. Standards in music and physical education are average. Extra-curricular provision is contributing to improved learning in these subjects and has a positive effect on standards. Where teachers are able to work to their specialist skills, as in some lessons in music, then standards can rise significantly, because of the rigour of the teaching. In general, the school aims to promote independent research and enquiry skills, although the limited use of ICT suggests that there is still some way to go.
- The school is making increasingly effective use of available data to ensure that pupils make the progress they should. Tracking of pupils’ progress has only been implemented recently. Not all staff have sufficient confidence to set appropriate individual targets for progress. While a good start has been made in English, individual target-setting in mathematics has yet to begin. The school appropriately identifies and provides as best it can for the needs of a small number of able or talented pupils.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **good** overall. They reflect the school’s very high expectations regarding behaviour and its very good work to promote harmonious relationships.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Reception children settle smoothly into school routines, behave well, and are keen to learn.
- Pupils of all ages have good attitudes to school.
- Good behaviour and very good relationships create a positive and inclusive environment for learning.
- Good levels of attendance make a positive contribution to pupils’ achievement and progress.
- Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong as a result of very good provision for moral development.
- Pupils’ personal development is good overall. Social development is very effective.
- Some pupils suffer from low self-esteem and poor social skills. They have difficulty in controlling their behaviour and in working as a team.
- Participation in extra-curricular activities has not been as high as the school would like, but is now improving.

Commentary

9. Attendance levels are above the national average. Pupils like school and are rarely absent without good cause. The rate of unauthorised absence is low. Good attendance enhances pupils' achievements and progress in all areas of school life.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.8	School data	0.05
National data	5.4	National data	0.5

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

10. Attitudes and values are good and make a positive contribution to pupils' achievements. Children do not necessarily set out with high aspirations and enthusiasm for learning. Many of them have low self-esteem and limited social skills. However, the school very successfully develops their personal qualities in co-operation with parents, support services and the local community. Pupils respond favourably to the school's Christian ethos, to teachers' high expectations and to good teaching. In general lessons are interesting and challenging, and promote good attitudes. The majority of pupils enjoy learning and are prepared to work hard, and as a result make good progress. The school has a significant number of pupils who display immature and occasionally confrontational attitudes. However, teachers usually manage them very skilfully. Pupils' involvement in extra-curricular activities has been relatively limited, but is beginning to improve now that there are rewards for attendance at after school clubs.
11. Pupils behave well. However, a minority of pupils have difficulty in controlling their behaviour. The school gives these individuals effective guidance on how to cope with their problems. It has very good procedures for raising standards of behaviour and promoting pupils' moral development. Members of staff are very good role models. They use the school's system of discipline fairly and consistently to define the boundaries of acceptable behaviour and to teach pupils the difference between right and wrong. The majority of pupils respond well to their high expectations. Bullying and oppressive behaviour are rare and there have only been two exclusions, a lower figure than might have been expected, in the past year.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	199	2	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0

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

12. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. Its programme of personal, social and health education encourages pupils to show consideration for the beliefs and feelings of other people, and develops their ability to work collaboratively. Class and school councils give pupils good opportunities to use their initiative and to serve their community. Pupils become increasingly mature and responsible. Although some individuals find team working very difficult, pupils generally work well together in lessons. They feel happy at school. They have good relationships with one another and with adults. This promotes good inclusion by creating an environment in which all pupils feel respected and valued.
13. The school successfully promotes spiritual and cultural development. Pupils get very good opportunities to reflect on their own beliefs and feelings in assemblies and in personal, social, and health education lessons. They have an understanding of, and show respect for, other faiths

and cultures. They learn about different beliefs and values through religious education lessons, visits to places of worship and through special events, such as the multicultural week. Very strong links with local churches ensure that pupils are made aware of their own spiritual and cultural heritage.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided is good. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively, so creating a positive climate for learning; support staff are excellent. The curriculum is good, with good extra-curricular provision. Pupils are cared for well. The partnership with parents is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is good, with some very good features. Most pupils learn well. Expectations are high and, in most lessons, learning proceeds at a good pace. Teachers' skilful management of pupils' behaviour is a fundamental strength. Overall, teachers use assessment information well to plan future work.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good, with some very good features. The proportion of good or better teaching is particularly high in Reception and in Year 6.
- Teachers' highly-skilled management of pupils' behaviour contributes significantly to the positive climate for learning. Relationships are good. Pupils feel valued in the school.
- Planning is effective and meets pupils' needs well. Teachers have high expectations. Pupils are challenged well, especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Learning support staff are excellent. They support learning, especially of pupils with special educational needs, very effectively.
- The pace of learning is sometimes affected by lessons which are too long.
- Assessment is underdeveloped in the foundation subjects, though good elsewhere.
- The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent in quality and effectiveness.
- Individual target-setting is not yet fully developed in mathematics.
- The use of ICT to support learning is inconsistent.

Commentary

14. In the short time since the school opened, a highly effective team has been established. There is a high level of consistency in the quality of teaching across the school. Expectations, particularly of pupils' behaviour, are high and staff are very responsive to the varying, and sometimes extensive, needs of the pupils. Teaching observed during the inspection was good overall, with around one quarter being very good. Teaching is particularly strong in Reception and in Year 6.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 35 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	8 (23%)	17 (48%)	9 (26%)	1 (3%)	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 are seen.

15. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall. Staff know pupils very well. They plan well to cover the expected areas of learning and to provide the challenge necessary to take children's learning forward. They ensure that work is matched well to individual needs. They use regular assessments well to guide the planning of future work. Teachers are particularly effective in their support for children's personal, social and emotional development and in preparing them for more formal learning in Year 1. Support staff are very effective and play a crucial role in ensuring

that children are cared for well. Overall, children make good progress as a result of the consistent and good quality teaching they receive.

