

INSPECTION REPORT

HERRINGHAM COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Grays, Essex

LEA area: Thurrock

Unique reference number: 114931

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Mackinnon

Lead inspector: Mr Geoff Cooper

Dates of inspection: 8 – 10 November 2004

Inspection number: 267001

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	349
School address:	St Mary's Road, Chadwell St Mary Grays Essex
Postcode:	RM16 4JX
Telephone number:	01375 842407
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Yuille
Date of previous inspection:	Newly established school; not previously inspected

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Herringham Community Primary is a new school formed in April 2004 as the result of the closure of Herringham Junior School and the significant enlargement of Herringham Infant school. The new school is large for its type with 349 pupils on roll. It is part of the local Excellence cluster of schools. The school is involved in the Intensifying Support Programme, part of the National Primary Strategy associated with the local education committee through participation in its intensifying support programme. The school also runs externally tutored courses for parents. The former infant school was awarded Investors in People status in 2003 and improvements in performance by the two schools separately were recognised by school achievement awards. When children first enter the school, their acquired knowledge and skills are well below those expected for other children of that age. National data shows that the area is one of relative deprivation. More pupils are entitled to a free school meal than in most schools nationally. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is above that found in schools nationally. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that in other schools. Most pupils with special educational needs have delay in the acquisition of basic skills but a small number have very specific physical needs that affect learning and some have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Two pupils are identified as learning English as a new language but neither is at the earliest stages of English acquisition. Most pupils come from a white British background. About five per cent of pupils come from a range of other

backgrounds, predominantly black African. Pupil mobility¹ at less than nine per cent is comparatively low and does not have a profound impact on overall achievement.

¹ Pupil mobility: the incidence of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than the usual time.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
23647	Mr G W Cooper	Lead inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Science Religious education
19320	Mrs B Attaway	Lay inspector	
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Information and communication technology
10611	Mr M James	Team inspector	Special educational needs English Geography History
11419	Mrs Underwood PJ	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Music Physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The overall effectiveness of the school is **satisfactory**. It provides satisfactory value for money. In this newly amalgamated school, achievement is satisfactory overall. Teaching has been strengthened recently because of some rigorous evaluation of lessons by senior managers and subsequent improvement in the quality of teaching. Learning is now satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. A well enriched curriculum enhances pupils' quality of learning. A small minority of pupils do not know how to behave well and this is affecting their learning. A major aid to achievement is the part played by the school's association with the local *Excellence Cluster*. Significant barriers to learning affect achievement, including difficulties recruiting and retaining high quality staff, the poor attendance of some pupils and the low expectations of some pupils and parents.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- provision in the Reception year is a strength of the school; these children make good progress;
- overall standards are below average because a minority find good behaviour difficult and because some pupils do not attend school regularly;
- in Years 1 to 6, provision is good for curriculum enrichment, for pupils with special educational needs and in personal, social and health education;
- teaching does not yet make sufficient impact on achievement to ensure better standards;
- some features of good management are not yet embedded in the work of the school.

The school has not previously been inspected since its change of status and no judgement about school improvement is possible. Progress has been made in addressing many of the key issues for action in the two previously separate schools. However, key elements of other issues for action from the inspections of the previously separate schools have yet to be fully implemented, for example, improving pupils' speaking skills and raising standards in mathematics and science, consistently observing behaviour policy and improving attendance.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E	E	B
mathematics	E	E	E	D
science	D	D	E	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.

Achievement is **satisfactory**. It is good for children in the Foundation Stage where the pupils make good progress towards the national goals set for the end of the Reception year. As they start from a low base of prior achievement, many are not securely on target to achieve the goals, except in personal, social and emotional development where most should achieve the expected goals. National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 in 2004 show results that were well below those of schools nationally, below those of schools in a similar context in writing and mathematics and well below similar schools in reading. Recent improvements have resulted in better learning. Standards in the work seen are below average in English, mathematics and science. Progress made in other areas of

the curriculum means that standards match expectations for pupils' ages in information and communication technology and religious education. National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 in 2004 show results that were well below the average of all schools nationally in English, mathematics and science. Accounting for prior attainment, the results were above average in English, below average in mathematics and average in science. In the work seen, standards are below average in English, mathematics and science but in line with expectations in information and communication technology and religious education. Documented analysis of tests show girls achieve better than boys in most cases, although higher attaining boys outperform girls at the end of Year 2.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are **satisfactory**. Attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory despite strong action taken to make improvements. The attitudes and behaviour of the substantial majority of pupils are at least satisfactory and occasionally very good. However, a small number of pupils in Years 3 to 6 have negative attitudes, responding uncooperatively towards school strategies to improve behaviour. Taken together, these attitudes and the lower attendance of a minority have a negative impact on the achievement of these pupils.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **satisfactory**. Teaching is **satisfactory** having improved recently. This has led to better learning, although the pace of learning is slowed by the need for teachers to use strategies to control and manage some pupils. Most staff do this successfully. The curriculum is well enriched by visits, visitors and activities out of normal school hours. A significant enhancement to the quality of education is made by the school's provision of learning support assistants, learning mentors and for the support of pupils with special educational needs. Personal, social and health education makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. These strengths work together to ensure a satisfactory quality of education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Satisfactory leadership, management and governance are underpinned by the individual strengths, expertise and qualities of the headteacher, staff and governors. Most have a strong commitment to the school, working to the best of their ability to secure its success. However, a number of the policies, practices and procedures used in the two schools before the change in status have still to be unified so that they support the drive to raise overall standards. This is understandable given the brief time since the change but completing the process should now become a priority. While statutory requirements are mostly in place, those for performance management have lapsed in Years 3 to 6. The governors are aware of this and working to meet requirements by the end of the school year.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents show confidence in the work of the school. However, about half have some concern in one or more area of school life. In particular, a significant minority of parents have worries about behaviour. The inspection team found a small minority of pupils who misbehave. They also found that the school puts a great deal of effort into managing the difficult behaviour. Pupils indicate that they enjoy their school life but have concerns about a minority of pupils who harass others. Inspectors agree that a minority of pupils demonstrate challenging behaviour which is difficult to manage.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- develop whole school management strategies to ensure that those with leadership roles are clear about their responsibilities and have the opportunity to review, evaluate and improve the education provided;
- improve the quality of education and the environment for learning through better teaching, behaviour, attitudes and use of assessment in order to raise achievement and standards.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- governors should ensure that all statutory requirements are securely in place for the amalgamated school.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement in the Reception Year is good. In Years 1 to 6 it is satisfactory. Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children in the Reception Year start from a low base but make good progress against the targets set for their achievement.
- A small core of pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not achieve highly enough, often because they have a poor attendance record and some find behaving well and concentrating difficult.
- While the results of some national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have shown some improvement, the school finds it difficult to sustain improvements.

