

INSPECTION REPORT

SHIREHAMPTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bristol

LEA area: Bristol

Unique reference number: 132196

Headteacher: Mrs Anne Travis

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jean Harding
21378

Dates of inspection: 20th – 23rd January 2003

Inspection number: 248934

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant & Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St Mary's Walk Shirehampton Bristol
Postcode:	BS11 9RR
Telephone number:	0117 903 1447
Fax number:	0117 903 1448
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs P Llewelin
Date of previous inspection:	Not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21378	Mrs Jean Harding	Registered inspector	Art and design	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed What the school should do to improve further Special educational needs
08971	Mrs Judith Hesslewood	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
22397	Mr Stuart Fowler	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	
22841	Miss Pat Jackson	Team inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Religious education	Educational inclusion
22352	Mrs Frankie Gaywood	Team inspector	Information and communication technology, Design and technology	The quality of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
20230	Mrs Jenny Clayphan	Team inspector	Science History Geography	
27240	Mr Tony Hooper	Team inspector	English Music	English as an additional language

The inspection contractor was:

*Criterion School Inspections
Juniper House
23 Abbots View
Abbotswood
Cinderford
Gloucestershire
GL14 3EG*

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33 Kingsway

London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This large primary school was created in September 2000 when the previous infant and junior schools closed. There had been an extended period of considerable disruption and changes in management in those schools prior to the closures; this affected the education of the pupils. This school opened with a new headteacher and many new staff. Since its formation, there has been an extensive building programme, which has created enormous difficulties for the staff and pupils. Currently the school provides education for boys and girls from 3 - 11 years of age, with 392 pupils on roll, including 52 children part-time in the nursery. Most pupils are of white ethnic origin and only three speak English as an additional language. There are no refugees and asylum seekers, but a significant number of pupils join and leave the school during the year. Class sizes are a bit higher than average.

About 22 per cent of pupils have special educational needs; this is around the national average. They have difficulties with their learning, behaviour or language. Eight pupils (two per cent) have a statement of special educational needs, which is average. About 21 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is about average but does not reflect the social disadvantage of the area, which is a city estate of rented and low-cost private housing. Seven pupils on roll are looked after by people other than their natural parents, but last year a significant percentage of pupils were in care. The school accepts pupils who have been unable to settle in other schools. Nearly all of the pupils have had pre-school educational experience, mainly within the school's own nursery. Attainment on entry to the nursery is mostly lower than expected, and attainment on entry to the reception classes is currently at the level expected in many areas, but with many children having some language delay. The attainment of pupils of all ages, when the school opened in September 2000, was often lower than averages and expectations, and those pupils joining after the age of five frequently have lower than average skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This school has come a long way since September 2000, and is well thought of by parents. It is improving in many areas, but still has quite a lot of work to do to achieve the quality to which it aspires. Pupils' standards of attainment are generally below averages and expectations, but their progress in learning in core subjects¹, and some others, is satisfactory; progress is good in information and communication technology. The weaknesses of the school are mainly due to the unsatisfactory planning of the curriculum, which lacks balance and means that pupils do not get enough teaching in some subjects, and so standards are below those that could be achieved. The successes are mainly due to the very good leadership of the headteacher, who has forged a coherent staff team, and to the involvement of an effective governing body. The teaching is satisfactory and the school has placed great emphasis on the care and welfare of its pupils. The very high number of exclusions of highly disruptive pupils since amalgamation has reduced recently, due to the school's very good provision for improving pupils' behaviour. Given all that has been done, in a relatively short time, this school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- There is good provision for children in the Foundation Stage², including the curriculum, assessment, the teaching and the management, and so the children achieve well.
- The pupils with special educational needs have good provision and make good progress.
- Pupils are making good progress in information and communication technology.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership and has forged an effective staff team, which provides stability and is leading to improvement.
- The governing body is effectively involved in the development of the school.
- There is very good provision to ensure pupils' care, welfare and safety.
- Due to the very good provision for moral and social development, pupils' behaviour is improving.

What could be improved

- The overall standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils' achievements, at Key Stage 2, in art and design, history, design and technology, geography, and religious education.
- The curriculum, which is unbalanced, and so pupils' rights to an appropriate education in all subjects, and to appropriate spiritual development are not ensured.
- The management of their subjects by many curriculum leaders.
- The assessment of pupils' attainment in subjects other than English and mathematics, and the use of the information acquired in most subjects.

¹ The core subjects are English, mathematics and science.

² The Foundation Stage applies to children from the age of three to the end of the reception year.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to the parents and carers of all pupils in the school.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This school, being new, has not been inspected before.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools ³
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	N/A	D	D	B
Mathematics	N/A	E	E	D
Science	N/A	E	E	D

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

It is not possible to make any judgements about trends in pupils' attainment from the National Curriculum tests, as the groups of pupils presented such diverse prior attainment, and only two years are covered. The pupils who left Year 6 last year were more able than the current Year 6, but had experienced many social and educational difficulties through Key Stage 2, which had affected their performance. Few pupils were able to attain the higher grade and 25 per cent had special educational needs. The school has placed great emphasis on teaching in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and this is paying off, although standards by the end of Year 6 are still below national averages. Pupils' progress in these subjects is, however, satisfactory. At Key Stage 2 standards of attainment in most subjects are below averages and expectations except for physical education, in which pupils attain standards that are as expected. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education are well below expectations. In music, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, given their prior attainment, and in information and communication technology pupils achieve well. In other non-core subjects⁴ pupils' achievement is less than satisfactory, as they have not been taught enough.

The standards of attainment of pupils in Key Stage 1 are below averages and expectations in English, mathematics, science, and design and technology, but their achievements are satisfactory. Standards are as expected in information and communication technology, history, geography, art and design, music and physical education, and pupils' progress in learning is satisfactory. Their progress in information and communication technology is good. Pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of religious education by the end of Year 2.

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in learning because of the good provision. Their achievements are particularly good in the reception classes. Pupils with special educational needs often make good progress in their learning, and pupils with marked behaviour problems often achieve well considering their prior attainment. More able pupils usually make the same sort of achievement as other pupils, but this could be better, especially in science. Pupils using English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

The school has set appropriate targets for pupils to attain the levels expected, and for higher levels in the National Curriculum tests. The attainment of the targets over the last two years has been compromised by the changes in the groups of pupils taking the tests, for instance, last year, 30 per cent of pupils changed schools during Years 5 and 6, and in insecure assessments procedures, which have now been addressed.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. The majority of pupils are keen to learn and enjoy their work. Some pupils, especially girls, are slow to respond and need encouragement to participate.
Behaviour, in and out of	Currently satisfactory, and this is a great improvement on last year when there was a

³ 'Similar schools' are defined by the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals; this measure has been found to be significantly related to the levels of attainment normally found in schools nationally.

⁴ These are subjects other than English, mathematics, science and religious education

classrooms	very high number of exclusions because of totally unacceptable behaviour. Most pupils behave well in lessons, but a few find it hard to get down to work and there often is quite a lot of low-level disruption, which affects the learning of others.
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Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils like to take responsibility but are not always given the chance in class
Attendance	Last year's statistics show attendance as well below average, but it is improving. Those statistics were affected by the very high number of exclusions, and the poor attendance of pupils from a few families who presented major social problems.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The teaching in the lessons seen was often good, with consistently high quality teaching in the reception classes. There was a little unsatisfactory teaching observed at Key Stage 2 and this was due to the unsatisfactory nature of the lesson planned, or the teacher's inability to control pupils' unacceptable behaviour. However, over time, the teaching, other than in the reception classes, is judged to be satisfactory, with some staff having strengths in their management of pupils. The teaching of information and communication technology, across the school, is good and has a positive effect on pupils' learning, although pupils do not make sufficient use of computers in other subjects of the curriculum. No definite judgement can be made about the teaching of design and technology as none was seen, but pupils' learning in this subject is unsatisfactory, due to the unsatisfactory curriculum provided.

The teaching of basic skills is satisfactory, and improving. Staff have sufficient knowledge and understanding of their subjects and possess a sound range of methods for their teaching. In the best lessons in the school teachers' expectations are high, they plan interesting activities to promote good learning, and pupils make good efforts because of the good pace and relevant strategies. However, at times, the pace of lessons is slow and resources are not appropriate for the ages and understanding of pupils. Under these circumstances pupils' concentration wanes, they make little effort and silly behaviour develops. The teaching is sometimes too directed which does not lead to pupils' independent learning. Classroom assistants are generally used well and make a good contribution to pupils' learning, especially when they withdraw pupils for extra help; as a result, pupils with special educational needs, and those in care often learn well. The learning of pupils with English as an additional language and of more able pupils is satisfactory but could be better with tighter planning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. Too little time is devoted to non-core subjects and religious education, especially at Key Stage 2. A great deal of time has gone into developing the core subjects at the expense of others. Time is often wasted. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils have good extra work in basic skills. They have clearly written individual education plans, but some of the plans lack sufficient evaluation criteria to check how well pupils are doing.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. There are good identification procedures and appropriate action is taken, but there is too little continuing support to ensure the best progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Satisfactory for cultural development and very good for moral and social development. It is unsatisfactory for spiritual development, as acts of collective worship and religious education are not good enough. The personal, social and health education programme makes a good contribution to pupils' development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good in terms of care, welfare and child protection. The procedures for improving attendance and behaviour are very good and paying dividends. There are very good systems for eliminating racism and bullying. Assessment of pupils' attainment is good in the Foundation Stage and in mathematics; it is satisfactory in English, but unsatisfactory, or poor, in other subjects. The information acquired is not always used well.

Pupils' rights to equality of provision are generally well promoted, but the practice of withdrawing them from some lessons and from assemblies for other work, or for punishment, is unsatisfactory. Parents think very highly of the

school and staff make good efforts to involve them. Staff would appreciate more parents being involved with their children's education, especially hearing them read. There are effective links with the local community.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is very good and has been key to the good improvements. She has formed a team of like-minded staff, and effectively managed change. The leadership and management of senior staff are satisfactory, overall, but there are weaknesses in the management of many subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have been highly influential in shaping the direction of the school and most statutory requirements are met. Governors provide support and hold the staff to account.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. There are good, clear aims and a useful improvement plan. Governors and staff do not always have sufficient ways of finding out how much things have improved. Procedures for monitoring teaching are weak and this leads to some assumptions about quality that are not justified.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The management of the finances is careful, and the plans for the building work have been managed well. Governors use some of the principles of best value, but need to make more comparisons with other schools.

The school is moving forward in the right direction. Everyone is committed to improvement, but the lack of management training of senior staff is holding back further development. There are sufficient staff who are appropriately trained. Resources are satisfactory overall. The library is poor, however, there are appropriate plans to improve it. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. Some parts of the building still require further development.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>That their children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are expected to work hard and do their best; • are making good progress; • behave well; • like school. <p>That the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has approachable staff; • is well led and managed; • helps pupils to become mature and responsible; • provides good extra-curricular activities; • helps pupils with difficulties well; • has improved since opening. 	<p>A minority of parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • would like their children to be given more homework; • think that progress could be better; • would like more information about their children's progress.