16. Teaching is also good in Years 1 to 6, with just under three-quarters of teaching being good or better. There is a commendable consistency to the quality of teaching seen, with only one year group where teaching quality is weaker, in the juniors. The key strength in this school is the consistency and effectiveness of teachers' behaviour management strategies. The school has a significant number of pupils with underlying behaviour patterns which can be very challenging. Teachers manage these issues with considerable skill, so creating a positive climate for learning. Occasionally, pupils disengage and their learning does not match the good quality of the teaching, in spite of the teacher's best efforts.
17. Overall, teachers have high expectations of pupils. They plan well to meet individual needs and there is a good level of challenge in the activities provided, though this is a stronger feature at present in English, mathematics and science than in the foundation subjects. Relationships are good and the majority of pupils are close to their teachers and value their approval. Teachers use questioning well to check understanding – this was a strength in a number of lessons. Not all pupils have a rich language background or well-developed speaking skills and this is an effective strategy to reinforce understanding of key concepts. They also work to provide good first-hand experiences for pupils, in practical tasks, or in the wide range of visits and visitors which the school organises. The school is also looking at the use of specialist staff where feasible – particularly in music and physical education. The support staff are excellent. They are a resource of fundamental importance. They are knowledgeable, well-prepared and proactive. They play a central role in supporting pupils with special educational needs and are particularly effective in dealing with pupils who have challenging behaviour patterns.
18. Weaker features of teaching include the excessive length of some lessons, particularly in the afternoon, when pupils' attention wanders and learning rapidly declines. Not all teachers yet use ICT as effectively as they might to support learning across the curriculum.
19. Assessment is good overall. The school has made good progress in setting up manageable systems. There is now the possibility of tracking pupils' progress and this information is increasingly used to support planning. Individual target-setting has been implemented in English, but not mathematics and this is an area for development. Also, there is still too much inconsistency in the quality of marking and the level of guidance provided. This is also an area for improvement.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught in lessons and very well taught when taught separately. Care is taken to ensure that pupils with any physical disabilities have adapted materials. Consequently they are very well included and participate successfully. Learning assistants give excellent support. They are well briefed and know the children really well. Their positive manner and sense of humour often encourages pupils to persevere with their learning. Assessment information is used very well to plan the next steps of learning. However, work is not always modified sufficiently to meet pupils' needs, so that, for example, some pupils with poor literacy skills struggle to record their work. Children with poor concentration and behavioural difficulties find it difficult to cope when lessons are particularly long. Teachers are aware of the need to support particularly able pupils. Where the need arises, these pupils are supported through the planning of more challenging work.

The curriculum

The school provides a stimulating and **rich curriculum**. As a result most pupils achieve well.

Strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides a broad curriculum with a good level of enrichment. This motivates pupils to learn and they achieve well.
- Many lessons are over an hour in length and are too long for some pupils.

- Children in Reception get off to a good start with their learning.
- The school is fully inclusive; provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength.
- Personal, social and health education is very well promoted.
- While accommodation is generally good there is no outside fixed equipment for Reception children to develop their physical skills.

Commentary

21. The school provides a rich, relevant and interesting curriculum, delivered through many practical first hand experiences. There is generally an appropriate balance between subjects; however, less time is allocated to art and design and information technology than in many schools. The school is successfully reviewing curriculum planning to ensure that skills are built on in a systematic way.
22. There is considerable enrichment of the curriculum. This stimulates pupils to learn. Many events such as the multicultural week, the science day and the Industry Week really motivate pupils. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the many events undertaken during the themed *Town in the Future* week. From Reception onwards pupils benefit from regular visits to places of educational interest. These help make learning relevant and help pupils to appreciate their local community. The school provides a good range of additional music tuition. It is successfully improving pupils' interest in joining the after-school sports clubs. The school has a good range of visitors and events in school which add real interest to the curriculum. For example, older pupils talk enthusiastically about the time local footballers joined the school for a literacy session. While lessons are interesting and well planned, some pupils find them too long. This affects concentration and behaviour. During the inspection, some pupils struggled in subjects when the lessons were longer than an hour.
23. Provision in the Foundation Stage is a strength. Children are helped to settle in very quickly and work from a rich curriculum. They have a good range of very interesting experiences and are helped to develop the social skills necessary to learn successfully. As a result they achieve well and enjoy learning.
24. The atmosphere of the school is fully inclusive. Pupils have good access to the curriculum whatever their ability, disability, gender, cultural or social background. The school makes every effort to let pupils know that they are valued as individuals. There are many strategies to raise pupils' self esteem. Provision for children with special educational needs is very good and ensures that these pupils achieve well. Many make very good progress towards their targets. The special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support assistants work very closely with the teachers to provide a suitable curriculum. The school meets the requirements for disability access.
25. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school makes real efforts to ensure that the challenges presented by two buildings, a considerable distance apart, do not affect pupils' learning. There is a good range of resources to support most subjects. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Provision for ICT is adequate. The classrooms are generally spacious, bright and attractive. The grounds are used well to further children's achievement in science, for environmental awareness, physical development and geography. There is no outside fixed equipment for Reception children to develop their physical skills. This is unsatisfactory. The school has plans to deal with this.

Care, guidance and support

The quality of care, guidance and support is very good. Members of staff are approachable, caring and ready to listen to pupils' ideas. The school provides a welcoming and safe environment where pupils are encouraged to do their best.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for promoting pupils' welfare, health and safety are very good.
- Pupils have trusting relationships with adults in the school.
- The school monitors pupils' individual achievements effectively; good monitoring results in pupils receiving well-informed advice that promotes their progress.
- The school's very good programme of personal, social and health education makes a major contribution to support and guidance for pupils.
- Arrangements for the induction of new pupils, and for transfer of pupils at Year 6, are very good.
- Pupils feel that members of staff value their ideas, but formal arrangements for seeking their views are very new and have not had time to have much effect.

Commentary

26. The school has very good arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare. It has very clear formal procedures for dealing with matters of child protection, backed up with appropriate training for staff. There are good routines for ensuring the health and safety of pupils and adults in the school. All the safety checks required by law have been carried out, and there is good provision for first aid. Arrangements for the supervision of pupils are good and help to promote pupils' safety during breaks and lunch hours. The school is mindful of the long term health of pupils and strongly encourages healthy eating. The before- and after-school clubs make an important contribution to pupils' welfare by providing care out of ordinary school hours. They ensure that pupils who arrive on site early and go home late are well looked after.
27. Pupils receive very good support and guidance, both as individuals and as groups with particular needs. The induction of the new intake into Reception is handled sympathetically and helps children to settle quickly in their new environment. Pupils get very good support when they move to Year 1 and during their transfer from Year 6 to secondary education. The programme of personal, social and health education gives very good guidance on issues such as relationships, dealing with bullying, and drugs, and makes a major contribution to pastoral care. The quality of support for individuals is very good. Staff have good relations with pupils, understand their particular needs, and give them appropriate guidance. Pupils value the good access that they have to sources of advice. Nine out of ten of them say that there is an adult in the school to whom they can turn for help.
28. The school monitors pupils' academic and personal achievements effectively. In the case of personal development, much of the monitoring is carried out informally through teachers' very good knowledge of pupils. Small class sizes contribute to the success of these informal arrangements. There are also good formal procedures for tracking pupils' progress. The system of discipline and rewards ensures that members of staff record pupils' positive achievements together with any incidents that give cause for concern. Individuals failing to make satisfactory progress are duly identified and given targets for improvement. Pupils with serious problems receive support that is tailored to their needs from specialist services.
29. There are good arrangements to involve pupils as partners in the running of the school. Pupils feel that members of staff listen to their views and treat their ideas with respect. They are satisfied with the school's arrangements for seeking out and taking into account their views. Formal mechanisms for consulting pupils are satisfactory. Class councils and the whole school council have been in operation since January 2003, and pupils have used them to put forward ideas for the new school building. However, it is too early to say how much influence the councils will have in practice.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has the confidence of parents and works hard to maintain a **good partnership** with them. It has **very good links with the local community** and **good links with other schools and**