Commentary

1. Assessments of the knowledge, skills and aptitudes of children when they first start school show that most begin from a low base of prior learning. The children settle well into school and make good progress. They quickly make effective relationships with adults working with them. They gain the confidence necessary to talk about events in their everyday life. The planned activities in the Reception classes interest them. Many achieve well. Despite their good progress and the good provision made for them, most are not securely on target to achieve the goals set for their learning by the end of the year. The exception is in personal, social and emotional development where many will achieve the goals and some will exceed them.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.0 (13.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	13.4 (13.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	14.8 (14.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 50 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. The table above shows the average point scores of pupils who took national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2004. The trend in school results has been relatively static since the previous year, although gains have been made since 2000, except in mathematics. The results for 2004 were well below those of schools nationally. Compared to schools in a similar social and economic context, reading was well below average and writing and mathematics were below average. Teacher assessments in science indicated standards well below average. There was little difference in the average points scored by boys and girls, except in mathematics where boys outperformed girls quite significantly. The school has an analysis of test results that indicates boys do better than girls in achieving the higher grades possible. The well below average scores stem from the fact that fewer pupils achieve the higher grades possible than in most schools.

3. These results are similar to but not the same as the evidence of the work seen during the inspection. Here standards in English, mathematics and science are below average. There has been recent whole school input from senior managers and outside consultants into what constitutes good learning and it is clear that this is having some impact. There is an initiative to ensure that pupils stay 'in the learning zone' and this is helping pupils focus and concentrate on their work. As a result, achievement is rather better than recent test results would suggest. In mathematics and science, there is a closer focus on practical and investigative work that matches the needs of pupils more closely and does away with worksheets that are not necessarily closely matched to pupils' prior achievement. However, in mathematics, there are still significant numbers of worksheets in pupils' books. Pupils get regular time for skill development in the computer suite and this has given a fillip to achievement in information and communication technology. Standards are about average for pupils' ages. Standards are also at the expected level in history. Despite delay in the acquisition of basic skills in English, pupils have good opportunities to show what they have learned. A similar situation is found in religious education where achievement is as expected in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about religion but also gain from opportunities to put their learning in the context of their everyday lives. Studies in religious education make a good contribution to pupils' overall personal development.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.5 (24.6)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	24.3 (23.6)	27.0 (26.8)
science	27.1 (27.9)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 63 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The table above shows the average point scores for pupils who took the Year 6 tests in 2004. The figures show that school performance lagged behind national results, although there has been some modest improvement in the school results compared to 2003. Science has dropped slightly but has been the most consistently improving subject tested over the past five years. Overall, these results indicate standards that are well below the average of all schools nationally. When compared to schools with a similar points score for the same pupils in the Year 2 tests, the results were above average in English, average in science and below average in mathematics. This indicates good improvement in English since these pupils were in Year 2, satisfactory improvement in science but unsatisfactory improvement in mathematics. Analysis of test results shows that girls perform more strongly than boys, both in 2004 and over the past three years. As in the Year 2 tests, overall performance at the higher levels is not as strong as in most schools nationally.
5. In the current work, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and standards in English, mathematics and science are below average rather than the well below average standards found in national tests last year; this is an improvement. Again, this is due to the impact of a number of features. The headteacher and the new leadership team are strengthening the teaching team. Considerable whole school initiatives are geared towards a better quality of learning and better behaviour. The school had previously assessed its own achievement as unsatisfactory. The evidence of the inspection is that achievement is currently satisfactory. However, the school acknowledges that

more needs to be done to raise standards in English, mathematics and science to national average levels. Standards in information and communication technology and religious education are average in Years 3 to 6. Because much of the work in religious education is accomplished through discussion and role-play, the lack of basic skills does not have a profound effect on pupils' learning about religion and learning from religion. Religious education has an impact on pupils' personal development.

6. Achievement in the school is satisfactory but it is affected by a high rate of absence from school and from the negative attitudes of a small group of pupils whose learning skills are not well developed. Most pupils make the progress expected of them, given their prior attainment. Where individual lessons were seen in the non-core subjects of the curriculum, achievement was at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well given their learning difficulties. This is because they have good individual educational plans that identify what they find difficult and break down what they need to achieve into small manageable steps. Teachers and learning support assistants give them close attention during lessons, ensuring that they keep working towards their targets. Two pupils are learning English as a new language although they are not at the earliest stages of language acquisition. The progress of these pupils is well tracked and their future needs effectively identified and addressed. Their progress is similar to that of other pupils and their achievement satisfactory. The school has a strategy for identifying and supporting gifted and talented pupils. In their lessons day to day, these pupils make the progress expected of them and their achievement is satisfactory. Achievement is often unsatisfactory for the small group of pupils who are reluctant learners. Although they get good support, especially from learning mentors and other support staff when their learning barriers become unmanageable, it is difficult to maintain a satisfactory pace of learning for them. Those pupils who do not attend school regularly find it difficult to catch up with the learning they have missed when absent.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Most pupils have a satisfactory attitude to school; in the Reception Year and in Year 1 and 2 it is good. While behaviour is satisfactory overall, a small minority of pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not behave well enough. The substantial majority of parents ensure that their children attend regularly and arrive on time. However, both attendance and punctuality are unsatisfactory overall because the attendance and punctuality of a small number of pupils are poor. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils assess their own strengths and weaknesses on their end of year report.
- Strategies to reinforce the importance of good behaviour are not consistently applied throughout the school.
- A small amount of bullying occurs, sometimes unnoticed by adults.
- Low attendance levels and significant lateness reduce learning for some pupils.

Commentary

7. Children in the Reception Year and in Years 1 and 2 have a good attitude to school because lessons are interesting and behaviour expectations are defined clearly. The quality of learning for older pupils is reduced by significant pockets of unsatisfactory behaviour preventing them from working in an atmosphere that is calm and ordered. In

classes where lesson pace is good or better, pupils remain on task, enhancing learning. When lesson pace slows, as it does occasionally, some pupils become disengaged, reducing teaching time for all pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6. In the playground for Years 3 to 6, there are too many incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour such as rough play, pushing and tree climbing. There is evidence that bullying does occur; this is not acceptable and confirms the views of pupils and parents. Observed instances are dealt with promptly and fairly by the teaching staff. One pupil was excluded for a short period; correct procedures were followed.

8. Pupils readily accept responsibilities and undertake them reliably. They are involved in setting their own personal targets and acknowledge their strengths and weaknesses in the end of year reports. For example, Year 5 pupils made realistic judgements of their progress over time in understanding direct and indirect speech. The new school council is beginning to make its voice heard in the school's development. Pupils are proud of the high level of funds raised for charity.
9. Records for the first half of the autumn term indicate attendance levels are improving but remain below the national average. A significant minority of parents do not view attendance and punctuality as making an important contribution to their children's learning. Because this is a new school, it is not possible to publish a table of attendance. However, in 2003, the authorised absence for the separate infant school was well above the national average and unauthorised absence was also higher than the national average. In the junior school at the same time, attendance was very low, in the bottom five per cent of schools nationally, with unauthorised absence higher than in other schools nationally.
10. Instances of spirituality were seen across the curriculum. Pupils showed reverence in a Year 4 class assembly, but in a whole school assembly reverence was lacking. A small minority of pupils do not have a clear understanding of what is socially and morally acceptable and seem unaware of the impact of their actions on others. In lessons where the pace is good or better, pupils concentrate and work together cooperatively. Multicultural understanding is supplemented effectively by external visits to places of worship. Also staff, parents and governors share their own cultures, such as Black African and Jewish, with pupils.