The inspectors agree with most of the parents' views, but judge that progress is satisfactory, rather than good. Behaviour is not as good as some parents stated. Homework is satisfactory, as is the information given to parents. Pupils' progress could certainly be better, and is likely to be so when the curriculum and assessment have improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress from a below average start, when they join the nursery. At the end of the reception year they are achieving standards broadly in line with those expected for their age, with the exception of speaking and writing skills, which are below expectations. This has not always been the case in the past; some groups of pupils started in Year 1 with skills below expectations in many areas.
2. Many pupils who joined the school in September 2000 were not working at the levels expected, due to particular learning difficulties, and especially due to the turmoil that their education had suffered in the preceding years. Many of them had a lot of catching up to do. In addition, the school is happy to accept pupils who are going through great social difficulties, which affect their learning; these pupils usually have deficits in achievement and need special help. The number of pupils moving into and out of the school is high, and this affects the attainment overall. The pupils who are looked after by people other than their natural parents, often on a temporary basis, also have special personal and educational needs that affect their achievements.
3. Four other factors affect the standards of attainment of a significant number of pupils:
 - Before they are taken into care, pupils often exhibit social and sometimes behavioural difficulties, which affect their learning.
 - Before pupils change schools, (and there has been a significant amount of this), their attendance is often poor and this affects progress.
 - Before pupils are given a statement of special educational needs they do not have the benefit of agreed individual support, which, it is clear, they need.
 - The very poor behaviour of a significant number of older pupils, in the past, not only affected their own attainment but also the attainment of other pupils in their classes.
4. Currently, pupils with special educational needs, and those with other sorts of problems, make at least satisfactory progress towards the targets set for them; those with speech and language difficulties, and with known behaviour difficulties, make good progress. The provision to address these difficulties has been a major focus for the school and is having a highly beneficial effect on the achievements of the pupils concerned, and on the overall attainment for the school as a whole. Pupils who are looked after by people other than their natural parents make at least satisfactory progress and it is often good.
5. Pupils' progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, although standards remain lower than expected nationally, in most subjects, by the end of Year 6. Pupils' attainment in physical education is as expected throughout the school, and in information and communication technology, history, geography, art and design and music, it is as expected at Key Stage 1, but below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. Standards are improving rapidly in information and communication technology, in all year groups, as pupils make good progress based on the good curriculum and teaching. Although in Key Stage 1 pupils' standards in religious education are satisfactory, those in Key Stage 2 are not; standards are much lower than those expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils' progress in religious education, through Key Stage 2, has been unsatisfactory because they have not been taught enough; this has also affected their spiritual development. Similarly, pupils have made insufficient progress in history, geography, design and technology and art and design, as they have had insufficient teaching in these subjects. Pupils' achievements are satisfactory in English, mathematics and science, throughout the school, as the curriculum has been better planned and pupils have had enough teaching. The appropriate schemes of work, which the school has adopted or devised, have not yet had time to make an impact on pupils' attainment, as older pupils have missed out on many programmes of study during their time in Key Stage 2. However, the main reason for the lack of progress in non-core subjects is the impoverished curriculum for older pupils; the school accepts that this is the case.

6. The National Curriculum tests results, for the two years in which the school has been open, show pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 achieving well below average grades in reading, writing and mathematics, in comparison with all schools, and also in comparison with similar schools. Very few pupils attained a higher grade, and none in writing. A significant percentage had special educational needs or had changed schools. It is too early to detect trends in attainment, but the current Year 2 group are working above these levels; they are below average, but not so far below. The school has set appropriate targets for the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 this year, and is on course to attain them.
7. The National Curriculum tests results for pupils in Year 6, for the last two years, show grades below average in English, but above average in comparison with similar schools. An average percentage of pupils attained a higher grade when compared with similar schools. Grades in mathematics and science were well below average, but below average in comparison with similar schools; a big problem was the low number of pupils who managed to attain a higher grade. Results, in comparison with similar schools, were average overall. The Year 6 group, last year, had a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and 30 per cent had moved schools during Years 5 and 6; this affected their progress. The absence from school of more able pupils also affected the grades. The targets for this year are set lower than for last year. This reflects the lower ability of the Year 6 group, but also a refinement of the assessment procedures, which, in the last two years showed that teachers' assessments were not a reliable indicator of attainment. The school was aware of the problems and has now addressed them.
8. Group targets for pupils to attain the required grade in the National Curriculum tests, and also a higher grade, have been set, and are appropriate, and the school is likely to achieve them. Pupils have individual targets in English, but not in all year groups, and not in mathematics and science; this is an area that the school plans to develop further. Current priorities for the school are to raise pupils' attainment in speaking and listening, reading, writing and numeracy; these are appropriate but the school should not tackle these in isolation, at the expense of other subjects.
9. There are differences in the attainment in boys and girls, reflected in the National Curriculum tests and also detected during the inspection. At Key Stage 1, boys do better than girls in the tests and also they are more forthcoming in class. At Key Stage 2, boys are well behind the girls in the tests, but tend to dominate the teacher's attention in class; in classes where there are few of them, girls do not perform as well as they are expected to. The school knows about the problems of boys, especially in literacy, and is starting to address the issue, but seems to be unaware that older girls are not doing as well as they could, for social reasons. More able pupils generally make satisfactory progress, but this is not as good as it could be because they are not always given sufficiently challenging work, especially in non-core subjects. Pupils using English as an additional language make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are improving, as the school emerges from the throes of change and, overall, are satisfactory. However, pupils' attendance is well below the national average, although improvement is evident in this school year.
11. Younger pupils show the greatest enthusiasm for school and are interested and involved in the activities provided. Good examples were seen particularly in the reception classes. Children in these classes listen well, are quick and keen to participate. In good lessons in Key Stage 2, pupils are attentive and maintain their concentration throughout because the teaching is lively and interactive with tasks well matched to their ability. Good examples were seen in science lessons in Years 5 and 6, and a good number of mathematics lessons. However low-level chat by older girls and disrespectful attitudes in a Year 6 dance lesson were also evident. Learning support assistants ably provide good consistent academic and behavioural support, and this benefits pupils' behaviour and attainment.
12. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. Pupils work well at their individual tasks. When opportunities are given for them to work in pairs and groups the response is variable. For example in a Year 3 mathematics lesson when pupils were asked to work in pairs to collaborate on creating the sum and finding the answer, only two pairs worked in this way, one mixed gender and one boys

only, the remainder worked individually and often struggled with the task. However, in the new information and communication technology suite, pupils work very well in pairs. Burgeoning use of techniques to raise pupils' confidence to learn and their self-esteem through the 'You Can Do It' programme have not yet had time to make a significant impact. Pupils talk confidently and enthusiastically about their information and communication technology lessons, but not always about their reading.

13. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. Since opening the school two years ago the headteacher has made very clear the kind of behaviour that will not be tolerated in school. Most pupils behave well in classrooms, the dining room and in the playground. They have a clear understanding of what is right and what is wrong. The atmosphere in the school is calm and settled. Since the start of this school year, two pupils have been temporarily excluded for three separate days and there have been no exclusions since Christmas. This greatly improving situation is because much energy has been expended on staff training for behaviour management. This involves containing pupils who have little self-control and teaching them how to behave, how to resolve conflict without fighting and make suitable reparations for their bad behaviour. Parents are appreciative of the efforts made by the school to improve behaviour.
14. There had been a very high number of exclusions in the previous school year. Most exclusions were of pupils in Year 6, many of whom had come from other schools and had special behavioural and social needs. All had the best level of appropriate support before the final sanction of exclusion. The need for exclusion involved serious health and safety incidents to staff, pupils or both, with injury or intent to cause injury. In the majority of cases the temporary exclusions had been for only one day to emphasise the seriousness of the situation. This 'inclusive' stance of needing to support the whole-school community, by excluding one or two pupils for the greater good, is fully supported by the local education authority, pupils and parents. Pupils in Year 6 said that *'the headteacher is fair and strict to make the school better – even the girls get punished now', 'the school is more friendly and less people get bullied or hurt – it is dealt with'*. Pupils in Year 5 said that they were kicked in the corridor, but the culprit was punished and *'that's OK'*. Parents say *'the school is working hard to lay down the markers of acceptable behaviour'*
15. Pupils are proud of and care for their new school and its equipment and materials. Pupils show a satisfactory understanding and respect for other people's feelings as demonstrated in a Year 1 'circle time'⁵ and the moral teachings in assembly. However their ability to demonstrate a respect for and understanding of other people's values and beliefs is in the early stages of development and limited by the paucity of teaching of religious education in Key Stage 2. Pupils' understanding of the impact of their actions on others is below the level expected. It is growing, as the school continues to work with individual pupils on their behaviour and as the teaching imparted through personal, social, health and citizenship lessons is built on as pupils move through the school.
16. Pupils take their responsibilities, such as sandwich box monitors, seriously. The daily 'special person' in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 is a good feature. Initiatives by the School Council to consult with pupils, particularly through a questionnaire, are effective ways of involving all pupils in the running of the school. However, opportunities for older pupils to work with younger pupils, for example, by writing and reading stories to them, or to use their initiative or become more independent learners, are limited.
17. Attendance for the 2001/02 school year was well below the national average, being in the bottom 10 per cent of schools across the country. The rate of unauthorised absence was above the national average. However this level of attendance is broadly comparable with other primary schools in the area and provisional data for 2002/03 indicate that attendance is improving. The high level of pupils' absence is attributed to several contributing factors:
 - holidays taken in term time, particularly in the first half of the autumn term;
 - absence for medical reasons;
 - a significant number of pupils leaving during term time; until their acceptance at a new school is notified to Shirehampton, these pupils must be carried on the school register, and this school is rigorous in sticking to these rules;

⁵ 'Circle time' is a session provided for pupils to discuss certain matters as a class, following strict rules about listening to others and taking turns to speak.

- the high number of fixed period exclusions, which count as authorised absence;
- the poor attendance of a few families, which adversely affect the school's figures.

18. The Education Welfare Service effectively works towards improving the attendance of the pupils in families that do not consider attendance at school to be important. The absences for illness have a serious impact on the figures and are a cause for concern with regard to pupils' attainment, especially in the National Curriculum test grades. Almost all pupils arrive for school on time. However punctuality is worse on Mondays and when the weather is wet.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It is good in the Foundation Stage and satisfactory over the rest of the school. During the inspection only four per cent of lessons were graded as unsatisfactory and 60 per cent were graded as good, or very good. Eleven per cent of lessons were very good across the whole school. Good lessons were seen in all year groups and from most teachers.

20. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good overall. The best teaching is in the reception classes where the teaching observed was consistently good, and has been so over some time; this leads to good learning and, hence, higher achievement by the children. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and most activities are challenging and well matched to the needs of the children. Relationships and the management of the children are a particular strength, as is the day-to-day assessment of children's achievements.

21. The teaching at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory overall and 66 per cent of teaching observed was good; two lessons given by supply teachers were very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen, and a result of this consistency is that pupils are interested in their lessons, and their behaviour and progress are at least satisfactory, and sometimes good. At Key Stage 2, teaching is less consistent. It is satisfactory over time, and over half of lessons observed were good, or very good. The unsatisfactory teaching in the school occurs when the teacher has not prepared the lesson well enough, or does not deal with unacceptable behaviour firmly enough. Some very good teaching was observed, which led to very good learning by pupils of all abilities. An example of very good teaching is in mathematics for pupils in Year 6, where the detailed planning and good subject knowledge of the staff led to very good learning by pupils. The good pace of these lessons led to good behaviour by pupils.

22. Teachers are most secure when teaching basic skills. All the English and mathematics lessons observed were at least satisfactory and two-thirds of English lessons were good. The teaching of information and communication technology, in the suite, is good and is doing much to raise standards. The teaching of other subjects is often compromised by an unsatisfactory curriculum, such as that for non-core subjects. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen, in many non-core subjects and religious education, was usually satisfactory. No firm judgement can be given on the teaching of design and technology, or history, as so little was observed and there was little other evidence. Pupils' progress is compromised by the lack of curriculum time for these subjects, rather than the actual teaching. The difficulty is compounded by the unsatisfactory timetabling of these subjects, as pupils do not have a programme that effectively builds on their previous knowledge and understanding or skills. Teachers are, therefore, often starting from scratch with regard to aspects of the programmes of study. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach are generally satisfactory, with some reservations about their level of training in art and design and in religious education. When teachers have expertise in a subject, such as was obvious in the music lesson for pupils in Year 4, expectations are high and pupils respond well. This lesson ensured that pupils could understand simple notation and they were eager to join in the lesson.

23. A sound range of strategies is employed, with group-work being particularly effective. However, the teaching is often not as good as it could be, as staff are more concerned with keeping things under control, than in letting the pupils develop skills of independent learning, for instance in their work in art and design. In lessons that are satisfactory, but, which lack the spark of those that are more successful, the teaching is too prescriptive and controlled, and pupils are told exactly what to do

rather than allowing them to find out for themselves. The use of information and communication technology is built into the planning for some lessons, but this is not always the case, and teachers do not make as much use of pupils' developing skills in this area as they should. A few staff need further training in some aspects of information and communication technology, and this is known to the school.