colleges. Overall, the school's partnership with parents and the community makes a positive contribution to pupils' progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of information for parents on school routines and events is very good.
- The school operates an open door policy. It listens to parents' concerns and deals with them.
- The school liaises effectively with partner organisations in the provision of education and care.
- The school has a very good partnership with the local community. Its links with local organisations enhance the curriculum and promote pupils' personal development.
- A significant number of parents have little involvement in their children's learning.
- Very few parents act as volunteer helpers in school or in running the parent-teacher association.

Commentary

30. Communications with parents are good overall and make a positive contribution to pupils' progress. The school operates an open door policy. It makes every effort to be a welcoming place. The quality of information on the curriculum and on pupils' progress is good overall. The end of year reports provide good summaries of what children have learned and can do. However, they give relatively little information on weaknesses or ways to raise attainment. Targets in reports are sometimes too imprecise to be helpful to parents who are keen to support their child's learning. Parents are informed of the latest school news through weekly newsletters. Arrangements for obtaining feedback from parents are good. The school uses questionnaires effectively to sound out their views and it is very prompt in responding to concerns. The school has an effective complaints procedure in place.
31. Parents' participation in the life of the school and pupils' learning is satisfactory overall, but uneven. The school wishes to increase parents' involvement and has organised courses to help them to support pupils' work. The outcome has been mixed. Some parents are very supportive of their children's learning, but a significant number are reluctant to come into school. Some are unwilling or unable to meet teachers even when their children are giving cause for concern. All parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend annual reviews of their individual education plans, but not all take up the offer. The school has only a small number of parent volunteers who help in the classroom. There is an active parent-teacher association, but it receives less support than is usual in primary schools.
32. The school is an integral part of the local community. It has a very strong partnership with the local Methodist and Anglican churches, and this contributes to the school's Christian ethos and enhances provision for pupils' spiritual and moral and cultural development. Teachers use the local area and local organisations very effectively as resources for learning. Prime examples are the whole school project on Bamber Bridge, "Town of the Future", and the industrial awareness week. The partnership with the local community is mutually beneficial. The school is a community resource that is used as a venue by a wide range of local organisations. Some of these groups, such as the junior football club, give pupils valuable additional opportunities for learning and personal development.
33. The school works closely with other providers of education. It has a very good partnership with the pre-school group and the before- and after-school clubs that are based on its sites. This enhances the quality of care for pupils and provision for children's personal development. The school also has good links with other church schools and with local secondary schools. There is good liaison with the latter over the induction of pupils into secondary education. The school's partnership with the local sports college makes a positive contribution to the curriculum for physical education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are very good overall. The school is governed very effectively, with some governors making important contributions. **The headteacher provides excellent leadership,** with good support from senior teachers.

Very good management structures and procedures underpin the everyday work of the school and applications of the principles of best value are good. The split site is not having a significant effect upon the work of the school, although interactions between older pupils and the youngest, sharing, socialising and supporting, is more difficult to achieve.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership of the headteacher is excellent.
- The school is moving forward briskly on all fronts as a result of establishing roles and responsibility with consideration and sensitivity.
- There is a very clear vision for the school, shared by all those involved.
- The management of support for pupils who have special educational needs is very good.
- The deployment of support staff is excellent; they are highly effective in support of pupils with behavioural problems.
- The governance of the school is very good. Governors are closely involved with the school, are highly supportive and have been successful in attracting additional funding.
- The secretary and caretakers make a significant contribution to the smooth running of both schools.

Commentary

34. The headteacher is an excellent leader and manager. She provides a very clear educational direction and her exceptional skills in the delegation of responsibility to staff are highly successful. She has very successfully established a united and supportive team who feel valued and who recognise and support pupil achievement. In the short life of the school, it has already been successful in achieving the *Investors in People* award. The school is now actively involved in the Primary Leadership strategy.
35. There is a clear, shared vision and sense of purpose amongst all staff even though the deputy headteacher has only recently joined the school and subject co-ordinators are all relatively new to their role. Clear monitoring and evaluation procedures and feedback structures are in place and are being used well by those co-ordinators who have already had non-contact time for their subject. This has increased their effectiveness and resulted in improvement in resources, the sharing of good practice and adjustments to planning. The aim is now to develop a target setting process at a class and individual pupil level.
36. This is an inclusive school where all pupils are valued and those with, for example, challenging behavioural issues, are managed extremely well. The monitoring and assessing of pupils' attainment and progress has been crucial to the provision of appropriate teaching and support for individuals and groups. The leadership of the work for pupils with special educational needs is very good, ensuring that these pupils are well supported through the excellent work of the support staff.
37. The management of the school is very good. The school has made very good progress in establishing procedures, roles and processes and a clear educational direction and focus for the school. The headteacher and governors have managed the staffing of the school well. After a successful first year very good relationships and working procedures are in place to enable the school to run smoothly on a day-to-day basis. The secretary provides very effective communication systems for the two sites. She is very welcoming to staff, pupils and visitors and, with the caretakers, makes a very significant contribution to the life of the school.