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	309	1	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	16	0	0
Any other ethnic group	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	4	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory overall although a significant proportion of the lessons seen were good or better. The curriculum is satisfactory and well enriched through extra activities, visitors and visitors. Pupils receive a good level of care overall. Provision in the Reception Year is good. Good links with other educational establishments support the professional development of the school.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is satisfactory overall. In the Foundation Stage the quality of teaching is good. Assessment in the Foundation Stage is good. As this is a new school it is not possible to make a judgement about improvement in teaching since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good ensuring that children achieve well.
- Where there is very good teaching, pupils are well motivated and focused on their tasks.
- In subjects where teachers are knowledgeable, learning is better.
- In many lessons, the underlying restlessness of some pupils detracts from the pace of learning.
- The school has good information about pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science and uses it effectively to set targets.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 51 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	2 (4 %)	24 (47 %)	24 (47 %)	1 (2%)	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.

11. There are strongly positive features to some of the lessons seen. About half the lessons effectively engage and motivate the pupils so that they learn and achieve well. However, the proportion of good lessons is below that found in the majority of schools. The school has had difficulties in obtaining reliable teaching staff but has done a great deal to overcome the problem with recent appointments. The quality of teaching is more stable. A very small proportion of teaching was unsatisfactory.
12. Half the lessons are good or better. A main strength is the teachers' knowledge of the needs of pupils and of the curriculum. This is particularly relevant in English, mathematics and science and as a result standards are beginning to rise. This is also true in information and communication technology and religious education where standards are average and in line with those in the locally agreed syllabus. Because the teachers know the pupils' learning needs well they make good provision for those with learning difficulties. These pupils are well supported and have equal access to the curriculum, either through appropriate tasks or additional support. In a small number of lessons there is room for the tasks to be more closely matched to the pupils' needs and more practical. Generally, teachers plan well and try to use strategies that appeal to the pupils and gain their interest. The good lessons are taught with confidence and at a brisk pace. This helps to ensure good behaviour so that learning can take place in a calm working atmosphere. However, in the satisfactory lessons pace is less brisk and an underlying restlessness in a small number of pupils detracts from the learning. This is also true where teaching is good but here teachers are better skilled at managing the pupils' behaviour. In some lessons teachers do not provide sufficient opportunity for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, accepting one word answers. Where there is opportunity, pupils' skills are improving and they are becoming more confident to respond to teachers' questions. Relationships between teachers and pupils are good but there are few opportunities provided for pupils to work together and share their ideas.
13. Because teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs is satisfactory in most subjects. However in the lessons where teaching is good or better pupils' achievement is often good. In the subjects where pupils' standards are average, achievement is good, given the low level of attainment on entry. This is effectively promoted by teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm which encourages good learning. Teachers make good use of the effective skills of additional adult support in the classroom. This is a particular benefit to pupils identified as having special educational needs and to those who are learning English as a new language.
14. Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage are good. Good teacher knowledge ensures children experience a wide and appropriate range of activities in all areas of learning. Tasks are closely matched to the needs of the children, so progress and achievement are good. Great emphasis is placed on developing children's language

skills, with every opportunity being used to extend their vocabulary and confidence to respond to adults. However, occasionally lessons lack pace and children spend too long on the carpet losing concentration and interest.

15. The teaching provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. They have appropriate targets for improvement, and these are used by both teachers and learning support assistants to provide a suitable range of activities and tasks. Pupils are keen to participate, they are given much well-directed support by adults, and this helps them to achieve well, in relation to the targets set for them.
16. The school has strategies in place for monitoring progress by assessing work and gathering data from national and other tests. The data is used to give an overview of how well pupils are doing and also highlights areas of strengths and weaknesses in understanding, so that teachers can amend teaching to more closely match learning needs. The information is then translated into group targets, most specifically in English and mathematics. These targets are shared with the pupils so that they know what they are aiming for. Although there is effective assessment in these subjects in other areas there is very little in the way of assessing the pupils' progress or development of skills. Pupils' work is always marked. Some of this marking is of high quality, informative and helpful to the pupil concerned.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory and well enriched. Adequate resources support learning and the accommodation is satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils benefit from a curriculum well enriched by a wide range of clubs, school visits and visitors.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that they achieve well.
- Pupils are well supported in their personal development through good provision for personal, social and health education and citizenship.
- Aspects of the accommodation on the St. Mary's site are unsatisfactory.
- The total weekly teaching time for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is below the nationally recommend allocation.

Commentary

17. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum, for religious education and for collective worship. It gives pupils sufficient preparation for the next stage of their education. The curriculum is broad and reasonably balanced, with a strong emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. There are opportunities for instrumental music tuition. Total weekly teaching time for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is below average. The school tries to develop the curriculum further, taking account of national and local initiatives. Strategies have been put in place to help those pupils experiencing difficulties with literacy, including the use of learning mentors. 'Buddy times' give pupils in Years 3 to 6 the opportunity to work together on projects in mixed-age groups for half an hour a week. The school's participation in the Tilbury-Chadwell Partnership provides funding for work with gifted and talented pupils and for other projects. The school is developing a more

consistent, whole school approach to curriculum planning. In mathematics, there are insufficient opportunities for the development of investigative skills or the use of information and communication technology to enhance learning.

18. The curriculum is enriched by a wide range of lunchtime and after-school clubs and most parents appreciate this provision. In addition to a breakfast club and a variety of sports clubs, there are clubs for board games, textiles and computers. Although there are no music clubs, the school participates in local music festivals. School football and rugby teams compete against local schools. Some pupils achieved notable success in last term's district sports tournament. Learning is enriched further by a wide range of visitors and visits.
19. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Clear procedures are in place, and they closely follow the national Code of Practice for identifying and assessing pupils. The Code has been carefully and effectively implemented by the school. Individual education plans are provided for pupils, and overall these are of good quality. They give pupils suitable targets for improvement. Considerable care is taken to ensure that the work is closely suited to the pupils' needs. Teachers and learning support assistants complement each other well in the support they give. Pupils are involved in the full range of school activities, and they are most happy to participate.
20. The school has two very distinctively different buildings. The St. Mary's building is spacious, with a large hall, large classrooms, small, but appropriate information and communication technology suite and library, and some other useful rooms, such as that used for special educational needs provision. The Claudian building is altogether more compact with little additional space. The St. Mary's building, being older, is showing signs of its age. The roof is beginning to leak, especially over, and into, the information and communication technology suite, and the surface of the playground is starting to break-up, causing a potential danger to pupils. The fabric of the newer Claudian building is better although storage space is at a premium. The main problem there is the lack of a covered play area for children in the Reception year. This means that inclement weather restricts their access to outdoor play.
21. The rooms in both buildings are kept clean and tidy by the hard-working cleaning staff. Displays of pupils' work enhance the working environment. Resources are satisfactory in number, neatly and safely stored, and readily available to staff and pupils. Some of the stock of reading and library books is in need of replacement. The school recognises the need for a further range of books for pupils in Year 3 to ease the transition between infants and juniors. The school is suitably staffed by a dedicated group of teachers, who are well supported by a good number of learning support staff. They complement each other well.

Care, guidance and support

The provision for care, welfare, health and safety is satisfactory; in the Foundation Stage it is good. Support and guidance for all pupils is good. The involvement of pupils in the school's development is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils benefit from access to good quality pastoral care.
- Pupils have established trusting relationships with adults in the school.

- The school has new procedures in place to improve punctuality.
- The school is not rigorous enough in following up unauthorised absence.