24. Mostly, teachers' management of the pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, and often it is good. However, when lessons lack challenge and the pace is too slow, the resultant silliness is not well managed by some staff. A few teachers lack sufficient training in the techniques of behaviour management and a few tend to send the pupils out of the class, often to another class. This might reduce the problem in the short term, but it does not address it in the long-term; it also compromises pupils' rights to access to a full curriculum. In a few lessons in Key Stage 2, during whole-class activities, teachers allowed boys to dominate by consistently asking them for answers. In these situations some of the girls became passive and disinterested.
25. Teachers' planning is generally satisfactory, with appropriate work being provided for pupils of all abilities. The work given to pupils with special educational needs is usually properly planned, but sometimes more able pupils could be given more challenging work, not just work that is extra to that undertaken by everyone else. The teaching of pupils using English as an additional language is satisfactory and they make appropriate progress in their learning, especially the development of their communication skills. When lessons planned are less than interesting and the delivery is rather heavyweight, pupils become restless, make too little effort in their work and the standards of behaviour deteriorates. The quality of the planning is very much tied to the quality of the pupils' response. A significant problem in the teaching is the wasted time within the lessons. Teachers quite often start the lesson later than is timetabled, and/or finish it early. The pace of the teaching is, at times, too leisurely, and this affects pupils' learning. In some classes pupils are not used to working quickly, and this will disadvantage them in the National Curriculum tests. When lessons are well paced, such as the one given to pupils in Year 2 in mathematics by a supply teacher, pupils are keen to learn and they get a lot out of the whole-class sessions at the end, which reinforce the aspects they have learned.
26. The learning support assistants have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of teaching strategies and make a good contribution to the teaching. They make a real impact on the learning of pupils with special educational needs, and parents acknowledge this. The school was using several temporary teachers during the period of the inspection; most are known to the school and have taught there before. Their teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good, and the school is fortunate to have such a valuable source of teachers when they are needed. Very good science and geography lessons were given to pupils in Year 2 by supply teachers; both had effective features, such as very good questioning, leading to very good challenge to pupils' thinking.
27. Marking is satisfactory, but not always consistent. Day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. Some teachers take into account how well the work they had planned has been achieved; however, systematic recording of this is not a consistent feature of the school's use of assessment. A few lessons, seen during the inspection, shared the aims of individual lessons with the pupils, but many did not. The school calls this the 'learning intention'. Thus, if this is left out, teachers and pupils cannot always assess the learning that has taken place during the lesson. Some evaluations take place on weekly planning sheets; however, little record is kept of those pupils who achieved the standard easily, in order to produce more challenging work next time. Classroom assistants keep good records of the pupils they work with, usually the less able. Smaller, more tightly focused lesson objectives would allow teachers to plan, more carefully, the next steps in learning for all ability groups, in order to raise standards.
28. Homework is satisfactory. It is set regularly and followed up. Some parents would like more, others less; this seems to infer that the school has got it about right.

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

29. Overall, the school does not yet provide a balanced curriculum of satisfactory quality. This is because several non-core subjects fail to provide sufficient breadth and depth of study to support

pupils' academic and personal development. This is particularly so in religious education, where the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus are not met. Insufficient time is devoted to the subject, at Key Stage 2, and religious education is not taught throughout the year. The shortage of time, and the intermittent lessons in religious education denies pupils equality of access to the curriculum, and to appropriate spiritual development. In addition, acts of collective worship frequently fail to meet legal requirements in respect of their religious nature, although they are valuable social gatherings. Other subjects that fall short of expectations in terms of the amount of teaching are history, geography, design and technology, and art and design. Whilst what is taught may contribute adequately to pupils' development, the learning of skills is not a continuous process, for example in history and geography, as the gaps in time between the teaching of units of work are sometimes too long. Similarly, in design and technology, insufficient emphasis is placed upon the whole design process, and several key aspects of art and design are insufficiently well developed. However, the school has had a considerable focus on information and communication technology, recently, and the quality of provision is definitely improving. Generally, the curriculum is more balanced in Key Stage 1 than at Key Stage 2.

30. Work in the Foundation Stage is well planned for each of the six areas of learning, with significant emphasis in the reception classes on the teaching of basic skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. Children are given good opportunities to take responsibility for their own actions and learn to be a part of a larger group. Children with special educational needs are quickly identified and good provision is made to support them as needed.
31. The school rightly places considerable emphasis on English and mathematics, due to the perceived importance of the national tests. In the two years since the school opened several curricular changes have taken place in order to create different timings in the day, so that more variety could be incorporated. As a result, additional time found within the curriculum is often given to the core subjects, by many of the teachers, especially in the spring-term timetables for pupils in Year 6. This makes the curriculum unbalanced and pupils do not undertake the full range of study in many subjects to which they are entitled. This over-emphasis on the separate teaching of English and mathematics, when these subjects could be delivered through other subjects, has not been well thought through and is a real weakness of the school.
32. Additionally, the timetabling arrangements are not monitored well enough to ensure that teachers have created a balanced timetable, or to check that they stick to the agreed times. Throughout the inspection, slippages in time were noted, for example when lessons were planned to last an hour, but started late, or finished early. This happened over a range of subjects and teachers. In addition, the changing time through the week, of the various acts of collective worship, frequently led to indifferent time keeping, or wasting time after assembly and before playtime. Some teachers appear to finish the day rather early, in order to be ready for parents' arrival, and time is lost here too.
33. Pupils are frequently withdrawn from a number of lessons, which means that from time to time they miss out on important aspects of some subjects. However, much of the time spent receiving individual support results in good progress, particularly in basic literacy skills such as reading. The school has provided well for pupils who have difficulties in basic skills, but at a cost. The school attempts to withdraw pupils on a rota basis to ensure that they do not consistently miss the same lesson, but this is not yet finely tuned. Some pupils consistently miss assemblies, which is unacceptable.
34. At present, the school is working to place more emphasis on what pupils will learn by the end of a lesson, rather than the task they will carry out. This 'learning intention' is beginning to focus attention on the curriculum and the programmes of study, as well as the need to work in a more integrated way, subject to subject. A good example of this is the use of information and communication technology to teach data handling in mathematics and science. These links are quite new and proving successful, but more work is needed to ensure maximum benefit for the pupils. Subject policies and schemes of work are largely based on national recommendations, and few modifications have taken place. Whilst this is understandable in such a new school, some changes will need to be made in order to customise the curriculum for the pupils. Teachers' plans indicate some understanding of what pupils with differing levels of attainment should do. However, the curriculum does not yet guarantee that pupils are sufficiently challenged in their thinking, especially those who are more able. Ineffective strategies for teaching literacy skills through other

subjects hold many pupils back in the development of their English. However, the teachers do plan in a satisfactory way for pupils to practise their numeracy skills in other subjects.

35. The provision for personal, social, and health education is good. The relatively newly introduced comprehensive scheme of work is appropriate and incorporates lessons in citizenship. This scheme enables staff to build on pupils' learning and understanding, year by year, and encourages the pupils to explore sensitive issues both within the secure confines of a structured 'circle time' or as part of a lesson. Sex education and drugs awareness are taught both in science lessons and as part of this programme. The scheme blends well with an additional project '*You Can Do It,*' running mainly in Key Stage 2, and designed to raise pupils' confidence and self-esteem. This provision has not yet had time to show much benefit, but potentially will be effective in raising standards. Participation in the 'Healthy Schools' project run by the government in conjunction with the local education authority and health improvement team from the local primary care trust, provides a good opportunity to educate pupils and parents on the wider implications of 'healthy choices'. Following an audit by the local organisers the school has targets to meet for improving the environment, recycling and walking and cycling to school.
36. The school provides a good variety of extra-curricular activities including music and sports, such as football, netball and tennis. Clubs are popular and well supported. The dance and drama group regularly stages a performance. Parents are particularly pleased by the increase in musical provision, such as the choir, recorder group and peripatetic music tuition. Pupils in Year 5 have the opportunity to attend an outdoor adventure residential experience in Devon, and this is effective in promoting their social development.
37. The community makes a good contribution to the pupils' learning. Some good features of this are the links with the local church, visitors to the school, such as the police, sports coaches, theatre groups and visits to local places of interest. Older people are invited to events at the school and the local community is very supportive of fund raising events. There are good sports links with a number of local clubs and secondary school, which is designated as a sports college. Training opportunities are also provided for students on work experience and nursery nurse training. Projects in conjunction with business such as the AXA Challenge and Royal Mail Connections enhance pupils' awareness of the world of work. However, the school's capacity for communicating with the wider world by e-mail is under developed because an Internet connection has only recently been established with the provision of the new information and communication technology suite. There are constructive relationships with partner institutions.

Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

38. Good overall provision is made for the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development of pupils, but there are great differences in provision between these elements. Provision for moral and social development is very good, as a result of the school's perception that these are vital areas to establish in order to promote a feeling of community and an atmosphere conducive to learning. Provision is satisfactory for pupils' cultural development, which does not have such high priority in school planning. Although satisfactory provision is made in some aspects, overall the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is not satisfactory, because assemblies do not regularly meet statutory requirements and the provision for religious education is unsatisfactory.
39. There are regular visits by local clergy, which ensure that some assemblies meet statutory requirements, but many assemblies do not fully comply with requirements, because they are not actual acts of worship. The spiritual elements are skated over or missed altogether. The daily meetings are used very well to develop pupils' feeling of school community and to raise their awareness of themselves and others. During the week of the inspection, pupils were encouraged to be tolerant and forgiving, but there was little acknowledgement of a supreme being. The school's planning to raise pupils' self-esteem, and to make them feel cared for and special goes some way to enhancing their spiritual development, but very little is planned, within lessons, to ensure that pupils have sufficient input in this aspect. Opportunities are missed in religious education lessons to develop pupils' spiritual side, often because the lessons are so short.
40. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good, and has shown real benefits. Staff set a good example in the way they address each other in front of pupils and they are united in their very caring approach to pupils. Constant attention is paid to raising pupils' self-esteem with extremely good

examples seen in lessons where both more and less articulate pupils are encouraged to speak and their opinions are valued. Pupils are consistently encouraged to be aware of the difference between right and wrong, to show respect for each other and for the accepted code of behaviour. A system of team points rewards both good behaviour and academic achievement. However, reinforcement of basic manners, such as saying, *'please'* and *'thank you'*, is not consistently promoted in all classes.

41. The school works very hard to provide opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and sense of responsibility. From a low base when the school was opened, pupils are beginning to take responsibilities and the provision is starting to bear fruit. Pupils are enthusiastic about the school council, which gives them opportunities to gain insight into how to work as a team. Their questionnaire to pupils, about what they liked and disliked about school, has given both them and staff valuable information and ideas, which they hope will take the school further. There are Citizenship cups awarded termly for exemplary attitudes. Both the Circle of Friends and peer mentoring are encouraging pupils to start to think about and to help others. Some lessons are structured to allow pupils to work together in pairs, or small groups and these help pupils to develop teamwork skills and to appreciate others' contributions. The orienteering week that pupils attend in Year 5 is extremely valuable in promoting social awareness and the ability to live as part of a group.
42. The provision to help pupils develop an understanding of their own culture and other cultures is satisfactory for this stage in the school's development. At present, there is not much emphasis on helping pupils to live in a multi-cultural society, because, although the school acknowledges this to be important, it has felt that its first priority was to establish a firm commitment on the part of pupils to their own school community. Older pupils are aware of some differences between European and African art, and they attend concerts in the local secondary school. They have celebrated Eid ul fitr and Diwali, visited Caerleon and Bristol Museum in connection with history projects, and read traditional literature as part of their English lessons. This is an area for further development that is accepted by the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school provides a very good, caring environment for its pupils. Clear boundaries are set for acceptable levels of behaviour in a secure environment and consistently adhered to. All staff, working together as a team, provide support, guidance and care which actively and inclusively promotes the welfare, academic progress and self-esteem of all pupils. As a consequence, pupils feel safe, happy and valued and this makes a very positive contribution to their attitudes to learning and behaviour. This very good teamwork and setting of consistent boundaries is particularly beneficial to those pupils with insecure home backgrounds, and emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils being looked after by carers, other than their natural parents, and the few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are well integrated into the school and their needs are being met equally as well as the other pupils.
44. Overall procedures for child protection, health and safety and pupil welfare are very good. The school complies with local child protection procedures. Staff are aware of the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about a child. However, they have had no recent formal training on child protection procedures.
45. Awareness of and adherence to the health and safety policy and procedures are very high. Conscientious and practical care was taken during the recent building work and is continuing. As the contractors moved to different areas of the site, revised evacuation plans and fire drills were carried out. Risk assessments with regard to car parking and child safety at the start and end of school are undertaken. Each year, the message about responsible parking is given to parents particularly those new to the school. Prompt reporting of accidents is encouraged, with the first-aider not only recording the extent of the injury, but the location of the accident. This has led to the identification of problem areas, which have then been tackled. Good regard is taken of safety as children in the Foundation Stage move to the hall and during their physical education lessons. Careful consideration and appropriate care is taken of pupils with specific medical needs with good practical policies and procedures covering medicines for behavioural problems, asthma and eczema.

46. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. The teachers, support and office staff, headteacher and educational welfare officer all work together to maintain an up to date picture of each child's attendance and punctuality. Absence and punctuality are monitored daily by teachers and office staff and weekly by the headteacher. If the reason for absence has not been notified by the close of morning registration, the school telephones parents to verify the child's whereabouts. Specific criteria agreed with the education welfare service mean that problem cases are followed up quickly and effectively. The need for good attendance and punctuality is vigorously promoted to parents, carers and pupils, at induction meetings, through the newsletter and the governors' annual report. It is encouraged by letters praising improvement and through certificates and verbal praise. However recent problems with new software at the local education authority have created some problems with the processing of attendance data and much information has currently to be accessed manually. This has curtailed the schools' use of comparative data to further promote awareness amongst pupils and parents.
47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. These procedures based on positive behaviour management techniques were established when the school was set up two years ago and are becoming well embedded in school practice. All adults working in the school have consistent expectations of pupils' behaviour. The positive behaviour policy, anti-bullying policy and physical contact policy, outline effective procedures for promoting good behaviour, reducing bullying behaviours and managing difficult pupils and situations. The ethos of the school's approach to promoting good behaviour is based on a shared set of values that enable an environment to be created where pupils are given the best opportunity to learn. All staff are involved in monitoring and promoting good behaviour. It is 'the behaviour' that is unacceptable not 'the person'. Pupils are involved in creating their own class rules at the start of the year. Good practical methods for staff to enforce school, class and wet-weather playtime rules, and types of unacceptable behaviour and associated sanctions, are clearly laid out in the staff handbook. Parents and the local education authority primary inclusion team are well involved, and there are appropriate procedures when problems occur, such as special needs group work and the ultimate sanction of 'time out'.
48. Elimination of bullying, fighting, kicking, punching, name calling and other unacceptable, antisocial behaviours is successfully encouraged by the use of behaviour cards and books, and the removal, both voluntarily and by staff direction, of pupils from volatile situations to a 'safe haven'. The headteacher is particularly effective in confronting miscreants with the consequences of their actions and agreeing reparation. In particular the organisation of lunchtime supervision and the variety of activities and strategies provided ensures that much effort is effectively expended by an integrated team of staff to ensure a safe, happy, sociable and enjoyable lunch break for all pupils.
49. Pupils' personal development is monitored informally by staff. Pupils' individual effort is effectively encouraged through praise, 'golden time', the awarding of stickers, team points and certificates for personal, behavioural and academic achievement. Similar successful systems and procedures operate in each class. Personal development is supported within 'circle time' and personal, social, health and citizenship lessons. The recently introduced 'You Can Do It' scheme endeavours to teach confidence, organisation, persistence and co-operation, the four 'foundations for achievement', and is a good feature.
50. The quality of the assessment for pupils with special educational needs is generally good and does much to promote their good progress towards their personal targets. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs, in terms of emotional and behavioural difficulties is particularly good. Within its list of pupils with special educational needs, however, the school has included pupils giving 'cause for concern'. Not only do these pupils not have special educational needs, within the current interpretation of the Code of Practice, but also this dilutes the work that is needed for those with the most important needs. Pupils giving cause for concern should have their needs met, as individuals, as part of the school's normal teaching and care procedures, and not as part of the special educational needs provision. Pupils' individual education plans are useful, properly reviewed and targets are generally appropriate. However, some targets are not specific enough to enable progress to be measured. The school has had useful help from staff of the local education authority to assess pupils using English as an additional language.
51. The quality and detail of assessments carried out in the Foundation Stage is good. In the rest of the school procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory overall in the core

subject of English and good in mathematics. The school has only just begun its focus on science, and this remains unsatisfactory, but is developing well. The school started the process of developing reliable assessment procedures some two years ago, with mathematics, after an analysis of pupils' papers in the national tests. Areas of weaknesses were targeted and subsequent results were monitored. Progressive tests, devised by members of staff and delivered three times a year, have resulted in good assessment procedures for mathematics. Currently, information and communication technology has been in the spotlight and teachers are beginning to consider the level of pupils' attainment. However, this also remains unsatisfactory. The rest of the subjects in the curriculum have hardly been considered at all. This is a poor state of affairs, when nationally available documents provide a starting point until a school can devise its own system. The school rightly wants to be reasonable about the number of new initiatives it tackles at one time, but neither portfolios nor any other method has been adopted. For these reasons, it is not possible to say that the school's use of assessment is any better than unsatisfactory.

52. Procedures for tracking the attainment of individuals and groups of pupils in core subjects are satisfactory. Records are kept of scores, from Key Stage 1, through optional tests, and predictions are made for Year 6. All teachers are involved and they know when the process will begin its next round. Any apparent discrepancies between the results of teachers' assessments and the national tests occur, usually, because staff err on the side of caution. Subject leaders liaise closely with the assessment co-ordinator and trials have begun to include pupils with their own self-evaluation, using response partners. Pupils in Year 2 already do this with spelling, and this is a positive move.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. Parents have a very high regard for the school and its work and are very supportive. They say that their children like school and are making good progress, and that the school teaches values that help them become mature and responsible. Parents are made welcome and feel comfortable approaching the school and headteacher with questions or problems. They appreciate the wide range of activities provided outside lessons, particularly the musical and sporting activities. Parents feel that teaching is good, teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and behaviour, and the school is well led and managed. However, a small number of parents feel that the school does not keep them well enough informed about their children's progress.
54. Good links are made with parents of children in the Foundation Stage. As well as involving them in the initial assessment of the child's achievements, parents are regularly kept informed of what is happening in the nursery and reception classes and there is an effective bulletin board outside the nursery entrance.
55. The school is working hard to involve parents and carers in the process of helping to educate their children in partnership and has good, effective links with parents and carers. Overall, the quality of information provided to parents about the school and its work, particularly through personal contact is good. The headteacher and staff provide a consistent, warm welcome to all. Written and verbal information is provided at every opportunity. Good examples of the clear practical written information provided include the prospectus, weekly newsletter, termly curriculum overview for each class, leaflets which reinforce school policies and provide guidance on expectations for attendance and punctuality, preparing your child for school, school uniform and the school's 'positive behaviour policy'. Annual reports provide satisfactory information on what pupils know and can do and evidence of their progress can be tracked from year to year, particularly through the Foundation Stage and into Key Stage 1. For example, reports for children in the Foundation Stage are particularly good. The front has a drawing done by the child of 'myself', together with targets for improvement. Personal, social, health education is reported as a discrete subject in Key Stage 1, but not in Key Stage 2.
56. There are, however, no written targets, other than in the Foundation Stage, no comparative 'level' information and no space on any reports for parents or pupils to comment. Parents at the meeting intimated that targets for improvement in English and mathematics are discussed during formal parents meetings and they are told verbally whether their child is above, below or at the standard expected for that class. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are given verbal reports on progress as often as possible. The headteacher is usually in the playground to greet pupils and parents, before and after school, and this promotes communication with parents. Teachers,

particularly in Key Stage 1, are available to speak to parents, before and after school, and by appointment. Information meetings about the national tests and new learning methods, such as the teaching of letter sounds, are held annually.

57. The home-school agreement and homework policy provide a clear framework for parents to help and support their children at home. A shared reading record encourages parents to regularly hear their children read. However, not all children are helped in this way. Parents of pupils in Years 1 and 2 are encouraged to come into school each Wednesday morning to read with their child. A regular group session provides mutual support for parents whose children have emotional and behavioural difficulties. Other parents help by hearing pupils read, with swimming and cookery lessons. When parents help at home or in school, standards improve.
58. The 'Friends of the School' hold two big fund raising events each year, an Advent fair and a summer barbecue, effectively supported by parents, the whole school community, and local residents. A parents' group now works with staff and pupils on the 'Healthy Schools' target of improving the school environment. Plans for developing the grounds are being effectively supported by funds from the Friends of the School. The recently introduced parents' information technology training sessions in the new computer suite, supported with a crèche, are very well attended and an excellent initiative. These events and initiatives effectively publicise the benefits of partnership in education and continue to raise local confidence, pupils' social skills and community awareness.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The very good leadership by the headteacher and the governors is key to the successes in the establishment of the new school. When the headteacher was appointed, she knew that much hard work and concentration on essentials would be needed to set the school up and to get it going in an effective manner. She also knew that staff and pupils would have to tolerate ambiguity, as not everything could be done at once; they would also have to put up with extensive construction work. She set clear goals and has led the school very well. The achievements are the result of a clear vision being set by the governors and senior managers, essential change being managed well, and a close-knit staff team being established. The headteacher and governors have had a highly beneficial influence on all staff and have taken personal responsibility for the successes and for the necessary improvements. They have established a 'corporate style' and developed shared values. There is a sense of purpose, but a relaxed atmosphere, as staff have dealt with numerous difficulties with humanity and realism. They have met the expectations of parents, pupils, staff and the local education authority. For this, they deserve much credit.
60. The management of the school is satisfactory overall. However, there are weaknesses in the management of the curriculum, which are having an adverse effect on standards and pupils' learning. The senior management and governors have little idea of the school's shortcomings in this crucial field. The overall planning of the curriculum is unsatisfactory as there is not an effective overview. The curriculum evaluation is not as good as it could be as managers are inexperienced and, at this stage of the school's development, many need further training in specific management techniques, such as that of evaluation of strategies and procedures. The leadership and management of many non-core subjects are unsatisfactory, but the leadership of mathematics, information and communication technology, and physical education is good; this is because these managers have expertise in their subject areas, know what is going on, and have clear plans for improvement. Generally, the monitoring procedures, such as that of the curriculum and teaching, are currently not good enough to ensure continued improvement. As subject leaders have not had the systems to find out any weaknesses, they have not had the information to set further improvement in place. There has been insufficient analysis of what is not working and so the impact of lessons that have been evaluated has been minimal. The 'operations management' of the school is not as well carried out as it should be. Routines, such as the timings of lessons, are a bit lax and there are too few systems and structures to ensure total compliance and conformity with set procedures. The school works reasonably smoothly, but not as efficiently as it should. There are no ingrained barriers to necessary change, except for lack of experience. The will to improve, is, however, very strongly apparent.