38. The governance of the school is very good. A permanent governing body was established only a short time prior to the inspection. The interim governing body had a very clear picture of the sensitivities relating to the amalgamation of the schools, particularly the impact on the communities served, and managed these very well. It has been very effective in bringing the two schools together. Interim governors have been fully involved in setting the school's future development and evaluating its performance. The two identified areas for improvement: the provision for pupils with special educational needs and the effective management of pupils' behaviour, have been successfully achieved. The permanent governing body is made up mainly of very experienced governors from the constituent governing bodies. They are consciously moving forward briskly on all fronts. Although not experienced in running an Aided school they are very willing to assume any additional responsibilities which arise.
39. The newly-appointed chair of governors visits the school on a regular basis to support the headteacher and to ensure that all the needs of the pupils are met. In discussion with the new governors it was clear that they have a very good grasp of the strengths of the school and areas for future development. Currently, they are heavily involved in planning for the new school and the opportunities presented when all pupils are together on a single site.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	484,513	Balance from previous year	n/a
Total expenditure	418,122	Balance carried forward to the next	66,391
Expenditure per pupil	N/a		

* The school was established in September 2002, so the figures quoted cover only part of the year. They also include monies relating solely to the affairs of one of the constituent schools. The residual funds of the other constituent school were retained by the new school and form part of the existing budget. In addition, some transitional funding was provided to enable the school to cope with additional costs of split-site operation. It is not possible in the circumstances to indicate an accurate figure for per pupil funding. However, the overall figures for last year, and the budget for the current year, would indicate that the school receives a level of funding towards the upper end of the funding range.

40. The interim governing body has managed school funds very well. They have been rigorous in evaluating the effectiveness of spending decisions. Financial and general administration in the school are currently very efficient. Recent audit recommendations have been implemented fully. The school meets the needs of its pupils well and currently provides **good value for money**.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and is one of the school's strengths. Children have a good start and achieve well. They settle in very quickly and benefit from a rich curriculum.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good with some very good lessons. Children achieve well as a result.
- Induction arrangements are very good; children settle quickly.
- The nursery nurse and support staff make a significant contribution.
- Staff take great care to ensure children with physical, emotional or learning needs feel valued and are included in all activities.
- Children's personal and social skills are very well developed.
- The Foundation Stage is very well led and managed.
- The school does not have any large fixed climbing equipment. As a result children do not have daily opportunities to develop their physical skills.

Admission arrangements are very effective and ensure children settle easily. Parents are pleased with how well children settle. There are good links with pre-school placements, including the *Busy Bees* group, who share the premises. Home visits also help staff establish children's needs before they start. Staff quickly help children establish known routines which give them confidence. Parents' views are valued and they are provided with useful information and training sessions to help their children with their learning. Staff use their regular assessments within lessons to plan the next activities. This ensures that the work is very well matched to the needs of individual children, so providing the right amount of challenge.

The management of the Foundation Stage is very good. The co-ordinator effectively plans an interesting and coherent curriculum. Interesting topics link the different areas of learning so that the children have an imaginative curriculum, which makes them keen to learn. She organizes meetings with parents and outside agencies, ensuring that children with special needs are very well supported. The Reception and Year 1 teachers have established very good transfer arrangements. As a result, when children enter Year 1 they are able to complete their Early Learning Goals before starting the National Curriculum work. This helps them settle well into their new class.

Accommodation, while satisfactory, has some weaknesses. The classroom is bright, stimulating and spacious. It is used well to support learning. However, the outside area needs further development. There is no large fixed equipment and no sheltered area. Consequently, children miss out on daily opportunities to use large equipment or to frequently use the outside area for learning. Plans exist to rectify this weakness.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is very good because of the very good teaching and high expectations of the staff.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote children's confidence and independence.

Commentary

41. Teaching is very good and as a result children make very good progress and achieve well in their social development. Most children are on course to achieve their Early Learning Goals, with a small group achieving more than might be expected. This reflects the emphasis the school places on developing the whole child.

42. Reception staff establish secure routines so that children feel safe and confident. Special times are set aside in the lovely *Rainbow room*, for children to sit and be calm and learn to talk about events that are important to them. This particularly helps the many children with underdeveloped social skills. Children have many opportunities to work alone and in small groups. Staff use every opportunity to praise children's independence and 'catch' and reward good behaviour. This really motivates children. They love putting stars beside their names on the class reward rockets, or helping fill the marble jar so that they can earn a marble party! Staff have very high expectations of children's behaviour. They set clear boundaries and the consistent role models set by the adults ensure the children know clearly what is expected of them. When children do not do as expected they are dealt with firmly but fairly so that they learn how to appreciate the needs of others. Children's behaviour and attitudes to school are good. They enjoy school and show real interest in what they are doing.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's skills through an interesting curriculum.
- The teacher and nursery nurse take every opportunity to develop children's language skills.

Commentary

43. Children enter Reception with a very wide range of ability and experience. Many children enter with restricted ability to express their ideas. While most will not achieve all their learning goals by the end of the year, a significant minority of children will do so, as a result of good teaching, and a few will exceed their targets.
44. Children are taught to listen carefully. Staff encourage less confident children to talk in sentences and more fluent communicators to extend their vocabulary. Class puppets *Lulu* and *Rusty* go home each day to encourage children to talk about their time at home. Very good relationships between children and adults mean that less confident children are encouraged. They know that adults are genuinely interested in what they are saying. The teacher consistently establishes good reading habits. She helps children enjoy books by using appealing stories with familiar characters, such as *The Three Pigs*. She shares books in a lively and interesting way. Imaginative use is made of a special character called *Fairy Mary* who often makes mistakes with sounds that children are encouraged to correct. The nursery nurse is used very well, encouraging less confident children to look at pictures, listen and participate. When children have choice time, however, few children actively chose to look at books or use the reading corner. Many interesting opportunities are provided for children to write for a range of purposes. Children are encouraged to record ideas. They know that the teacher values their efforts by the way that their writing is displayed on walls. Work from last year shows that while every effort is taken to develop writing skills, many have difficulty forming letters fluently.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because teaching and learning are focused on developing children's skills through a practical curriculum. As a result they achieve well.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote children's mathematical development.

Commentary

45. Children enter Reception with a very wide range of skills, many having limited experience in using and applying mathematical knowledge. This area is well taught, with a focus on first hand

practical activities. While most will not achieve all the learning goals by the end of the year, a significant minority of children will achieve them, as a result of good teaching, with a few exceeding their targets.

46. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce and extend children's mathematical skills and language. For example, children daily take an active role in counting numbers for the register. Number awareness is promoted through number rhymes and games. This engages the interest of boys and girls well. In a very well taught lesson the teacher made shapes relevant to their everyday lives. She encouraged the children to make big models on the floor, using the names of shapes while building them. A range of water, sand and larger mathematical equipment is in constant use so that children can extend their mathematical language. Practical activities prepare the way for future learning. They sustain children's interest well, although some still find it very difficult to stay with an activity while unsupported.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well because of very good teaching which is focused on developing children's skills through a practical, imaginative curriculum.
- There is no investigation area for children to explore informally.