Commentary

22. Pupils' pastoral care through the learning support mentors is an important aspect of the school's work. These members of staff are proactive in identifying pupils who need additional support in areas such as attendance, self-esteem and friendships and this helps remove barriers to learning. When appropriate, they work closely with outside agencies to enable individual pupils to receive additional support. For the small minority of children whose families are rarely or never seen in school, additional support is offered. Pupils say they know someone they can talk to about a problem.
23. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and whole school training, including for governors, is planned for the spring term. Medicines are stored safely and records of administration are detailed. The importance of a healthy lifestyle is addressed through the curriculum, especially science. Health education is promoted further by the availability of a variety of fresh fruit at break time and all pupils having the opportunity to drink milk; crisps and sweets are discouraged.
24. Monitoring of behaviour is good and detailed records are maintained, including correspondence with parents. The school has addressed the concern of older pupils who were aggrieved at being overlooked for regular good behaviour. Rewards are monitored informally to ensure every pupil receives at least one award each year and this helps raise self-esteem when they have a special moment in the whole school assembly.
25. Unauthorised absence is not monitored rigorously enough. There are too many unexplained absences in most registers and there needs to be more immediate rigour in seeking explanations from the parents concerned. The school works closely with the education welfare service. It is prompt at following up the non-arrival of a child for no known reason and this is good practice. Newly introduced procedures for lateness have tightened monitoring but it is too early to assess the impact of these measures.
26. Assessment is used satisfactorily to support pupils' academic progress, but is not yet sufficiently developed to embrace individual target setting. Personal development is monitored informally but effectively.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents and the community are satisfactory. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' annual reports are very good.
- The school has developed good links through the Excellence Cluster.
- The governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements.
- Parents of older children are not given enough opportunities to have a full role in their children's education.
- A small minority of parents rarely discuss their child's progress.
- There is no whole school monitoring of homework.

Commentary

27. Links with parents of younger children are more firmly established than they are with parents of older children. Parents of children in the Reception Year and Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to take an active role in their children's education, for example by shared reading, and have received guidance on how to help at home; this promotes learning. The family learning project enables small groups of parents to understand how literacy and numeracy are taught. Most parents of older children have not received guidance on supporting learning at home and this slows progress. More opportunities to share in the life of the school would be welcomed. There is ready access to all staff at the start and end of the school day and parents appreciate this.
28. Attendance at parents' evenings is satisfactory, but nearly half the parents are apathetic about their children's education. A few are rarely seen in school; this disadvantages their children. Some adults accept the school's invitation to help in the classroom, for example with numeracy and reading games, and this provides useful support. Pupils benefit from the money raised by the Friends.
29. Pupils' annual reports are very good because they are specific to the individual child. Almost all teachers say how each pupil has achieved compared to national expectations and this is helpful for parents. Homework is set regularly in some classes but whole school monitoring is not in place to ensure consistency, quality and appropriateness. The latest governors' annual report to parents does not include all the necessary information, for example targets for assessments at the end of Year 6. Parents were consulted about the amalgamation of the infant and junior schools but the school has not sought all parents' views on other occasions and this does not help strengthen links.
30. The school's partnership with the Excellence Cluster gives good benefit to all pupils. Curriculum links with a pre-school group, secondary school and local college benefit all pupils. Year 2 pupils sing at a residential home for the elderly and older pupils have collected food parcels for elderly residents. These activities help link the different generations within the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governance is satisfactory overall. The leadership of the headteacher and key staff is satisfactory. Management is satisfactory. The leadership and management of the Reception Year is strong.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Because the Reception Year is well managed, the children are settled, achieve well and they are eager learners.
- School budget setting procedures are secure, ensuring sufficient funding for each aspect of school life.
- Governors' understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school puts them in a strong position to make well-informed decisions on its behalf.
- Statutory requirements are not yet fully in place for the newly amalgamated school.
- Members of staff are committed to the well-being of the pupils and to the future of the school.

- There is insufficient written guidance from senior managers through policies and shared improvement plans about the direction the school is to take.
- Satisfactory management ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to learn and achieve, although not all pupils choose to take this opportunity.

Commentary

31. Leadership and management are satisfactory and strengths outweigh the weaknesses. However, some of the weaknesses represent fundamental matters necessary to lead and guide the school forward. Among the school's strengths, the provision in the Reception Year is good. As a result, children make good progress against the goals set for their achievement. The school has effective budget setting procedures that ensure appropriate sums of money are available for staffing, building maintenance and the provision of adequate learning resources. Governors play a full part in budget setting and have effective measures for monitoring spending. Governors also have a secure understanding of what the school does well and what needs to improve. They receive good information through regular reporting to them and through their visits to the school. They are well placed to make vital decisions on the school's behalf, ensuring that they support it and help shape its future direction. Governors and the senior managers of the school are successful in promoting the inclusion² of all pupils in the opportunities offered to them. This includes effective identification of and provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils who have special gifts and talents. A proportion of pupils come from a range of backgrounds other than the predominantly white British background. These pupils are well included in what the school has to offer.
32. During the period leading up to the change of status, the performance management³ of some staff lapsed in the juniors. This was largely due to circumstances beyond the school's control. Nevertheless, it is a breach of statutory requirements. Currently, the school identifies the training of all staff in performance management as a priority and is to resume performance management by the end of the school year once the training is complete. Governors are aware that other statutory requirements are technically not yet fully in place. This is because of the change in status and the short amount of time since then to complete the process of approving policies. They have the matter in hand and aim to complete the process before the end of the school year.
33. Members of staff at all levels are committed to the future of the school and to the well-being of pupils. This is clear from strong endeavour in the face of significant challenging behaviour in the classroom. Teachers, learning support assistants, learning mentors and special educational needs co-ordinators put in a great effort to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to learn. The team of those working directly in the classroom has been strengthened by management recently and leadership has ensured that guidance has been made available to all on what constitutes a good lesson and how difficult behaviour can be managed. Learning and achievement are currently satisfactory as a result, although there is evidence from samples of pupils' work and from school monitoring of provision that this has not been the case in the recent past. However, many members of staff remain uncertain about their role and responsibilities in the newly amalgamated school. For example, subject leaders have

² Inclusion refers to the arrangements the school has for meeting the educational needs of all pupils, whatever their gender, ability or background.

³ Performance management refers to the statutory requirements for the work of teachers to be evaluated and for them to be supported in their professional development.

no job descriptions. Some remain unclear whether or not their responsibility is whole school or for one or other of the formerly separate schools. Although there are policies to inform the direction of the former infant and junior school, there are few policies for the amalgamated school. Some draft policies are currently going to the governing body for ratification. While there is a school improvement plan, this is still in skeleton form without time scales, success criteria, budget implications or indication of who is responsible for securing priorities. Nor is the plan a shared document among all staff. Indeed, it is not clear how far the plan has been circulated and discussed. This puts the school in a weak position to make essential improvements. Members of staff feel uncertain and unclear about what is expected of them. Although senior members of staff have a vision for what the school can become, at present it is not yet sufficiently well shared with all staff.