61. The management by the senior management team, and of the different phases of the school is satisfactory. However, the high quality of the management of the key areas of special educational needs and the Foundation Stage is leading to better than expected progress in these areas. The provision for pupils with special educational needs has been managed well by an experienced co-ordinator, ably assisted by a specialist teacher. They have set up effective procedures to identify and help these pupils, and the systems are paying off. The staff who work with pupils with special educational needs do especially useful work with pupils in care and those who are troubled. They are very well supported by an involved and knowledgeable governor with responsibility for this aspect. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is also responsible for checking the provision for pupils using English as an additional language. At the moment there is no policy document for the teaching of these pupils, as this has not been a priority, because the numbers are so small. This is, however, an area that needs to be addressed in order to ensure quality provision for pupils using English as an additional language; the school knows this.
62. The governors, working with the staff, have set the direction and scope of the school over the long-term. The strategic planning, in terms of a formal improvement plan, is good, although tighter costing and evaluation criteria would make it even better. Led by an effective and experienced Chair, governors are not only supportive of the school, but are also very well involved at many levels. The school has worked hard to ensure that there is a full complement of governors; there are more than enough volunteers for recent vacancies, and this says much for the way that the community knows that governors are properly involved in decision-making. Governors take their responsibilities as 'critical friends' very seriously and are aware that procedures for evaluation and for planning the finances are not yet as good as they would like them to be. There are a couple of statutory requirements that are not met, including proper adherence to the rules for acts of collective worship, and to the provision for religious education. The reason that the governing body did not know about these was because the evaluation of the curriculum is not good enough. It has not helped that the school has had three different local education authority advisors in its short existence. Individual governors are now linked to each subject area, and this is potentially a good move, but in order for the governors to improve their overview of their subjects, many will need further training to find out about the requirements in each curricular area.
63. The school has been through a complicated period of amalgamation and this has led to difficulties with regard to financial planning. The governors, advised by the headteacher, have worked with a number of different budget officers, and it has not always been easy to maintain an accurate picture of the school's financial position. They have, however, spent wisely and efficiently in a number of different areas and these strategies have proved of immense benefit to the school. For example, standards of accommodation have improved considerably and this has created a much more pleasant working environment for staff and pupils. The decision to employ a large number of experienced learning support assistants has both raised the attainment of pupils, particularly those with special educational needs, and contributed significantly to the moral and social development of all pupils. Improved security measures have led to a decline in the high level of vandalism that was previously targeted at the school.
64. Although the school has benefited from the expenditure that has taken place, financial reserves remain much higher than in many schools and considerably higher than the percentage considered reasonable. Some further spending has already been planned, such as the provision of a canopy for the nursery and the much-needed refurbishment of the school library, but many areas of the school are in urgent need of redecoration, and resources in some subject areas are unsatisfactory. There is plenty of cash in hand to address these problems, but, as yet, the school does not have a clear and precise financial plan to ensure that financial reserves are at an appropriate level and that future spending is efficiently targeted to benefit the pupils that are currently in the school.
65. Governors, especially those directly involved in financial matters, feel ownership of the budget. The governors' involvement in the school's annual strategic planning enables them to be fully informed and to make a positive contribution, and the newly developed monthly budget forms are enabling members of the finance committee to be increasingly involved in financial planning. These measures aim to make sure that, as far as possible, the school's finances will be sufficient to ensure the continuation of its present strategies. The use of the specific funds element of the school's finances, and other additional funding, including a grant from the New Opportunities Fund, is well focused. The development of the new computer suite is helping to raise standards in information and communication technology and the good use of learning initiatives, such as

additional literacy and numeracy support, makes a positive impact on the quality of learning provision for all pupils, particularly those who receive extra help to address special educational needs.

66. The school's day-to-day control of its finances is good. The new school office is spacious, well equipped, and its staff make very effective use of new technology to support their work. Effective use is made of the information available from the school's computerised management system for monitoring and there are sound financial and administrative procedures in place that allow the very efficient office manager to make a significant contribution to the effective running of the school. There were a number of recommendations made as a result of the school's most recent audit, none of which remain a matter of concern. Elsewhere, there is a strong commitment to the use of new technology. In addition to the support of administrative activities, the school has moved to fully embrace the benefits of information and communication technology across many aspects of school life and are seeking currently to incorporate the School Fund into their computerised systems.
67. Within the governing body, effectively supported by the headteacher, the principles of best value are generally applied. The proper implementation of these procedures means that the school's spending is evaluated and targeted to ensure that the quality of education provided for the pupils is consistent with its development planning. Governors have made good progress in their understanding of the principles of best value and they are continually seeking to improve their role within the school. They are aware of the need to seek comparisons when purchasing services and resources and have satisfactory procedures for ensuring that value is obtained. The governors are knowledgeable and competent and now need to play an increasingly questioning role in the monitoring of performance, by comparing the school's achievements with what is expected, what is achieved elsewhere, and what could be done with a different spending pattern.
68. The current headteacher has worked hard to blend staff from the old infant and junior schools, and the newly appointed staff, into one cohesive unit and to achieve a good team spirit within the new school. This has been done very successfully. The match of teachers to the demands of the curriculum is satisfactory. Performance Management systems are satisfactory and the induction of newly qualified teachers is good. There has been appropriate training for all staff in the management of pupils' unacceptable behaviour, but more is needed for some of them. There has been insufficient planning for the development of the roles of the subject leaders, and this has affected the management in this area. The school places a high priority on the provision of support staff and currently employs a large number of suitably qualified learning assistants who give very good support to pupils, especially those with special educational needs. The shared commitment of teachers and support staff is making a positive contribution to educational standards within the school and is helping to improve standards of behaviour significantly.
69. During the last two and a half years, the school has experienced considerable disruption due to the extensive programme of building work and refurbishment that has been carried out. It is to everyone's credit that this work has not been allowed to interfere with the smooth running of the school. The accommodation is now satisfactory overall and fully meets the demands of the curriculum. There have been major improvements, including the provision of an attractive entrance area, new staff room, well-equipped computer suite, a new kitchen and a resources room. Further planned improvements include the provision of a canopy for the nursery, the development of an art room and the refurbishment of the school library. There is sufficient playground space, and although the school does not have a playing field, pupils do have access to local sports pitches. The 'Friends of the School' association have already provided some outdoor play equipment and there are extensive plans to enhance the appearance of the site by providing additional outdoor learning resources. The interior of the building is well maintained by the very efficient school caretaker who, with the cleaning staff, provides a clean and tidy environment in which learning can take place. However, some areas of the building, particularly the library, gymnasium and many Key Stage 2 classrooms are in urgent need of redecoration.
70. Overall, resources for learning are satisfactory. Since the amalgamation, there has been a considerable improvement in the provision of resources for information and communication technology. In most other curricular areas, resources are satisfactory, although in some subjects, such as music and science, the quantity of resources are insufficient for two parallel classes and this does put some restrictions on efficient timetabling. Learning resources for geography, history

and art and design are unsatisfactory. Although the school gymnasium is in urgent need of redecoration, it does provide an additional resource for physical education and it is used effectively.

71. Although the school has had extra money to set it up and to improve the accommodation, it does not spend more than many schools. It has funds in hand to continue to improve the accommodation. Given all that has been achieved in a short time, and the satisfactory quality of education currently being provided, it gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

72. In order to continue the good improvements already made, the governors, headteacher and staff must now:
- Raise pupils' standards of attainment by: addressing the issues below; continuing to develop best practice in the teaching of basic skills*; and improving the library* without delay.
(Paragraphs 5, 106, 123, 129 and 131)
 - Improve pupils' achievements in design and technology, history, art and design, geography, and religious education by the end of Year 6 by:
 - improving the curriculum planning, especially developing schemes of work to ensure that all aspects of the subject are covered and pupils acquire skills, knowledge and understanding in a coherent way;
 - devoting more time to the teaching of these subjects;
 - acquiring better resources for art and design, history and geography;
 - providing further training for teachers where there is a need;
 - establishing appropriate assessment procedures so that staff and parents are clear about what pupils know, understand and can do.
(Paragraphs 5, 123, 129, 131, 135, 137, 138, 139, 143 and 144)
 - Improve the planning of the curriculum by:
 - devising systems so that there is an effective overview of the whole curriculum by senior staff;
 - ensuring that there is sufficient time for teaching, especially at Key Stage 2;
 - ensuring that the time for teaching is not wasted, either between or within lessons;
 - planning the timetable for each class so that all subjects have an appropriate allocation of time, and especially ensuring that the amount of time allocated to religious education is in line with the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus;
 - adapting the new schemes of work in non-core subjects to ensure that all the required elements are covered and that they start at an appropriate level for pupils;
 - stopping the practice of removing pupils from essential lessons for reasons that are not valid;
 - ensuring that all pupils attend acts of collective worship and that these are sufficiently spiritual;
 - giving subject leaders more training so that they have an effective overview of their subjects.
(Paragraphs 5, 22, 29, 31-34, 38, 39, 60, 62, 129, 131, 133-137, 141, 143, 144 and 169)
 - Improve the management of the subject leaders by:
 - further training in the best methods of monitoring and evaluation;
 - ensuring that they have an effective overview of provision in their subjects by more rigorous checking of the planning;
 - undertaking more observations of the teaching;*
 - more analytical scrutiny of pupils' work, so that they know about standards.
(Paragraphs 60, 128, 134, 137, 141, 144 and 169)

- ❑ Improve the assessment* of pupils' attainment in science, religious education and non-core subjects by:
- devising appropriate systems for assessment;
 - ensuring compliance by all teachers;
 - making use of the information acquired.
- (Paragraphs 51, 128, 134, 141, 144, 152, 155, 162 and 169)*

In addition to the above, the governors should ensure that the very good procedures to improve the rates of attendance, which are getting results, are rigorously followed to ensure the continuing improvements to the statistics for attendance. *(Paragraph 18)*

Items marked with an asterisk (*) indicate that the school has already made plans to address these issues.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

75

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

87

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	37	27	3	0	0
Percentage	0	11	49	36	4	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	366
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	012	79

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	87

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	31

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	25	27	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	23
	Girls	20	20	22
	Total	37	38	45
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (85)	73 (83)	87 (89)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	23	21
	Girls	20	23	22
	Total	38	46	43
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	73 (87)	88(91)	83 (89)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to 2001

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	29	29	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	18	26
	Girls	23	19	24
	Total	42	37	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (66)	64 (52)	86 (69)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	18	22
	Girls	21	18	24
	Total	36	36	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	62 (44)	62 (57)	79 (27)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to 2001

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	356	41	2
White – Irish	0		
White – any other White background	2		
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0		
Mixed – White and Black African	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	0		
Mixed – any other mixed background	4		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0		
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0		
Black or Black British – African	1		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1		
Chinese	0		
Any other ethnic group	0		
No ethnic group recorded	0		

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.6
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	302.25

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5
Number of pupils per FTE adult	13

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	943,934
Total expenditure	904,674
Expenditure per pupil	2,079
Balance brought forward from previous year	64,382
Balance carried forward to next year	103,642

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	392
Number of questionnaires returned	165
Percentage of questionnaires returned	42

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	58	38	2	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	60	4	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	52	6	1	10
The teaching is good.	49	49	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	48	10	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	29	5	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	41	1	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	40	48	7	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	48	45	2	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	52	3	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	41	2	0	12

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were very appreciative of the efforts made by staff and governors to get the school up and running.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

73. The Foundation Stage provides for children in the nursery and reception classes and the curriculum is broken down into six areas of learning. Children in the Foundation Stage receive a good all-round education due to knowledgeable staff and good provision.
74. Most children are admitted to the nursery in the year in which they will be four and transfer to reception the following September. The warm, caring atmosphere with firmly established routines, into which the children are welcomed, helps them settle in quickly and happily. At the time of the inspection, there were 52 children in the nursery, attending either a morning or an afternoon session. About a fifth of the children from the nursery transfer to another local school, which does not have a nursery, and a few children join the reception class without having attended the nursery. Children in the two reception classes all attend full time from the beginning of the year.
75. On entry into the nursery the majority of children do not have all the skills or understanding that is expected of children of their age. Their speaking and literacy skills are particularly low. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage so that, by the time they leave the reception classes, overall, they achieve standards that are broadly in line with those expected for children starting Year 1. They make particularly good progress in their personal and social development, and many reach the expected early learning goals in this area well before the end of the reception year. Although good progress is made in communication, language and literacy, because of the particularly low start about a third of the children do not reach the expected goals in this area of learning.
76. The good progress that the children make is the result of the teachers' high expectations of behaviour and independence, detailed planning of the curriculum, good teaching and continuous, careful assessment of what the children are learning. Children who have special educational needs are quickly identified and given appropriate support, helping them also to make good progress. Parents bring their children to school on time and confidently leave their offspring, knowing they are happy and well cared for by a team of well-prepared professionals.
77. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good and provides for all the six areas of learning. Most aspects are covered during each day and the reception timetable puts a strong emphasis on communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. The planning is guided by the six areas of learning, and the detailed weekly plans take into account the level of understanding of the children, especially in the two reception classes. Activities linked to language, literacy and mathematical development are usually carefully planned to match the level of learning of different groups of children. This means that children make good progress in their learning. The day-to-day planning for some of the other areas is not always sufficiently specific to ensure that the activities achieve the intended purpose. For example, in one physical education session, the children were thinking so hard that they did little moving around!
78. Assessment procedures are good, with some aspects very good. The very good individual 'Records of Achievement' include an initial assessment, by the parents, of what the child can do when they enter nursery and a continuous record of achievements in each of the six areas of learning. A summary of the progress made by each child is recorded each term, but as yet this is not finely tuned to the 'Stepping Stones'⁶ leading to the Early Learning Goals⁷ for young children. Plans are in hand to do this.
79. The overall quality of teaching is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen and, in the reception classes some very good sessions were observed. Relationships are very good throughout, which is reflected in the good progress children make in their personal, social and emotional development. Occasionally in the nursery teaching is too prescribed and teachers talk at the children, rather than

⁶ 'Stepping stones' are the carefully graduated steps within the Foundation Stage curriculum, which enable teachers to track children's progress in each area of learning.