Commentary

47. Many children have limited experiences to draw on when they enter Reception. This area is very well taught, with a focus on first hand practical activities, through a wide range of trips and visitors. A significant minority of children will achieve their learning goals by the end of the year and a few will exceed them.
48. Staff provide a very wide and interesting range of experiences. This helps the children to build up their picture of the world. For example, during an excellent focus on industry, children visited a restaurant, pet shop, football stadium and fire station to learn about different jobs. These regular visits and events add real excitement. Visitors stimulate children's curiosity. In a very well taught lesson, children looked at photos and talked both about when they were babies and when they were growing up. This lesson demonstrated how all areas of learning are developed effectively alongside each other. However, within the classroom there is no investigation table with objects, such as kaleidoscopes, for children to handle informally. Staff extend children's knowledge of **different cultures** well, through books and toys. **Computer skills** are well taught on a daily basis. Staff build up children's confidence in using the computer. As a result, they have positive attitudes and display equally good skills. Very good use is made of the digital camera to capture children's learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory overall**; however, facilities outdoors are limited.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan well for the limited outdoor equipment but there is access to a good hall for structured lessons.
- There is no continuous access to an outside play area. There is no large fixed outdoor equipment to promote physical development.

Commentary

49. No judgments are made about teaching and learning, standards or achievement as no lessons were seen relating to physical development. The teacher plans regular sessions in the hall to help children develop their physical skills and to learn to respond to music. While the school has

a range of three-wheeled vehicles, these are not in daily use due to limitations of outside provision and the need for supervision. The school does not have any fixed outdoor climbing equipment, so children do not have daily opportunities to improve their skills and ability. This is unsatisfactory. The school has plans to improve this aspect.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good and children achieve well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well because they are taught well and experience a wide range of creative activities.
- The imaginative play area is used well to encourage children's creative response.

Commentary

50. Children enter Reception with a wide range of creative skills and responses, with many below that expected for their age. There are daily opportunities for children to develop creativity. Teaching is good. Most children are on course to achieve their learning goals by the end of the year, with a significant minority of children likely to exceed them. Staff develop children's skills and creativity through a range of interesting topics and imaginative play experiences. These are used well to extend children's creativity. Role play scenarios have included a chip shop, hairdressers, pet shop and doctor's surgery. Staff skilfully interact with children to extend their use of language and creativity.
51. There is daily access to a good range of materials, with many opportunities to paint, draw and make models. Children show real pleasure as they make firework pictures from a good range of materials, producing pleasing and individual results. Children enjoy singing and music making activities and join in with gusto!

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**. Overall, the quality of teaching and the work planned for pupils are good and this ensures that they achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well because the very good planning for literacy is delivered well and pupils make good progress as a result.
- Use of key questioning is leading to improved speaking and listening skills and is having a positive effect on achievement.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well.
- Good use of target setting in reading and writing helps pupils to have good knowledge of their own learning.
- Speaking skills are better than listening skills.
- The school's priority to improve handwriting and presentation skills has been successful.
- Marking is very effective in some classes.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities to improve writing in subjects other than history, or to use ICT to help with presenting work in English.

Commentary

52. Standards in English are below average by the end of Year 2 and average by the end of Year 6. Achievement is good. Every class has a wide span of ability with a number of pupils who have differing special educational needs. Almost all pupils achieve well because planning is carefully matched to their differing abilities and needs, behaviour management strategies are well understood and consistently applied, and support staff are very well organised.
53. Overall, standards in speaking are broadly average but listening skills are a little below average for a number of pupils. Some younger pupils and pupils with lower ability have a restricted vocabulary. Use of key questions in Year 6 promotes thinking and discussion. Pupils respond confidently when spoken to and conversations are often extended. In a Year 2 literacy lesson the teacher effectively engaged pupils in contributing good adjectives for a poem on fireworks. Their suggestions included imaginative vocabulary such as '*Exploding, fizzing in the sky*'.
54. Pupils achieve well in reading. Standards are a little below average in Years 1 and 2 due to the number of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are making good use of picture cues and basic phonic skills. Higher attainers read with fluency and accuracy in both years. There is a structured reading programme with pupils working through a published scheme. There are good daily opportunities for pupils to engage in group, paired and silent reading. In the juniors, pupils use the library with confidence. Older pupils use inference and deduction with increasing skill and express their preferences for favourite authors and genres. All pupils enjoy reading and are very well supported in their reading by the support staff.
55. Standards in writing overall are below average. This is mainly due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Higher attainers in all years achieve well and write for a range of purposes. Younger pupils use basic punctuation, including speech marks, accurately and writing is often extended. Their choice of vocabulary is lively and descriptive. Older pupils are well challenged and encouraged to use powerful language such as this in a Year 6 story: '*Poisonous saliva dripping from his jaws like a snake spitting venom at his victim*'. The range of writing is well extended to include explanatory and instructional texts, reports and argument. Handwriting and presentation skills have improved considerably across the curriculum in the past year as a result of a whole school positive approach and the very good support given to those pupils with special educational needs, including physical needs, who have poor fine motor skills.

56. The quality of teaching is good overall, with some very good teaching seen. Teachers' expectations are high. They plan work carefully to meet the differing abilities in their class, so ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties are well supported and that all pupils are well challenged. Relationships are good and this is reflected in pupils' very positive attitudes to learning. Good use of assessment information results in purposeful target setting, which moves learning on. The best marking, particularly in Years 5 and 6, is very effective in helping pupils to improve their work but marking is inconsistent across the school.
57. Assessment information is used effectively to set appropriate targets. This is contributing to improving standards, as is the involvement of pupils in self-evaluation. Records show that there has been good achievement already in the Year 1 class. The school has been successful in its first year in achieving appropriate standards in English and has set challenging targets for the coming year. The leadership of English by the co-ordinator is good.

Language and literacy across the curriculum.

In a key example, pupils from Years 1 to 6 used their language and literacy skills well in the whole school theme week on the *Town of the Future*. Pupils made lists, wrote captions and labels, reports of visits, performed a play and used information books and the Internet for research. Older pupils developed their speaking and listening skills well as they debated the positioning of wind farms. Planning identifies some opportunities for applying literacy skills in other subjects, as in Year 4 writing about the Roman Empire and in Year 6 in their work on World War Two. However, more opportunities could be developed in subjects across the school.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well through the school.
- Teaching is good. Pupils are challenged well in most classes.
- The coverage of the curriculum is good.
- The co-ordinator leads the subject effectively and has a clear view of what needs to be done to move it forward.
- Support staff are highly effective in promoting learning.
- The quality of marking is variable, with some weak practice.
- There is an over-reliance on worksheets in the infants.
- Homework arrangements are inconsistent.
- ICT is not used consistently enough to support learning in mathematics.