34. The management, by the special educational needs coordinators, and the assistant coordinator, of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties, is good. The Code of Practice has been carefully and successfully introduced. Pupils are identified quickly, through a variety of procedures, and placed on the special needs register which the school has chosen to retain. Pupils are provided with individual education plans which set suitable targets for improvement. These plans are reviewed regularly, with new targets set if appropriate. The coordinators also keep extensive and detailed records, and the progress made by the pupils is carefully checked. The governor appointed to monitor the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs carries out her work efficiently and helpfully.
35. As this is a new school it is not possible to publish a table of spending in the previous financial year for the amalgamated school. Taking the spending of the separate schools into account, the school spends an average sum of money per child. A modest under-spend is being monitored carefully by the headteacher and governors, as it may need to be used to maintain staffing levels. Decisions on spending take note of the school's standards, its provision and the views of others in a position to give good advice and guidance. Satisfactory regard is taken of the principles of best value. Taking all factors into account, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. The provision in the Foundation Stage is effective and gives the children a good start to their education. Admission to the Reception Year is in the September before the children's fifth birthdays. Initially those whose birthdays fall between September and February attend full time the younger ones part time until after Christmas. Many of the children have had some pre-school experience. Attainment on entry is well below average. Communication, language and number skills are often considerably underdeveloped. Because of the low level of attainment on entry, few children are on course to attain the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception Year. Nevertheless, all children including those with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well given the delay in acquiring basic skills.
37. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the needs of this age group ensures that they provide children with a wide and appropriate range of worthwhile activities in all areas of learning. Provision is closely linked to the national stepping stones for early learning. Tasks are closely related to the relevant learning needs of all the children. There is a very strong emphasis on language development. Questioning is used effectively to encourage children to explore language and extend their vocabulary. Good relationships give children confidence to respond to adults and to share their thoughts. Tasks are carefully matched to the needs of each child. This has a positive affect on learning, giving children access to work and helping them to concentrate. There is a good balance between directed and self-chosen activities. However, occasionally the whole class session lacks pace and children sit on the carpet for too long, losing concentration and getting a little restless. Assessment is used effectively to ensure children are appropriately challenged.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of opportunities helps children to develop appropriate skills and to achieve well.
- The teachers' high expectations of behaviour have a beneficial affect on learning.

Commentary

38. The quality of teaching is good. Achievement is good in this area and many children are on course to attain the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception Year. Most children respond to the teachers' high expectations of good behaviour. Although they have not been in school long, they already know the routines well and settle quickly to tasks. The majority are well focused and interested and remain on task when working independently. A calm working atmosphere pervades the area. Children are happy and confident and most are willing to respond to adults' questions. They know they must take turns and listen to each other but occasionally they get over excited and call out. The very good teamwork of all adults provides the

children with good role models of co-operation. Children were observed playing together and helping each other but there are still some who play side by side rather than together.

Communication, language and literacy

Provision in this area of learning is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Every opportunity is used to increase communication skills and extend vocabulary.
- A high priority is given to developing reading and writing skills.

Commentary

39. Despite good teaching and good achievement few children are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. This is because a significant number of children have weak communication skills on entry and need more time to develop their learning skills. A strong emphasis is placed on providing plenty of opportunities for children to develop their language and vocabulary and this is effectively improving skills. Tasks are carefully matched to children's needs. Questioning is used effectively to stimulate verbal responses from the children. A few reply in simple sentences, but many only give a one-word answer. All adults are patient in their approach, building up confidence in the children and a willingness to participate. Children enjoy listening to stories and sharing books but, as yet, the higher attaining children are still unsure of familiar words. However, they find sessions on recognising letter sounds interesting and they are well motivated to succeed. They talk about stories they have heard but often misunderstand a question and the answer they give is inappropriate. Children are encouraged to explore writing for different purposes and all make good progress in developing these skills but only the higher attaining children are beginning to write the first letter of the words in their stories. Many children still struggle to form letters correctly.

Mathematical development

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching number facts is given a high priority.
- Good teaching and a wide range of supporting activities are leading to enthusiasm and considerable progress.

Commentary

40. Effective provision is leading to good achievement. Nevertheless, few children are on course to attain the national goals for early learning by the end of the Reception Year because of low attainment on entry. Counting is taught through number rhymes and action songs as well as practical activities. Children particularly enjoy this approach but find it difficult to understand the concept of 'one less than' or to remember the number sequence to ten. However, some higher attaining children successfully order numbers to ten but they are in the minority. Through a topic about the three bears, children explore weight comparing two different sized bears and learning to recognise the heavier and lighter bear. Practical activities are used to reinforce the learning so children become more familiar with the language of weight.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

41. No direct teaching was seen. From planning and talking to teachers it is clear that a wide range of experiences is provided for the children, broadening and enriching their knowledge of the world around them. It was not possible to make a judgement about attainment in this area. During the inspection children were looking for signs of autumn and had a collection of leaves to observe through a magnifying glass. Displays showed examples of people who help them and their families. Computers are regularly used. Children's control of the mouse and cursor is variable but satisfactory overall.

Physical development

Provision in this area is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children have access to a good range of outdoor activities in all areas of learning.
- Poor drainage and lack of shelter has a negative effect on the use of the outdoor area.

Commentary

42. Children are achieving well, because the quality of teaching is good. They are on course to attain the early learning goals in dance and other physical activities. However, many will struggle to attain the goals for pencil control because they cannot form letters correctly, neither can they use scissors effectively to cut along lines. The children potentially have access to a good range of outdoor activities in all areas of learning because the area is resourced as an extension of the classroom. However, during inclement weather these activities have to be curtailed because there is no shelter and a large puddle covers about half the hard area. This affects the use of the area, although children using the bicycles enjoy riding through the puddle! The school is aware of this difficulty and hopes to provide suitable shelter and improve drainage. During a session in the hall children demonstrate good body control. They were able to stop when asked and showed their developing awareness of space.

Creative development

43. The small amount of individual teaching seen was good but as so few children were involved it is not possible to make a judgement about attainment. A very brief observation was made of a music lesson. The standard of children's observational drawing is very varied. Some show just how well they have looked at their teddy bear, while others have little idea, despite adult input. A range of media is provided for the children and they work happily with oil pastels, paper collage, play dough and paint. Children enjoy their creative sessions, particularly in music. They sing with enthusiasm. They are beginning to recall the names of percussion instruments.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory, and as a result, standards show signs of improving.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although teachers provide limited opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills.
- Most pupils enjoy reading and writing activities but a number of older pupils are sometimes inattentive and do not give of their best.
- Pupils' presentation of their work and the teachers' marking of this work are variable throughout the school.
- The coordinator has produced a very appropriate action plan for the development of the subject through the new school.

Commentary

44. The results of National Curriculum standards tests for 2004 show that pupils attain at a level well below that of schools nationally. The most recent quantifiable trend has been one of some decline, although there is current evidence that this has been arrested. Although many pupils achieve the levels expected for their age, fewer than in most schools achieve the higher levels. Girls tend to do better than boys. In the work seen, standards are below average and achievement is satisfactory overall.
45. At Year 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average. Pupils usually sit quietly during lessons whilst listening to their teachers. However, their lack of language skills means that sometimes they do not understand clearly what they have been told. When given the opportunity, a number of pupils speak clearly and confidently and provide extended answers and comments. However, a significant minority of pupils speak either in single words or in short phrases, lacking the vocabulary or the confidence to express themselves at length. At Year 6, standards remain below average. A number of pupils listen carefully and then clearly demonstrate their understanding. However, a significant minority of pupils find it difficult to listen and maintain their concentration for any prolonged period of time. Some pupils demonstrate their speaking ability by producing answers and observations confidently and concisely. However, a significant number of pupils are not keen to speak at length in front of adults and other pupils, finding it difficult to explain themselves clearly.
46. At Year 2, pupils' standards in reading are below average. A good minority of pupils read their texts accurately, introducing some expression into their reading, and explaining what they have read. A number of pupils read their books successfully, but with little expression or fluency. Other pupils read individual words, but often need help in reading a whole sentence. Most pupils have appropriate phonic skills that help them to read words that they do not know. At Year 6, pupils' reading skills are also below average. A significant number still find reading difficult although others use appropriate expression. In talking about what they have read, these pupils readily make reference to characters and events in their books.
47. At Year 2, pupils' standards in writing are below those expected. Most pupils attempt to write portions of text, including stories, news and poems. However, a significant number do not use capital letters and full-stops consistently, correctly or independently to add structure to their writing. These pupils also find spelling difficult. At Year 6, pupils' writing standards are also below average. Most pupils produce both factual and

imaginative writing, often producing work of some length. However, pupils are often inconsistent with their use of punctuation. Many pupils find difficulty introducing enough variety and imagination in their vocabulary to improve the quality of their writing significantly.

48. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge. Lessons are suitably planned and organised. Teachers follow the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy carefully. They provide many opportunities for pupils to listen to stories and various forms of instruction. They do not always provide pupils with enough chances to speak, tending to ask questions that only require one or two word answers, or asking for answers from the same pupils, with others having less chance to contribute. Teachers are careful to provide appropriate reading books for pupils. They are provided with appropriate opportunities to read and suitable support and encouragement are provided by teachers, learning support assistants and visiting helpers. Pupils are usually keen to read and, even when they find the text difficult, most are prepared to tackle the words presented.
49. Teachers throughout the school provide an appropriate range of writing activities and opportunities for their pupils. However, on occasions too long is spent on the introduction to the lesson, which limits the time available for pupils to tackle their writing tasks. Teachers assess pupils' work effectively, and this allows them to provide tasks that are suited to pupils' particular needs. Most pupils respond appropriately to the opportunities provided, in all aspects of the subject, and this allows them all, including those with learning difficulties and English as an additional language, to make satisfactory achievement.
50. Pupils' attitudes to English are satisfactory, overall, although in Years 1 and 2 they are good. Many listen carefully, work well on their own, and in groups when required, and they persevere with the work set. However, a significant number of older pupils tend to be inattentive and restless, and this then disturbs the concentration of others. A small number of pupils are keen to produce a neat and careful standard of presentation in their books, but others take less care, in particular showing some inconsistency in their work. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly, but they do not always provide clear advice to pupils about improving their work. In particular, they tend to be too generous with their praise, especially in relation to presentation.
51. The coordinator has only recently taken over responsibility for the subject in the whole school. However, she has drawn up a very appropriate action plan and the signs are that this is already being effective. She is a good practitioner, she supports her colleagues with advice when necessary, and she is fully aware of the difficulties facing the school in raising standards in the subject. She studies samples of pupils' work to see where the main weaknesses lie. She has had some opportunity to see lessons taking place to assess the standards being achieved there. She has identified the need for further encouragement of boys and suitable resources have been purchased. She also recognises her need to become more aware of activities and expectations in Years 1 and 2, and she is currently working on this. Her leadership role is satisfactory. Currently there is no timescale for her to review, evaluate and develop provision throughout the school.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. The use of language and literacy across the curriculum is satisfactory. The school is keen to develop pupils' literacy skills in other subjects, as well as in English. Suitable

writing activities are provided, for instance, in history and geography. Information and communication technology is also used, for example, for pupils to word-process pieces of writing.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Strategies for teaching calculation skills are good.
- The teaching in Years 1 and 2 encourages good achievement from a low starting point.
- There is insufficient emphasis on teaching mathematical investigation to promote pupils' thinking skills.
- Although they get regular information and communication technology lessons that teach mathematical skills, the use of these skills is not evident in pupils' books.
- While the role of the joint subject leaders is satisfactory, their leadership and management opportunities are limited.

Commentary

53. The results of National Curriculum tests in 2004 showed that standards achieved were well below those of schools nationally when pupils were in Year 2 and Year 6. This has been a consistent trend for three years, although results in Year 2 have declined since a peak in 2002. Compared to the results of schools in a similar setting, standards are below average in Year 2 and well below average in Year 6. Boys tend to perform better than girls. This was especially the case in Year 6 in 2004 when although they did not perform as well as boys nationally, they still did significantly better than the girls in the school. The school performs less effectively than most because fewer pupils achieve the higher levels. The work seen during inspection indicates that while standards remain below average, they are not well below average at present. At the moment, pupils are achieving rather better because there has been a recent strengthening of the team of adults working in the classroom.
54. Pupils are achieving well in Years 1 and 2, because they make good progress across the curriculum working from a low starting point. This includes pupils who have been identified as having special educational needs. They get particularly good support that keeps them motivated and engaged. Although standards remain below average at this stage, pupils' attitudes are positive; they are interested and want to learn. Together, the skills of the adults working with them and the pupils' positive attitudes work together to ensure good achievement. Achievement in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory overall. All pupils make some progress in relation to their prior attainment. Some pupils are extremely well motivated and make good progress. A few have negative attitudes towards learning and make less progress. For a few who present challenging behaviour, and who do not settle promptly to work, achievement is unsatisfactory. While learning is satisfactory overall, this does not do enough to help those pupils who have fallen badly behind their expected levels. Standards remain below average. Few pupils are well on target to exceed the levels expected for their age.
55. Good attention is given to pure number work, where pupils achieve standards that are close to those expected for their age. Most understand the four rules of number and

make steady progress through increasingly complex calculations. For example, the older pupils know several ways of multiplying a number by two digits. However, some older pupils using calculators were very surprised to find that multiplying a number by 23, then dividing it by 23 brought them back to their starting number. This is a basic rule of number and their surprise shows their lack of understanding. Although pupils are becoming more accustomed to mathematic investigations, there is insufficient investigation of number and problems. This fails to stimulate pupils' intellectual engagement and power to think through mathematical situations. This is particularly the case for potentially higher attaining pupils.

56. Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall. A significant proportion of teaching is good, particularly in Years 1 and 2 and in Year 6. Good use is made of the methods of the National Numeracy Strategy. There are brisk mental warm up sessions and often stimulating question and answer sessions where teachers challenge pupils to explain their answers, to give reasons and to answer the questions, 'why?' and 'what do you think?'. These sessions are sometimes followed up with lots of calculations to practise number facts and techniques with insufficient opportunities to tackle practical applications of mathematics. Tasks are frequently planned to respond to pupils' prior attainment, indicating that assessment is being used to plan the next work. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to investigate the mathematics in their everyday life. The school has tried to find a way out of a diet of worksheets that neither give support to lower attaining pupils nor challenge higher attaining pupils. This has met with some success although some pupils still complete many worksheets. Although planning meets many of the needs of pupils, not enough use is made of pupils' information and communication technology skills.
57. Some teaching is less effective and this occurs where the adults in lessons find difficulty in managing challenging behaviour. There is an element of disinterest and disaffection in most classes, especially in Years 3 to 6. In the best lessons this is dealt with very effectively through a mixture of interesting, brisk and challenging work. Where lessons are less effective, the pace and flow of learning is slowed by the need to resort to frequent behaviour management strategies. Some strategies are ineffective, for example, where the teacher has to resort to shouting or a very hard edge to relationships.
58. Subject leadership is satisfactory. The two joint subject leaders have a great deal of collective experience and expertise. They combine effectively to ensure direction to the work of the subject. Although they have an action plan to move the subject forward, they do not have a clear and current job description that clarifies expectations of their role. Nor has there been a sense of urgency in writing a policy to add focus to the whole school approach to mathematics. There is no time scale for them to review, evaluate and develop the provision in the subject to give impetus to raising standards in mathematics.