⁷ The Early Learning Goals set out what children should achieve by the time they reach the end of the reception year in primary school.

engaging them in a two-way conversation to develop speaking skills. Where this happens children become passive listeners, opportunities are missed and their rate of progress slows.

80. Where teaching is very good, open-ended questions, such as *'What do you think will happen next?'* constantly challenge the children to respond and be fully involved. This was seen in most of the literacy and numeracy sessions in the reception year. In the nursery, in addition to the adult-led activities, children are provided with good opportunities to make choices and many of the activities provided are sufficiently stimulating to engage the children in meaningful learning and creative development, for instance, through construction toys, painting, modelling, jigsaws, books and a 'toy shop'.
81. Both the nursery and reception years have direct access to their own secure outside areas. Although these are small, there is sufficient room for small groups of children to develop physical and social skills by riding bikes, using wheeled toys and engaging in stimulating imaginary play. Plans are in hand to extend the nursery area, which will then include better opportunities for the children to explore aspects of the world around them, particularly growing things.
82. Support staff are valuable members of an effective Foundation Stage team. This enables all children, including those with special educational needs, to have appropriate support and to make good progress. The overall leadership of this stage of the children's education is very good. This high calibre of leadership has ensured that, despite the necessary changes brought about by the implementation of the Foundation Stage curriculum, the physical moving of the nursery classroom and the amalgamation into a new school, children of all abilities make good progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

83. All three classes in the Foundation Stage provide a calm, warm and caring environment, which gives children the security to come to school with confidence and excited anticipation. The recognition, by the staff, that the care and education of the children is in partnership with the parents contributes significantly to the children's happy transition from parent, or carer, into school each day.
84. The children's personal and social skills are wide-ranging when they enter the nursery, but are slightly below those expected for their age overall. By the time they leave reception, usually after two years in the Foundation Stage, they have made good, and, in some cases, very good progress. Many of them reach the goal for this stage of learning well before the end of reception. They are helped to make this good progress by clearly established routines and a high expectation of independence. Children in the nursery know where things belong and confidently fetch equipment, such as aprons, jigsaws and construction toys, and quickly tidy away when asked. In reception this high expectancy of independence continues and in a mathematics session, without any instruction from the teacher, a child immediately fetched sufficient glue and scissors for the whole group. This trust and responsibility is a particularly strong feature, which has been carefully built in by the teachers.
85. Children's behaviour is consistently good and on the very rare occasions in the nursery when the children find it difficult to share, staff calmly help them to resolve their differences. By the time the children join reception, they are co-operative, willingly share and respond politely to all adults. During whole-class sessions, and when working independently, children show appropriate levels of concentration and, when the teaching is exciting, they respond enthusiastically. They are a delight to be with, which is a reflection of the very good teaching received in this area of their learning.

Communication, language and literacy

Speaking and listening skills

86. Children make good progress in the development of speaking and listening skills, many from a level well below that expected when they join the nursery. By the time they move into Year 1, although about half have reached the expected levels, many still have not achieved the Early Learning Goals. In the nursery many children still respond with very simple phrases and incorrect pronunciation. For example, a four-year old, when asked about his drawing, proudly described it as *'yellow'*. Staff encourage the children to talk about their drawings and other activities, with the responses being

carefully and frequently recorded for assessment of what the children know and understand. In reception, very good teaching constantly develops children's speaking skills by extending their vocabulary and providing opportunities for them to explain what they know. For instance, during a shared reading session, the most able children were asked, *'Who can explain a digraph?'* There was an eager and correct response from two or three children. Also one child, excitedly remarking on the picture of a primate on the back of the book, was immediately challenged to recall the species of primate, (a baboon), which appeared in the story. His response, too, was enthusiastic and correct.

Reading skills

87. In the nursery, children enjoy hearing stories told by the teacher and, individually, some will voluntarily bring a book to share with an adult. It is clear that several of the youngest children, (three-year olds), are not very familiar with handling books and do not turn pages consecutively. They show an appropriate interest in the pictures but respond very hesitantly. Although a few children choose to spend time looking at books, the nursery 'reading corner' is not sufficiently attractive to generate much enthusiasm and promote a real love of books. All children in the reception classes enjoy the sharing of stories and are developing good reading strategies. This is achieved by the teachers' good knowledge and understanding of how to use large-print text with their class. Good attention is paid to the learning of familiar words, including the sounds and names of letters, as well as reading for enjoyment and understanding. Again opportunities are seized to extend speaking as well as reading skills. For example, a child was asked *'How did you know that word said zebra?'* and, to the whole class, *'How can we work out this long word?'*
88. Parents and carers of children in the nursery are encouraged to share books with their children and can borrow books each week to take home. In the reception classes children take responsibility for their book bags and, on a daily basis, are expected to share books and words, (for reading and spelling), with an adult. By the time they move into Year 1 the majority have reached the standards expected for their age.

Writing skills

89. Good opportunities are made for the development of children's writing skills in both the nursery and reception classes. They have access to a range of writing and drawing materials, though little evidence was seen of recording for a particular purpose. Children in the nursery are at a very early stage of writing, most of them unable, yet, to form recognisable shapes and letters. This is reflected too, in their observational drawings. Only a few children are at the standard expected for their age. They are encouraged to use pencils, crayons and paint, which help develop writing skills, but little evidence was seen of any direct teaching of how to draw circles and patterns to foster handwriting skills. In reception there were limited opportunities seen for independent writing and drawing but in one class, children were skilfully helped to form letters correctly. As one child wrote a letter on the white board, the rest wrote it in the air. By the end of the reception year, children are not reaching the standards expected for their age overall, though the majority can write their names reasonably legibly. From a very low start, all make good progress.

Mathematical development

90. By the time they reach Year 1 the majority of children will have achieved the expected goal in this area of learning and all children make good progress as they move through the Foundation Stage.
91. Most of the children in reception class reliably count to 10 and at least half to 20 and beyond. Many can also count backwards and, in one class, in French. Many, mostly the oldest, children recognise and match numbers to 10 and have a good understanding of one more and one less. Their understanding of mathematical language is developing well, through good, daily oral work and questioning by the teachers, particularly in the reception classes. The children's ability to use this understanding confidently in practical activities is satisfactory, but many struggle to explain and use this knowledge in discussion, which is below that expected for their ages. For example, in reception, a group of middle ability children easily ordered three elephants according to size and correctly described *'largest'* and *'smallest'*, but struggled to explain the middle one. Children with higher ability successfully graded six elephants. The good progress in counting, number

recognition and problem solving is because the teachers, particularly in the reception classes, seize opportunities throughout the day to count and reason, such as in lining up for assembly and during registration. In the nursery a lot of good incidental work also reinforces learning. For example, one child, who had just learnt to recognise and draw a triangle, went on to make one with a wooden construction kit.

92. Most of the activities that are specifically planned for different ability groups in the reception class provide appropriate challenge, reinforcement of knowledge and develop mathematical thinking. Adult interaction in nursery and reception, both in small group situations and with individuals, varies and does not consistently extend and develop children's use of mathematical skills and understanding.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

93. Teachers' detailed planning around the good range of topics ensures that children make good progress in this area of learning. Much of it is incidental and is built into work related to other areas, such as communication, language, literacy and mathematical development, especially in the reception year. For example, the main story for literacy sessions for the week of inspection, was 'Crocodile Tea' and, through this, the children's knowledge and understanding of animals was considerably enhanced.
94. Similarly, in the nursery the 'Toy Shop', planned specifically to develop imaginary play and speaking and listening, plays a significant role in the children's understanding of the world around. They engage in taking on and talking about the role of the shopkeeper and customer and familiarise themselves with a range of coins.
95. Children show an appropriate curiosity and interest in what goes on around them. In one session in the nursery they were provided with a satisfactory range of exploratory activities that stimulated their curiosity and developed their knowledge and understanding. For example, working independently, one four-year old little girl was delighted with her construction which she made spin round, whilst a three-year old boy was fascinated to discovered that he could fasten pieces together using plastic screws and nuts.
96. From the children's records, it is evident that the children are being introduced to a sense of time, providing a sound basis for history lessons when they move onto the National Curriculum in Year 1. Within the 'Toy' topic children in reception considered whether toys were old or new and why. One child thought that a teddy must be old because it was dirty and new because it was clean. Similarly, satisfactory opportunities are provide for the beginnings of science. Records of achievement show that all pupils have tried tasting different foods and higher attaining children have a good understanding of 'reflection' for their age. Children are also given appropriate opportunities to develop skills and an understanding of information technology. In the nursery children confidently use a tape recorder to listen to stories and songs and, with adult support, follow simple instructions to operate a computerised 'Roamer'. However, children in the nursery are not given sufficient opportunities to use other computers and children in reception do not benefit from working in the computer suite.
97. Overall, children's standards in this area of learning are broadly in line with those expected for their age and most are on line to achieve the goals for this area of learning by the time they leave reception.

Physical development

98. Children make good progress in their physical development and, by the end of the reception year, many exceed the levels expected for children of this age. The only area of weakness is in the use of some hand-held instruments, such as pencils, though the majority of children use scissors appropriately.
99. Throughout both nursery and reception, children handle small toys and equipment carefully and use them for the intended purpose. They help to clear away activities at the end of sessions, generally putting things into their correct places. In reception, the majority of children are able to undress and

dress themselves for physical education lessons and some willingly and competently help each other fasten aprons and other clothing. They use paintbrushes, scissors and other implements with care and developing control.

100. In the nursery, children have daily opportunities to use pedalled and 'push' or 'pull' wheeled toys as well as run freely in the outdoor play area, weather permitting. The opportunity to use climbing equipment is limited and there is currently no grassed area for more adventurous play. Children show appropriate control and, as they get older, willingly share equipment in activities that need more than one person. Children from both the nursery and reception classes enjoy sessions in the hall, showing good awareness of their bodies when stretching and curling and developing good awareness of themselves and others in a large space. Good teaching is helping the children develop an awareness of the need to warm up and to recognise that exercise makes the heart beat faster. This good teaching also motivates the children to work hard, but only occasionally is good use made of the children's efforts as an example to the others. Appropriate emphasis is placed on key words to help develop children's language skills.

Creative development

101. Overall, children make good progress in this aspect of the curriculum and, by the end of the reception year, the majority meet the early learning goals for this area of learning. Activities are thoughtfully planned to provide good opportunities for the children to develop creatively through their use of imagination, their response to experiences and their communication of ideas. In both the nursery and reception classes, children explore and try out a good variety of materials and experiences in order to create pictures, patterns and models. They listen to music and look at pictures and patterns, which stimulate ideas and widen understanding.
102. Despite good encouragement from the adult working with them, paintings of tricycles showed that only a few children in the nursery are able to make satisfactory observations of features and colour. Imaginary paintings of their favourite toys were more recognisable. Work by children in reception, showing pattern, shape and colour in the style of the artist Mondrian, demonstrate clearly the progress made. Opportunities for role-play are satisfactory but little adult interaction was evident in these situations. Musical opportunities, such as singing and exploring the sounds of different instruments, are good and help the children make satisfactory progress in this area of their creative development. Children in the reception classes also make their own simple, but very effective, musical instruments, which show good understanding of the ways to join and fasten, as well as how sounds can be created in different way.

ENGLISH

103. The results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests in reading showed that the standards in reading and writing attained by pupils in Key Stage 1 were well below both the national average and the average in similar schools. In Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in English was below the standard reached nationally, but was close to that of similar schools. These results are slightly lower than those in 2001, but the school has a large proportion of pupils who enter and leave in all age groups. In schools with such an unpredictable turnover, the results seldom show a consistent trend.
104. Pupils come into Year 1 with under-developed language skills, especially in speaking and listening. They make satisfactory progress in both key stages. By the end of Year 2, some pupils show increasing confidence in speaking and begin to use more formal speech patterns. However, this is not the case for the majority of pupils who still find it difficult to express themselves in complete sentences. Pupils do not always find it easy to listen to teachers, or each other, in an attentive manner, and this sometimes leads to poor behaviour. Teachers give younger pupils opportunities to practise their speaking and listening skills in their literacy lessons. An example of this was in a good lesson in Year 2 when pupils were encouraged to use descriptive words like 'slimy' and 'slippery' to help bring the setting of a story to life. At the end of Year 6 a significant minority of pupils demonstrate good standards, for example, when talking about their reading books and their work in other subjects. In a good Year 4 lesson the teacher developed the speaking and listening skills of pupils by encouraging them to compare a prose account of the tide coming in with a poem on the same theme. The pupils responded well and were eager to volunteer ideas and talk about how specific words and phrases added to the impact of the writing. The school is aware of the

need to develop speaking and listening further, and has introduced the local education authority's scheme of work to help in this. Learning support assistants in the classroom have a valuable part to play. They clarify questions, explain new vocabulary and encourage pupils to offer answers; these practices are raising standards.