Commentary

58. Standards in mathematics are below average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Pupils achieve well in mathematics. The progress they make from the well below average mathematical skills typical of most Reception children when they enter the school to at least average standards by the end of Year 6 is good. There is no long term profile of performance in this new school, but standards in Year 6 were above average in 2003, with an above average proportion of pupils (around one third) achieving the challenging Level 5. This was a particularly able group of pupils and not typical of most year groups in the school. Standards in Year 2, on the other hand, were well below average – in a year group with a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. The current Year 2 has fewer such pupils and is likely to achieve standards closer to, though still below, the national average. Pupils with special educational needs do well, making good progress overall – though this is weaker overall for those pupils with significant behavioural difficulties. There were significant variations in pupils' attainment by gender in 2003 – girls did much better than boys in Year 2, while the situation was reversed in Year 6. However, the proportion of boys was very small in Year 2 and there were other distorting factors. This

pattern of attainment is not evident in the current year. Overall, pupils' achievement in mathematics is a strength.

59. A good start has been made in this new school. There is an appropriate focus on securing basic numeracy skills throughout the school, but particularly in Year 1 and 2, and there is evidence of very thorough work to reinforce basic understanding. However, a high proportion of recorded work makes use of worksheets, with a relatively low level of independent recording. More could be done to develop such independence even at this early stage. Overall, however, the level of challenge is good, supporting the good achievement seen. In the later years, the pace of learning is sustained, although there is some unevenness in Year 4, where the pace slows. Problem-solving is a weaker feature generally, often because pupils' basic language skills are not sufficiently robust for them easily to interpret the context and detail of a problem. Curriculum coverage is good. Year 6 pupils, for example, have a good understanding of the properties of the more complex two-dimensional shapes and have already covered a thorough body of work this year, including fraction, decimals, percentages and ratio. However, there is scope for the greater use of investigative work across the school, to secure pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts.
60. Teaching is good overall, although there are minor inconsistencies in quality in the upper school. Common strengths include the careful planning of lessons and the accurate match of work to pupils' needs. Pupils are challenged to succeed – expectations are high. Almost all teachers are highly-skilled in the management of the challenging behaviour displayed by a significant minority of pupils and this is crucial in sustaining a positive climate for learning for all pupils. In this they receive excellent support from the well-prepared and proactive support staff. Teachers use language well and question pupils carefully to ensure that they understand. They place emphasis upon the methodical recording of work to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of the stages of working involved in a calculation. There is limited use of computers to support learning in ICT. The school recognizes that this is an area for improvement.
61. The majority of teachers use assessment well to guide their planning of future work. The school has begun to establish targets for each year group and, in most classes, pupils identify what it is they are to learn that day in their books. However, individual target-setting, with short-term, achievable targets has yet to be tackled. A weaker feature is the inconsistency of marking across the school – and, in one class, its poor quality. Some teachers do not include any developmental comments, so that pupils have no clear idea of what they need to do next. Some high quality marking was seen in the current year's work from one class in Year 6. Homework arrangements appear to vary across the school, with no consistent pattern and this is an area for improvement.
62. The co-ordinator is effective and has had good opportunities to monitor teaching and learning. She has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and completes an annual audit of what needs to be done. Resources, other than in ICT software, are satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

Pupils occasionally use mathematics to support their work in other subjects and there is evidence of this in science and in geography. They use graphs and tables as a means of recording data in science and practise their skills in measuring when they undertake practical tasks in design and technology. This is a satisfactory feature at present, though with scope for further development.

SCIENCE

Provision for science is **good**. Pupils achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and most children achieve well.
- Pupils experience a wide range of practical activities, with learning support assistants giving excellent support to pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' investigative skills are well taught, although there is not a consistent approach to recording scientific work.
- Good use is made of literacy, numeracy and art skills to support learning in science.
- Not enough use is made of ICT in science.
- Work is not sufficiently matched to the learning needs of all pupils.
- Science makes a good contribution to pupils' social development.
- Leadership is good. The co-ordinator gives good guidance to staff.

Commentary

63. Teaching is good and most pupils achieve well. All lessons seen were at least good. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and excellent behaviour management skills. Pupils respond well to this and consequently attitudes and behaviour are good. Teachers' marking is generally helpful, with good questioning to help clarify misunderstandings. However, work is not marked to the same depth by all teachers. In lessons, teachers offer a good level of challenge, take a practical approach and use clear language. For example, in a very good lesson in Year 6, the teacher improved pupils' understanding significantly by the use of very probing and relevant questions. This really helped pupils who were struggling to explain the process of separating sand from water.
64. Excellent use is made of the very able team of learning support assistants. They consistently give very good support to pupils with special needs and any pupils with behavioural difficulties. They explain difficult concepts and encourage pupils to try hard and persevere. They help make scientific learning interesting and fun! Consequently most pupils with special educational needs attain the national average in their tests. For some this represents very good achievement.
65. Standards are below average at Year 2, but average by Year 6. Pupils' investigative skills are well taught and built on systematically. Pupils are taught from Year 1 onwards to record their work in a scientific way and to suggest ideas for their own investigations. For example, in a well taught lesson in Year 2, pupils researched and recorded for themselves items that used electricity. There are good examples of pupils using standardised methods of recording, though they are not used systematically throughout the school.
66. As many pupils struggle to express their ideas scientifically, a strong feature is the school's emphasis on helping pupils to use scientific language. For example, in a well taught lesson in Year 5, the teacher insisted pupils used the correct terms to explain scientific principles around the concept of *night and day*. Pupils also have regular opportunities to use their writing, numeracy and art skills. However, there is limited evidence of pupils using computers regularly to extend their scientific understanding. While resources are generally good, the school does not have sensor equipment or an electronic microscope. This is a weakness that the school has identified.
67. Thorough assessments are in place. However, work in books shows that the information is not used consistently to plan work for the different groups of pupils. While most pupils achieve well, last year's teacher assessments show that no pupils attained the higher Level 3 by the end of Year 2. A number of these pupils achieved satisfactorily. The school is tackling this issue and more pupils are expected to attain Level 3 this year. By the end of Year 6 attainment is on course to be average. This represents good and, for some very good, achievement. Although attainment is likely to remain below the national average by the end of Year 2, this represents good achievement for most pupils. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls or ethnic minority pupils.