Mathematics across the curriculum

59. The use of mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. In science pupils weigh and measure carefully to ensure valid results for their investigations. Pupils follow a curriculum in information and communication technology that ensures the development of skills in data handling and graphing. However, the use of these skills is not very obvious in pupils' work. There is little current evidence to show how well computers are used to promote the learning of number facts. In history, pupils make time lines that require mathematical interpretation and there is some work on

coordinates that links mathematics with geography. However, the use of mathematics across the curriculum is incidental to the activities in other subjects rather than links being consistently planned as an integral part of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As indicated by Year 6 test results, science is the most consistently improving subject in the school.
- In the lessons seen, teachers demonstrated good subject knowledge.
- There is a renewed emphasis on learning scientific methodology.
- There is no clear job description for the subject leader nor is there a policy to give direction to the work in science in the recently amalgamated school.

Commentary

60. The results of National Curriculum standard tests show that standards have risen consistently in science since their lowest point in 1999. That rate of improvement has now flattened out. The results of the end of Year 6 tests in 2004 were well below the average of schools nationally but average in terms of added value since the same pupils were assessed in science at the end of Year 2. Most pupils achieved at least the level expected for their age. However, fewer than in most schools achieved the higher levels and this is why the results were well below those of other schools nationally. A proportion of pupils remain at a level just below that expected. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2004 indicated that standards were well below those of similar schools, and again, the reason is that fewer pupils achieved the higher levels than in most schools nationally. This is similar to, but not the same as, standards achieved in the work seen.
61. At Year 2, pupils' standards are below average and their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of life and the need to eat a healthy diet. They begin to learn about magnets and simple electrical applications. They study forces and label different parts of the school building that demonstrate the practical application of forces. Much of their work is practically based. Although lower attaining pupils struggle to complete written work because they have delay in acquiring literacy skills, the fact that they have been full participants in discussions and practical work means that they achieve as well as their peers. At Year 6 standards are similarly below average. Achievement is satisfactory for most pupils, including those learning English as a new language and those identified as having special educational needs. Pupils use sophisticated scientific methodology to pose and test hypotheses, record results and draw valid conclusions. They set out in their own words a series of propositions about the quality of light, defining simple rules such as 'light travels in a straight line' and 'when a solid object interrupts a beam of light, it casts a shadow'. Other pupils acquire a detailed knowledge of planetary movement and explain day, night, and the seasons of the year. However, few pupils demonstrate the highly developed level of thinking that would enable them to make sharply observed, intuitive generalisations and would indicate the potential for achieving the higher levels. It is a feature of science throughout the school that, while some pupils have a good understanding of the need for group working, sharing tasks, cooperation and

negotiation, a significant minority do not have the social skills to be able to achieve this.

62. The teaching is satisfactory overall and this gives sufficient support to learning to ensure that achievement is satisfactory. Some pupils achieve well, especially where they are well motivated towards their activities in science. However, in most teaching groups, a small number of pupils are not well behaved, waste their time and only the successful intervention of teachers and learning support assistants ensures that the majority of pupils are able to concentrate and focus on the task in hand. The challenging behaviour of a minority slows down the pace of learning. Some teachers manage difficult behaviour very well and make sure that lessons are brisk and meaningful. Some behaviour management strategies are less successful. A particular feature of lessons is the well-used subject knowledge most teachers bring to their lessons. This helps to maintain the level of interest found in lessons and results in learning that is satisfactory overall. Teachers and learning support assistants give good guidance to those pupils who find learning difficult and, as a result, pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve at a level that is appropriate to their prior attainment. Some of these pupils have positive attitudes to their work and they achieve well. There is also good support for the small number of pupils who are learning English for the first time. Pupils' work is always marked, sometimes very effectively to promote further learning. Appropriate lessons are learned from the analysis of test data to ensure coverage of the curriculum and to address areas where pupils perform less effectively.
63. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall well supported by the experience and expertise of the subject leader. However, there are no current plans for her to review, evaluate and develop the success of lessons to improve standards. Nor is there a current and up to date job description to make her role and responsibilities clear. The school has subject policies dating back to the two former schools prior to amalgamation. The review of current policy is an urgent area for development.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- There are good opportunities for the pupils to use their information and communication technology skills across the curriculum, although more use could be made of information and communication technology in mathematics.
- A water leakage in the ceiling of the information and communication technology suite is a risk to hardware.

Commentary

64. By Year 2 and Year 6, all groups of pupils achieve well. Standards are average. By Year 2, the pupils make good progress in developing their early keyboard and mouse skills. They alter the size, style and colour of font to suit their writing. Art programs are used effectively to create imaginative pictures. The pupils devise a set of instructions to program a floor robot. Cassette tapes and headphones are used confidently by pupils to listen to stories.

65. By Year 6, progress continues to be good. The pupils use the Internet to research information independently in a number of subjects. They combine text and graphics effectively. The pupils have experience in using the school's digital camera and digital microscope, but not in communicating by e-mail. They use spreadsheets accurately to enter, analyse and retrieve data. They devise a set of instructions to program traffic lights. Effective multi-media presentations are produced on the theme of 'All About Us' and they use a graphics package satisfactorily to design their own bedrooms.
66. Teaching is generally good and this is leading to effective learning. It enables all groups of pupils, including higher attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, to achieve well. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and this enables them to deal effectively with minor technical hitches and to develop the pupils' confidence. 'Don't worry', said a teacher in a Year 2 lesson, 'the computer will always let you undo any mistake.' Demonstrations of specific techniques are clear and the teachers ensure that all groups of pupils are fully included in learning. They use questioning effectively, in order to make the pupils think carefully. 'How can we improve the text?', asked a teacher in Year 3 and this helped the pupils to consider the style and colour of fonts. The biggest weakness in teaching is class control. Noise levels are frequently far too high in the information and communication technology suite. The pupils enjoy their information and communication technology lessons, but they have not yet developed quiet work habits and they are sometimes slow in responding to instructions.
67. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject leader has led training for colleagues and is developing a whole school approach to planning and assessment. However, she has not yet had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching. There is a clear action plan to raise standards and provision further, although these actions are not evaluated for cost. Learning is enriched by a computer club. There is currently a problem with water leakage from the ceiling in the information and communication technology suite.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

68. There are missed opportunities for the pupils to use their information and communication technology skills in mathematics, but in a number of other subjects, they use these skills well. Younger pupils use the computers to generate imaginative pictures and they word process simple sentences for a monster story. In work linked to personal, social and health education, pupils in Year 3 combined text and graphics effectively to create a poster about friendship. Pupils in Year 5 use their word processing skills satisfactorily to write stories about treasure.