105. Standards in reading are below the national expectation. Younger pupils develop skills that help them to read the text. Pupils in Year 2 read many words confidently, and talk about their reading books. However, even the pupils who have no difficulty reading a wide range of words are less good at talking about their book in anything more than a literal way. The more able pupils in Year 2 use different methods to read words that they find difficult, such as splitting them up, sounding out the letters and gaining clues from the illustrations. Not all pupils in Year 2 are clear about the difference between an author and illustrator and fiction and non-fiction. Very few named books and authors other than the one they were currently reading. None of the sample of pupils in this age range knew how to use their knowledge of the alphabet to find books or information. In Key Stage 2 also, few pupils had a secure grasp of library skills. Many pupils are familiar with the terms 'contents' and 'index' and how these can be used to locate information. However, not all pupils in this age group know how to use their knowledge of the alphabet to locate texts. In Year 6 some pupils named authors and talked confidently about them, but these were a minority. Again, only a few pupils in this age range spoke about books they had read in any depth. Some pupils read expressively as a result of the way that teachers guide them in shared reading sessions.
106. Pupils mostly enjoy reading and read both fiction and non-fiction texts. The reading records for pupils foster links between home and school, by getting parents and carers to add comments, which help children to develop their reading skills. As pupils move into the older year groups, the records mainly list the books read with a comment from the pupil and sometimes from parents and carers. The library contains a satisfactory range of both fiction and non-fiction material, but some of the texts are old and unappealing. There has been some weeding out and more will be done when the redevelopment of the library takes place. The room is in poor decorative order and has some structural defects. The school is aware of this and making the library a worthier part of the school is a high priority in the school's development programme. Currently, the lack of a satisfactory library is adversely affecting pupils' literacy skills. Class libraries provide extra reading material. Overall, pupils who have special educational needs or use English as an additional language make satisfactory progress as a result of the support for reading.
107. From the samples of pupils' written work seen during the inspection, the standards attained in Key Stage 1 are below the national average. More able pupils in this age range develop cursive handwriting and use simple punctuation to begin and end sentences. Many pupils spell short common words and longer regular words correctly. Where the words are incorrectly spelt, most pupils manage a version that is phonetically sound. However, many pupils in Year 2 still use unjoined handwriting and few use capitals and full stops at the beginning and end of sentences consistently. The work seen in pupils' books covers the various areas of the programmes of study.
108. In Key Stage 2 standards are also below the national expectation. Some pupils write for a range of different purposes and use punctuation accurately. As they get older the majority use a joined and legible script. However, in Year 6 there were still examples of pupils of all abilities using unjoined handwriting. In Years 4 and 5 many pupils write in pencil, which detracts from the presentation of their work. Most pupils spell the majority of words that they use accurately and become more adventurous in their vocabulary choices. The more able pupils organise ideas into grammatically correct complex sentences and show an increasing understanding of speech and question marks. However, even some of these do not use capital letters and full stops consistently. Many pupils used a very limited range of punctuation and sentence structure to express their ideas. There were some lively pieces of work in Year 6, where pupils had written short play-scripts. Most pupils know the conventions, such as stage directions and dialogue, of setting out a dramatised version of a story. Pupils learn to follow planning structures and how to organise their writing. They set out letters, both formal and informal, correctly. Teachers develop pupils' spelling by regular setting of spelling lists as homework. In Year 6 pupils had used information and communication technology to dramatised legends such as 'Theseus' and 'Orpheus and Eurydice'. The school is developing the use of information and communication technology to support literacy. Pupils in both key stages use computers to draft and re-draft work. An increasing amount of the use of information and communication technology takes place in the computer suite.

109. Teachers sometimes take opportunities in other subjects to encourage pupils to increase their technical vocabulary and their use of spoken English. There were some good examples of this in music lessons where terms like 'percussion' and 'crescendo' were used as a natural part of the teaching. One teacher used the poem '*Jabberwocky*', as a stimulus for pupils to create a picture in an art lesson and pupils responded enthusiastically. The provision is not consistent however, and opportunities are missed for pupils' spiritual and cultural development during English lessons. There were few examples in the sample of pupils' written work, in subjects other than English, of literacy skills being developed by the use of extended pieces of writing.
110. All of the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory or better. From the evidence of the scrutiny of work, and the pupils' results, the overall standard of teaching is satisfactory. In the better lessons skilful questioning and explanations ensure that pupils understand their work. Praise is used well to show pupils that their work is valued. Teachers follow the National Literacy Strategy and this ensures that pupils cover the various writing styles that are needed for the National Curriculum. In a good lesson in Year 5 on using imaginative vocabulary, the teacher set a brisk pace, made effective use of a variety of strategies that kept pupils thinking about the subject matter and challenged all pupils, including the most able. However, some lessons do not take account of the needs of the more able pupils to encourage pupils. Some teachers consistently give effective pointers for pupils to make further improvement. However, this is not always the case, and the co-ordinators need to ensure that all their colleagues follow the best practice. The focus for the lesson is generally shared with the class so that they are all clear about what they will be learning. Relationships are good and teachers manage behaviour well. As a result, pupils work hard, show interest and sustain their concentration throughout the lesson. Most pupils co-operate well in group-work and the subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the moral and social development of pupils.
111. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of the effective arrangements for their support. Much of this takes place in the classroom, but for some additional literacy support sessions, small groups of pupils work in the library or other areas of the school. There is good communication between the learning support assistants and class teachers so the planning for these sessions takes account of the main focus of the work that the rest of the class is doing. The very small number of pupils with English as an additional language make similar progress to the other pupils, and again, the arrangements for their support are appropriate. However, more could be done to devise methods of enriching the language of pupils who have learned enough English to follow lessons successfully, but only speak English during the school day. Boys do not do as well as girls in the National Curriculum tests but little difference in attainment was noticed during the inspection.
112. The leadership and management of English are satisfactory. Most teachers are now secure in their knowledge of National Curriculum levels and this is helpful in assessing the progress of pupils. There is a comprehensive system of assessment that looks at progress over the medium and long term, but more focus on day-to-day assessment of pupils would be helpful. The school is developing a system of setting individual targets for pupils and has prepared information sheets for parents and carers, which explain the requirements for the various National Curriculum levels. This helps pupils to have a better understanding of what they need to do to achieve the next level in their progress through the National Curriculum. There are satisfactory resources for the subject and they are of good quality, except for the library books previously mentioned.

MATHEMATICS

113. Standards of attainment in mathematics are below the national average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. However, the progress of pupils throughout the school is satisfactory when compared to their low starting point when entering Year 1. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory and the decision to place older pupils in ability sets for mathematics enables teachers to plan and deliver work effectively. As a result, the achievements of more able pupils are satisfactory. Assessment procedures are good and this enables the school to see how well individuals and groups of pupils are progressing. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school, due to the good support that they receive from the high number of experienced learning support assistants.

114. By the end of Key Stage 1 many pupils do not yet have a sound understanding of number and teachers work hard to improve this weakness. The more able pupils can add and subtract numbers up to 100, using various methods, and they display much greater confidence than other pupils in their handling of these numbers whilst performing more complex calculations. In one Year 2 lesson, for example, more able pupils could count forwards and backwards in multiples of 2, 5 and 10 and were able to recognise numbers to one thousand. They use their numeracy skills to solve number problems, for example, by answering questions based on a survey of favourite pets within the class. They have a sound understanding of shape, space and measure and can describe the properties of simple two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, pentagons and hexagons, although there is little evidence of knowledge of three-dimensional studies. They are learning to measure using standard and non-standard units and understand concepts such as 'greater than' or 'less than'.
115. Most pupils know how to collate data and produce simple tally charts, pictograms and bar graphs. Pupils in Year 1, for example, had conducted a traffic survey that highlighted parking problems in Shirehampton and completed bar graphs to represent the countries that different pupils had visited for their summer holidays. However, many pupils remain insecure in their understanding of number and find it difficult to work independently. Teachers in Key Stage 1 have recognised this as a problem and concentrated on providing work that is targeted to improving this weakness. As a result, there is not the range of curricular provision that is seen in many schools and areas such as shape, space and measures and the using and applying of number for problem solving are weaker elements of the curriculum. Although most pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, those with special educational needs make good progress due largely to the additional help that they receive from the learning support staff.
116. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils have a sound understanding of number, demonstrating the ability to add, subtract, multiply and divide using a variety of different methods both on paper and in their heads. They work confidently with fractions and decimals and have a sound understanding of the language of probability. In their work on shape, space and measure, they can calculate the area and perimeter of regular shapes, such as rectangles and squares, but this area of curricular provision is less well developed than their number work. The more able pupils demonstrate much greater confidence in their handling of numbers and the decision to place older pupils in ability sets for mathematics enables teachers to plan and teach more effectively. This decision to group older pupils into ability sets for mathematics has had a positive impact on raising standards of attainment within the school, as it enables work to be targeted appropriately. For example, in one very good lesson in Year 6, pupils in the top ability group were challenged to recognise and use numbers up to ten million and they did this with confidence, demonstrating skill in applying different methods to carry out their calculations in the most effective way. At the same time, pupils in the Booster Group were making good progress both because of the relatively small number of pupils within the group and the high quality of support that they were receiving from the class teacher and learning support assistants. Although little use is made of information and communication technology within mathematics lessons, some effective data handling takes place in other subject areas. The new computer suite is an excellent learning resource that is helping to improve pupils' computer skills. For example, pupils in Year 3 were developing a database of personal details, whilst pupils in Year 4 were able to carry out searches and interpret personal data. However, at present, insufficient use is made of information and communication technology as a strategy within numeracy lessons.
117. The development of mathematics has received a high priority within the school and the impact of the initiatives undertaken has been positive. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been particularly beneficial in providing a clear curricular structure for teachers and in helping them to develop effective teaching methods. Close attention has been given to monitoring the way that the subject is taught and the standards that pupils achieve; this has helped the school to gain a clearer understanding of its own strengths and weaknesses. The school has targeted the beginning and ending of lessons for improvement and these sessions are now often very good. For example, a Year 2 lesson ended with pupils playing 'Bingo' by answering number problems and this caused great excitement. A Year 5 lesson began with pupils co-operating in pairs to discuss various strategies for answering problems and a Year 6 lesson ended with pupils completing cheques and discussing what they might do with the money!