68. The school tries to make learning interesting, with a good range of enrichment activities. These include focus days on electricity, and performances by the *Quantum Science Theatre Group*. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy science. They are given many opportunities to work in small groups and to collaborate. Attention is paid to developing pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles. This contributes well to their personal and social development.
69. Leadership is good. The co-ordinator carefully monitors work and analyses results for strengths and weaknesses. These are discussed with staff.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has made substantial investment in ICT resources recently.
- Staff are making a good effort to integrate the use of ICT in other subjects. The digital cameras are used well.
- There are good opportunities for ICT in the 'theme' weeks.
- Standards in ICT are below average at present. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils do not have sufficient access to computers or sufficient opportunity to practise their skills.
- Split-site operation and accommodation issues are inhibiting the development of the subject.
- The co-ordinator has little time to influence teaching, learning or standards.
- Assessment is unsatisfactory.

Commentary

70. Standards in ICT are below average and pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is in large part because available resources are not organized or utilised sufficiently effectively to allow all pupils to have their full entitlement of time and regular access to machines. More often than not, computers sit unused – and frequently not turned on – during lessons. The operation of the school on two sites and the imminent demolition of one building, pending the construction of a new school, have made it difficult to proceed with the development of the well-equipped suite to which the school aspires. Nonetheless, additional computers have been purchased to form the core equipment in the planned suite and there has already been significant investment. The building used by the older pupils has had a small area of the library assigned as a mini-suite, but there is no strategy for using this effectively (or at all) and equipment is, again, mostly unused.
71. In the lessons observed, teaching was satisfactory overall. The teachers observed had good knowledge and understanding and managed pupils very well, promoting a positive climate for learning. However, these sessions are mostly teacher-input, preparing pupils for individual skill work, as opportunity offers, later in the week. Learning is, inevitably, affected because the opportunity to put into practice what they have been taught is so much delayed. Most teachers have some system for monitoring access and try to ensure that pupils have some time on the computer. There are too few safeguards to ensure that this happens – and time provided is often at the expense of work in other subjects.
72. In spite of the disadvantages arising from the accommodation at present, some use has been made of ICT in the past year and the current term, and there is evidence of both skill development activities and the use of ICT across the curriculum. This ranges from a small amount of word processing in English and history, the use of aerial photographs, Internet research in history, the use of spreadsheets and databases in Year 5 and, currently, graphical modeling, where pupils reproduce paintings in the style of particular artists. The recent *Town of the Future* theme week provided a good range of additional opportunities for Internet research and the use of ICT. Most staff are doing what they can to ensure that pupils receive at least part of their entitlement. The school is in a position to teach all elements of the curriculum, except, temporarily, for control work.

73. The co-ordinator has worked very hard to ensure that equipment is available and working well on both sites. However, he has little direct opportunity to influence the quality of teaching and learning. Assessment is a weaker feature and is an area for development.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

The use of ICT to support learning in subjects across the curriculum is satisfactory. Classroom computers are not extensively used, but there is evidence from the last year of ICT enhancing learning in elements of history, art and design and mathematics. This is a positive feature.

HUMANITIES

Only one lesson was observed in geography. It is not possible to form an overall judgement about provision. However, on the evidence of recorded work from the last school year and the limited amount of work from the current year, it appears that standards are average. Pupils achieve satisfactorily. Monitoring of teaching and learning by the co-ordinator is limited in extent.

History

Provision in history is **good** and pupils achieve well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Enquiry skills are built into every planned unit of work.
- Good monitoring and evaluation procedures are in place.
- There is good coverage of the curriculum but history and geography are often taught in an uneven rotating sequence, which hinders the progression of skills.
- Visits and visitors play an important part in making the work interesting and relevant.
- Chronology needs a higher profile.
- ICT is not used enough to extend pupils' learning.

Commentary

74. Standards of work indicate that by the end of Year 2 most pupils generally achieve as well as those in similar schools. Standards are in line with what would be expected by the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. For example, there was a sense of story in a very good Year 6 lesson based on the changing role of women from the 1930's and 40's compared to today. Very effective questioning and very good attention to individual pupils resulted in all pupils achieving well.

75. The whole school themed week, '*Town of the future*' developed geographical and historical skills very effectively. Pupils had good opportunities to follow and map routes in and around the local area and study the locations for towns. Pupils were able to give their opinions on local issues regarding land use, the siting of wind farms and the railway barriers in the High Street. Pupils considered what life was like living in the older houses, how these people travelled and where they shopped. Older pupils tried to imagine life before electricity, the changes it brought and the effects on society.

76. Teaching is good overall, with some very good features. Teachers have an enthusiasm for the subject and teach it well. Resources for teaching and learning are good. The school makes productive use of trips to Manchester and Bolton Museums to learn more about the Egyptians, Turton Tower and Astley Park for the Tudors and the Lancashire Museum for first hand learning about life during World War Two. Pupils' fieldwork skills are further developed through visits to the local area and during the week of the residential trip.

77. The effective and hardworking humanities co-ordinator has had the opportunity to monitor and evaluate planning, teaching and children's books in history. As a result resources have

improved, good practice has been shared and the progression of skills and individual targeting is beginning to be dealt with. However, this is difficult because, with the present structure for rotating history and geography topics, there can, at times, be three half terms before the subject is taught again. In Year 3, for example, no history is taught after Christmas until June. This works against the progressive development of skills through the school.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No lessons were observed in **art and design** and there is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement about provision, teaching and learning, or achievement. However, pupils' drawing and painting skills are secure, on the evidence available. Their work is attractively displayed and carefully presented. Year 1 learn about lines and patterns, using a computer program to design pictures based on Mondrian. Year 2 consider how to create texture, using leaves and paper. There are examples of creative tile making in Year 4. Year 5 use computers to generate designs in the style of Matisse. Year 6 learn how to mix colours for a purpose, for example, using complementary colours in the style of Picasso. There is evidence of pupils collaborating when working with an artist to produce a bold and striking image of the Christian cross. The school identifies pupils with particular talents in art. Work in sketch books and around the school shows that a number of younger and older pupils produce work to a standard that is higher than the national average.

Less time is allocated to art than to other subjects. However, art skills are developed in subjects such as science, history, music and religious education. A programme of work is in place which includes opportunities to learn about Chinese, African and European art. However, skills are not systematically identified to ensure progression. The curriculum is currently under review in order to add further interest. The recently appointed co-ordinator's action plan has also identified the need to increase the range of three-dimensional work.