HUMANITIES

Geography and history

69. Only three lessons were seen in geography and history. No overall judgements are made about provision, standards, teaching and learning. The teaching in the geography lesson was satisfactory and one history lesson was good, the other satisfactory.
70. In **geography**, in Year 3, the pupils studied pictures and photographs of the local environment, identifying aspects they would like to improve. Most pupils found the

topic interesting and the standard of the work produced was in line with that expected. A study of teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work show that an appropriate coverage is made for the subject during the year, and suggests that overall standards are also as expected. For example, pupils in Year 1 have studied different types of houses and produced simple maps of the local area, and those in Year 2 have further developed their knowledge of maps and places through following the journeys of Barnaby Bear. Pupils in Year 5 have tackled a range of mapping skills, such as using coordinates, and those in Year 6 have started looking at important rivers and features of those rivers. Pupils throughout the school, as well as those in Year 3, all show an appropriate concern for the environment.

71. In the **history** lessons seen, pupils studied, discussed and sequenced old toys in Year 1, and found information on Henry VIII in Year 4. The standard of pupils' work was broadly as expected and their attitudes to the subject were satisfactory. Pupils in Year 4 were particularly knowledgeable about the wives of King Henry. Discussions with pupils, on other aspects of the subject, also suggest a knowledge and understanding of the subject in line with that expected. Pupils in Year 2 could talk in detail about a number of famous people such as Florence Nightingale, and older pupils knew appropriate information about a range of different periods of British and world history, such as the Romans, Ancient Greeks and Victorians.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good because teachers take an imaginative and balanced view of the subject.
- Good use is made of artefacts to promote pupils' understanding.
- The curriculum ensures a good balance between learning about religion and learning from it.
- Currently there is no whole school subject policy and no recent job description for the subject leader.

Commentary

72. Teaching in religious education is good overall. One lesson seen was very good. This ensures that pupils achieve standards that match the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Throughout the school pupils have a secure understanding of Bible stories and stories from other religious traditions. In Year 4, the story of Abraham was read from the Old Testament but pupils had constant reminders that the Abraham story is central to both Judaism and Islam. In Year 5 pupils made informed choices of which New Testament story to illustrate and write about. The width of their choices showed the depth of their background knowledge. Year 2 pupils thoroughly enjoyed their Diwali party with diva lights and the story of Rama and Sita acted out with traditional stick puppets. Within the detail of learning about religion, pupils had good opportunities to discuss religious themes and relate the central messages of different religions to their everyday life. For example, they discussed the word 'covenant' and the promises that they make in their lives. It is a strength of the work in religious education that pupils are encouraged to learn from their studies. This is a central part of the school's provision for personal development and works well alongside provision

for personal, social and health education. It is also a significant part of the school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

73. Subject leadership is effective despite the fact that the subject leader has no clear terms of reference for her responsibilities. Nor is there a whole school subject policy that guarantees the school's coverage of the locally agreed syllabus. Subject leadership has ensured that the resources for teaching religious education are adequate. Good use of the artefacts that are available is a significant stimulus to pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The school has a strategy for assessment in religious education, assessing pupils' work against the objectives of the scheme of work and the short term learning objectives for each group of lessons.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

74. These subjects were not a specific focus of the inspection. A limited number of lessons was seen: two in art and design and one in design and technology. Three lessons were seen in each of music and physical education. No overall judgements are made in these subjects for provision, standards, teaching and learning. The quality of the lessons seen was satisfactory overall but lessons ranged from a very good lesson in physical education, several good lessons in art and design and design and technology and satisfactory lessons in a range of subjects.
75. In **art and design**, an analysis of pupils' work indicates that by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards are broadly average. By Year 2, the pupils are making satisfactory progress in their ability to use different techniques and media. They use paints and pastels to draw effective portraits of members of the school staff and they produce satisfactory pencil sketches of famous people such as Florence Nightingale. The pupils make good use of their computer skills to create imaginative pictures of bonfire night.
76. By Year 6, the pupils are making satisfactory progress in developing their skills in both two and three-dimensional work. As part of class projects, the pupils contribute to the making of effective wall hangings, illustrating stories such as 'The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe'. These display satisfactory techniques in the use of textiles, fabric paint and appliqué. As part of another class project linked to religious education, the pupils created an effective collage of Moses crossing the Red Sea. The pupils are developing their ability to observe detail in still life drawings. They are familiar with the work of some well known artists; for example, they experiment with the techniques used by Monet. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator ensures that the curriculum is enriched by visits to places such as Tate Modern and the National Gallery and by the use of visitors such as a sculptor. She organises a well attended, weekly textiles club. There is no monitoring of the quality of teaching and there are currently no whole school procedures for assessing the pupils' progress. The subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' cultural development. They are, for example, familiar with aspects of African and Aboriginal art.
77. In **design and technology**, an analysis of planning indicates that, over the school year, the curriculum is broad and balanced. Currently, they are designing and making effective cushion covers and bags, displaying satisfactory skills in weaving and sewing. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The coordinator offers help and advice to colleagues as necessary but she has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching. She has ensured that there is a good range of resources to

support teaching and learning. There are, however, no whole school procedures for assessing and tracking the pupils' progress.

78. There was little opportunity to observe **music** during the inspection period. No lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6 and although assemblies were visited, no singing was heard. Only two lessons were seen in Year 1 and 2: one was a class lesson; the other a session for all pupils in Years 1 and 2. The standard of singing was as expected for this age group, being tuneful and pleasant. Although the pupils found the higher notes more difficult to pitch they did hold onto the longer notes at the end of phrases. Appropriate techniques for good singing are being taught to these young pupils. There are opportunities for pupils to learn musical instruments but very limited opportunities to join a choir, except for the summer festival. The monitoring role of the subject leader is underdeveloped and does not yet incorporate both schools.
79. There were very few opportunities to observe **physical education** during the inspection. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 but a few sessions were observed in Years 3 to 6. These sessions were dance and hockey. The pupils enjoy dance but standards seen varied from class to class. In one session, pupils' movements were just in line with expectations but in another session their imaginative dance movements and facial expressions were better than expected. During the latter lesson, pupils were very well motivated and given very good guidance from the teacher on how to develop their skills. In a games session, pupils' control of the ball with a hockey stick was as expected. In some lessons progress was marred by the restless behaviour of a small minority of pupils. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided, often using tuition sourced from outside the school. Pupils have been successful in many matches showing they are developing the relevant ball skills. The school is participating in an initiative to increase school involvement in sport and, as a result, has received additional funding for equipment and training. Sports and games are an important feature of school life. However, the role of subject leader is underdeveloped and does not yet encompass Years 1 and 2.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education

80. No judgements can be made about provision overall or the quality of teaching. However, lessons were sampled. The school regards its provision in personal, social and health education as a vital ingredient in pupils' personal development. Provision is delivered through planned class time, through circle time, when pupils sit in a circle and discuss matters important to them and their personal development, through whole school and class assemblies. Elements of personal, social and health education are also taught through science and religious education. The school works to a commercial scheme of work from which elements are drawn as necessary and when relevant. In practice this works successfully. Pupils get good direction from the teaching about self, and relationships, and about bullying, and how they can respond to it. Strong messages about understanding, tolerance and patience are conveyed through direct teaching and through the positive role modelling of all staff. It is central to the school's aims that pupils are taught through personal, social and health education that they are in a safe environment; that they can be effective learners and gain social skills that help them find solutions to life problems. The school is successful in this in many respects although there remains a minority of pupils who are unable to take these important messages to heart.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	8
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	4
Attendance	5
Attitudes	4
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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