The evidence for work in **design and technology** is limited overall, with some year groups having very little material evidence available either from the current or previous school years. In both lessons observed, in Years 3 and 6, pupils were beginning their first DT task for six months, so that the focus was largely on the teacher's input. It is not possible to judge current standards, teaching and learning, consistency of teachers' practice, or pupils' achievement on the fragmented evidence available. However, there is evidence that pupils cover an appropriate curriculum, with some enhancement from activities arising from the termly *theme weeks*. For instance, all years had some opportunities for 'design and make' activities within the recent *Town of the Future* project – often involving modelling with found materials. Years 1 and 2 pupils have discussed healthy eating and made orange juice, designed and made Joseph's coat, wind-up toys and puppets in the last year. Evidence is less substantial in Years 3 to 6, but there is some evidence of glove designs and shelter-building at Year 6. Overall, however, there is nothing to indicate that standards are any higher than average, with some indication that making skills are rudimentary for some pupils. There are inconsistencies in the approach to design tasks and not all work appears to be evaluated by pupils to an agreed format.

Design and technology has not had a particularly high profile since the school opened. Management is unsatisfactory. Although the curriculum documentation is clear and detailed, there is no monitoring of teaching, learning or standards at present and no real perception of strengths and weaknesses within the school. No procedures have been developed to assess pupils' standards or progress. There is some use of ICT when pupils capture their work in digital photographs.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well in lessons.
- Pupils with special needs or behavioural difficulties are well supported.
- There is a strong programme of additional events and clubs.

- Pupils with particular talents in sport are identified.
- PE makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
- Physical education is well co-ordinated.

Commentary

78. Planning shows that all the elements of physical education are covered, including opportunities for swimming, outdoor and adventurous education. Pupils are on course to attain the national average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, with a minority of pupils exceeding the standards usually found.
79. Teaching is good and most pupils achieve well in lessons. All lessons observed were at least satisfactory, with most well taught. Staff deliver physical education well. Good use is made of the co-ordinator's subject specialism to teach older pupils. Lessons are well planned, crisp and focused. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the curriculum, very good relationships with pupils and high expectations of behaviour. Pupils are used well to demonstrate skills. As a result the sessions are productive and enjoyable. Most pupils work hard, make good efforts to extend themselves and achieve well. Some younger pupils find it difficult to concentrate when lessons are too long.
80. Pupils with special educational needs or behavioural difficulties are well supported by teachers and the special needs assistants. Pupils with physical needs are fully included in lessons. However, in one lesson, where there was no additional support, most pupils only made satisfactory progress and achievement was less secure. This is because, despite good teaching, the pace slowed when the teacher had to redirect her energies into keeping all pupils on task.
81. There is a strong programme of additional events and clubs to enrich the curriculum offered. There are good links with a cricket coach, the Adidas Football Academy, the local high school and local football clubs. The school has worked hard to improve the participation of pupils in after-school clubs. Older pupils are pleased with the newly introduced sports card which offers a range of rewards for attendance.
82. The school identifies pupils with particular talent in physical education. Girls and boys have good opportunities to extend their skills through competing in a range of sports events. Physical education makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Health education is well promoted. In most lessons observed, the teacher explicitly drew pupils' attention to the link between health and physical education. Girls and boys regularly have opportunities to compete, collaborate and take part in team events. They learn how to accept both success and defeat.
83. The co-ordinator has good leadership qualities. She shares her subject expertise by teaching classes other than her own. She has updated resources and organises a good range of sporting activities and out-of-school provision.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is beginning to make use of specialist teaching.
- The school has set up opportunities for pupils to learn instruments.
- Good links have been established with outreach programmes from orchestras.
- Some links are being set up between music and other subjects of the curriculum.
- Older pupils do not sing with enthusiasm. There is no choir.
- Assessment is not used effectively to support planning.

Commentary

84. Standards in music are average by the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils achieve satisfactorily across the school. The school values its support for music, although, given the pressures of amalgamating two schools and securing the curriculum overall, it has not been a priority in the first year. Pupils have regular opportunities for composition and one effective session was observed in Year 4. Overall, however, composition is considered an area where further staff training is needed. The standard of singing is average overall. Pupils sing quite well in the infants, but this is not replicated in the juniors, where singing lacks vitality and pupils appear unenthusiastic. The school does not have a choir at present, but is looking at ways to fire pupils' enthusiasm for singing. There was a tradition of regular performances in the constituent schools and this is being sustained as new opportunities are developed. Connections exist with the outreach programmes of both the Halle Orchestra and the Liverpool Philharmonic and such opportunities are taken up enthusiastically by the school.
85. Teaching is satisfactory overall. The school is looking at ways to deploy expertise most effectively, with a view to improving the rate of pupils' progress in class music. Already the co-ordinator-designate is taking three classes across the school and this is working well in terms of sharing expertise and providing good opportunities for class teachers to develop their own skills. However, on the evidence seen, not all teachers have the same level of confidence in their teaching of music. Some effort is being made to identify and improve opportunities for cross-curricular use of music. An example in Year 6 was the creation of paintings inspired by listening to Holst's *Planets*.
86. Assessment is underdeveloped, consisting only of one annual judgement. This is an area for development. There is minimal use of ICT to support learning and this is another acknowledged area for development. Resources are good, having been renewed shortly after the amalgamation. Year 3 pupils are taught the recorder, while a small number of older pupils can elect to take lessons in brass or keyboard. However, the numbers involved are not, at present, great. The leadership of the subject is in transition. The headteacher has been caretaking the subject through the first year of the school and is now handing on the responsibility.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a well-developed programme focused on health and social issues relevant to the pupils.
- Elements of personal, social and health education are delivered successfully through other subjects.
- Pupils are helped to become mature and independent.

Commentary

87. Provision for personal, social and health education is very good. Parents are pleased with the provision. They feel the school helps their children become more mature. There is a well thought out programme which deals with a range of important and sensitive issues such as prejudice, racism and citizenship. Unusually, in each year group, there is a portfolio of recorded work relating to health and social issues covered – often reflecting key concerns in the school, such as friendship, bullying or self-management of behaviour. Younger pupils have a weekly session in the very special *Rainbow Room* to share their ideas. Health education is very well promoted through physical education and the science curriculum. Pupils are encouraged to value their school, the local community and develop a respect for the environment and the wider world. Considerable efforts are made to help pupils develop as mature and responsible young people. Pupils say they enjoy school, that they are listened to and feel the school involves them in decisions about their relatively new school.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
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	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	2
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	2

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