118. Procedures for assessment have improved, and are now good. Test results are analysed carefully to identify any areas of weakness. This has enabled the development of individual pupil targets, which are displayed in every classroom and pupil-tracking sheets allow teachers to have a clear idea of what individual pupils have already achieved and what they are capable of achieving in the future. The school's analysis has also highlighted the need to spend more time on helping pupils to apply their data handling skills in numeracy lessons to real-life problems, such as when pupils in Year 3 used their number skills to answer money problems and to check that they had not been overcharged.
119. In most of the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good, although other evidence indicates that teaching overall is satisfactory. In the most successful lessons, the teachers help pupils to think about what they are doing and to develop their ability to work things out for themselves. These lessons are well structured, providing pupils with a range of activities that are appropriately matched to their individual needs. In a good lesson in Year 4, for example, all pupils made good progress in developing both mental and written strategies for adding two-digit numbers and were provided with a good range of games and resources. Very good lessons, such as those seen in Year 6, had real pace and challenge and as a result, pupils made very good progress. Some good lessons contain strong cross-curricular links; for example, the close attention paid to the key words for each numeracy lesson contributes significantly to the development of literacy skills.
120. Almost all lessons begin with an effective oral activity that is usually well delivered with good pace. Teachers often set activities with time challenges and pupils respond to these challenges with enthusiasm. When pupils undertake individual or group activities, they are usually given a clear indication as to how long they have in which to complete each part of their work. Timely reminders helped to focus pupils' attention, with the result that pupils made good progress during the lesson. In good lessons teachers provide extension activities for pupils who complete their allotted task, such as when more able pupils in Year 2 were encouraged to extend their knowledge of numbers up to one thousand. In almost every lesson, the teacher makes pupils aware of the lesson objectives before commencing and revisits those objectives at the conclusion of the lesson. This enables pupils to judge their own progress over the lesson and the teacher to assess whether the learning objectives have been achieved successfully.
121. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is always satisfactory and often good. Pupils enjoy their numeracy lessons and the recent survey carried out within the school indicated that for the majority of pupils, mathematics was one of their favourite lessons. They work well as individuals, although they are often hampered by their lack of ability and need the help of their teachers and support staff. When given opportunities to work in pairs, they generally co-operate well, maintaining concentration and sustaining interest; this helps their social development. A small number of pupils, particularly some in Years 5 and 6, behave less well and teachers have to work hard to ensure that the behaviour of these pupils does not adversely affect the ability of others to concentrate on what they are doing. The good support given by learning assistants helps to ensure that this does not often happen.
122. The management of the subject is good. Since the amalgamation of the two schools the subject leader has made a significant impact in ensuring that standards of teaching and learning have been monitored closely. She has very good subject knowledge and her careful analysis of the performance of pupils in national tests has enabled her to address any weaknesses that have become apparent, such as in the area of mental recall. She has implemented assessment procedures, including pupil-tracking sheets and pupils now have individual and group targets. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching systematically, led in-service training and provided key objective sheets for all teachers. She has a clear, appropriate plan for future development that includes a commitment to develop the use of information and communication within numeracy lessons and to raise standards of attainment of all pupils throughout the school.

SCIENCE

123. Standards are currently below the national average at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils entered the new school with standards of attainment that were below those expected and, considering the turbulence that the school has undergone, their achievement is satisfactory. Lesson observations, scrutiny of work and discussions with teachers and with pupils indicate that standards in science are still below average in Year 2 and Year 6, but that the subject is starting to move forward. There is great emphasis this year on encouraging pupils to investigate problems and phenomena, in addition to the other areas of learning, and the assessment of pupils' achievements is just beginning. Although pupils with special educational needs are catered for competently, the school does not yet challenge its more able pupils consistently. There are plans to expand assessment of pupils' achievements to include all areas.
124. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a sound understanding of how to set up an experiment. For example they investigated why different toy cars travel different distances over the same surface. They have become aware of the properties of different materials such as wood and paper, and know that heating makes ice melt. Pupils also know that some foods are healthier than others and have a growing understanding of the effect of exercise. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support which enables them to learn well, although at a lower level than their classmates, but more able pupils do not have the opportunity to work consistently at more challenging tasks.
125. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have a clear understanding of 'fair testing' in an investigation, and many of them know how to use such a test to discover which of a number of surfaces produces most friction and how to check the accuracy of their findings. They have covered a satisfactory range of topics, but there is too much reliance on the teacher's input and not enough on independent learning. Most pupils can name the main organs in the human body and many know their basic functions. Pupils are less confident in revision situations where they are expected to think, reason and remember independently, and many pupils still rely on teachers' help. When given appropriate support, pupils with special educational needs throughout the key stage make similar progress to the rest of their class. More able pupils are reaping the effect of less than challenging teaching in the past, and particularly among the older pupils, few have the background knowledge to tackle independent tasks.
126. Pupils in many classes across the school use a common formula to write up investigations and while it ensures that the basic facts are recorded, it prescribes the development of pupils' literacy skills. There is little indication that pupils use information and communication technology in science, although good use is made of pupils' mathematical knowledge in the form of charts and graphs. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' moral, social and cultural development, but not as much to their spiritual development as it could.
127. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, and some of the teaching observed was good. Where the teaching in the school is good, teachers prepare carefully and ensure that the topics are presented in ways that stimulates the pupils to think and to be well involved in activities. For example, in a Year 4 lesson pupils watched one demonstration, and then performed a series of associated activities, which furthered their understanding that some solids dissolve in water while others do not. The pace was brisk with good use of scientific vocabulary, which together with very good relations between teacher and pupils, ensured that everyone maintained good levels of concentration throughout. In half an hour the pupils had made considerable advances in their understanding, and had also thoroughly enjoyed themselves.
128. Schemes of work are in line with recent national initiatives and the school's provision for science is satisfactory. The subject leader is keen and experienced and, now that the school has become more stable, is able to start putting into practice plans to develop the subject. There is clear understanding of the need for providing challenging tasks for the more able pupils in each year group in order to raise standards further. Assessment is unsatisfactory; it has just begun as a preliminary to tracking pupils' progress across the school and in year groups. Although monitoring of planning and of teaching has started, more needs to be done. Resources are satisfactory and are used appropriately.

ART AND DESIGN

129. Pupils' standards of attainment in art and design are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 but below those expected by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory gains in their learning, but at Key Stage 2 the achievements of boys and girls of all abilities are unsatisfactory. This is mainly due the lack of teaching that they have had during their time in Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6. The co-ordinator knows about this state of affairs and has sound ideas to address the problem, but will need the cooperation of senior management and a significant change to curriculum planning in order for improvements to be made quickly enough.
130. Pupils at Key Stage 1 have an appropriate curriculum so that they acquire a satisfactory range of skills by the end of Year 2. They have made satisfactory progress in learning since they left reception. They have received teaching in an appropriate range of media, but the work done often supports topics, rather than developing purely artistic skills. In the lessons seen in Year 2 pupils showed interest and were openly supportive of each other's efforts. Many were able to use their imagination to complete a picture, even though the pictures supplied were sometimes very complicated for their level of development. The pupils with special educational needs, especially those with marked behaviour problems, were greatly helped by these art lessons. Good whole-class sessions were planned for the end of these lessons, which help to consolidate pupils' learning as well as their speaking and listening skills.
131. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have had an impoverished curriculum and so have not acquired an appropriate range of skills in art and design. From the work on display, older pupils have made little progress in art and design since they left Year 2. Pupils in Year 6 could not talk about the pictures around the school, put there to stimulate them. Pupils in most year groups have sketchbooks, but the work in these shows little development or progression; their drawing skills are weak. Older pupils enjoy art and design, but are often disappointed with their own efforts. They have a satisfactory idea of colour, and have benefited from satisfactory teaching of colour mixing in the past. The knowledge of artists and designers of pupils in Year 6 is poor, and they have little knowledge of the art, craft and design of the culture of this country, let alone of other cultures and traditions. At present, they are not visually aware and the subject has done little to develop their cultural side or their emotional response to great works of art. No visits to view the wealth of design in the city of Bristol have been made, although there are plans to do so.
132. Some lovely work is on display around the school. This work encompasses the work of artists from non-western cultures and of modern artists, such as Bridget Riley; the standard of much of this work is good. An interesting project in art and design, incorporating technology, was undertaken in response to the building work, and pupils in Key Stage 2 were proud of the whole-school efforts that went into these, under the direction of a keen art and design co-ordinator. There are albums of photographs of pupils' work and displays, which show some interesting and careful work, but these are not annotated to say who did them, and how much time and help they were given. The rather special works seen are one-off creations, directed by teachers, and not produced as a properly planned development of skills. Some sound ideas have gone into work in Year 6, with pupils having made pictures and designs in response to music and to literature, but this work is rare and in itself does not contribute to pupils' skills and knowledge of technique.
133. The teaching of art and design, when it happens, is satisfactory overall. Teaching in the lessons seen was generally satisfactory, but even skilled and interested teachers were hampered by an unsatisfactory scheme of work and insufficient time to develop pupils' ideas in the set lesson time. As pupils are interested, their behaviour is generally satisfactory. The lack of appropriate resources for learning does not help pupils' achievements; there are far too few artefacts, art books and pictures to stimulate pupils, and to open their eyes to different ways of working. Insufficient information and communication technology is used within the subject, and little printing work has been done, or work with textiles, but the school kiln is used properly. The teachers observed displayed genuine interest in art and design but some have insufficient training to put this enthusiasm across in the most effective way. Opportunities are missed to use the subject to motivate those pupils who might need a creative outlet for their problems. More able pupils and those who show particular interest are not sufficiently challenged in this subject.

134. The school is fortunate in having a separate room for art and design, which, although in need of extensive refurbishment at the moment, presents real opportunities to extend the subject. There are also several staff with professional skills and others with interests in art, which bodes well for the future. Currently, the subject leader has no time allocated to observe lessons or to work with staff to improve their teaching. The question of the assessment of pupils' attainment has not yet been addressed; pupils do not have collections of their own work, and there is no whole-school portfolio so that staff can assess the standard of art being produced. The co-ordinator knows this, and has started to consider effective ways of assessment; there are suitable ideas in the subject development plan.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

135. By the end of both key stages pupils attain standards below those typical for their age groups. The progress of pupils of all abilities is unsatisfactory because insufficient work is done in the subject, whereas, pupils do what they do, adequately. Teachers' planning is rather basic. No lessons were taught during the inspection, even though the curriculum overview indicates a few year groups will tackle a project during this term. However, the same curriculum overview indicates that pupils in Year 6 will do no design and technology until after their national tests. This indicates that the curriculum is completely out of balance for those pupils. A few examples of work were on display in one of the main corridors, and some sheets indicating planning and evaluation were offered for scrutiny. They were generally acceptable as proof of a design process; however, too little detailed work takes place in any year group, at present, to build skills and knowledge in any continuous way. For example, insufficient work is carried out using focused tasks that build towards a finished article.
136. Pupils at both key stages remember a whole-school project based on bridges, with a set of rules, where all age groups had different material with which to build. Insufficient opportunities are offered for pupils to interpret the brief in a personal way, or even to choose the materials they would use. Pupils in Key Stage 1 were not sure what design and technology might be, or why they might be doing it. This was in marked contrast to their animated discussions about information and communication technology, which they obviously understood. When reminded, they discussed, quite well, making finger puppets, when pupils in Year 6 came to help some of them with their sewing. No reliable judgement can be made on the standards of teaching as none was seen and there was little evidence of the teachers' input. Work displayed on the walls indicates that some pupils evaluated the work they had done, and the teacher had asked them to write their comments as if they were the puppet. This was an interesting and challenging activity, which engendered some fascinating comments. One pupil wrote, *'I am well-made because nothing has fallen off'*. The teacher's labels described a process, which included opportunities to practise sewing as a focused practical task, but little documentation supplied substantiated this.
137. The subject leader is new to the school, and she took on the post knowing that there is a lot of work to be done. Resources are adequate but the subject has not been high priority due to the pressure of government initiatives and those of creating a new school. Consequently, skills are not taught as a continuous process, building year on year. This co-ordinator has a clear vision of what she would like to do; she is keen, knowledgeable and honest about her own and the school's ability to succeed. Her action plan is modest but reasonable, given the school's task of starting from scratch in everything. Her first priority must be to ensure pupils have their entitlement to the subject and her second must be to ensure that adequate assessment procedures are in place, in order to monitor pupils' progress.

GEOGRAPHY

138. Pupils' standards of attainment are at the nationally expected level by the end of Key Stage 1, but below expectations by the end of Key Stage 2. This is because no geography is timetabled for pupils in Year 6 until the second half of the summer term. Pupils' knowledge and skills, therefore, cannot be at satisfactory levels, because not enough work is done throughout the year. In addition, teachers' planning does not show one of the topics in the outline scheme for Year 6, which makes coverage of geography incomplete at Key Stage 2.
139. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have started to build a satisfactory range of skills. They are

familiar with maps and understand simple keys. Most pupils contrast their local area with an imaginary island and are clear about similarities and differences. They voice likes, dislikes and what they would miss if they moved from Shirehampton. During a lesson about Bangladesh, pupils showed good levels of knowledge and understanding about the way of life there. Pupils with special educational needs, when given adult support, make satisfactory progress. Opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills vary. Pupils were encouraged in one lesson to use books for research, and other pupils have made up questions, but evidence suggests that some work is copied at present. There was little indication that pupils practise their mathematical skills or use information and communication technology in geography. Evidence of pupils' attainment through samples of work at Key Stage 2 was very sparse, due mainly to uneven timetabling. Pupils in Year 5 develop their map-reading skills satisfactorily. During the inspection, for instance, having walked round the playgrounds, pupils studied plans of the school and used symbols effectively to mark outside sources of water, where it collects and how it is dispersed.

140. In the lessons observed during the inspection the quality of teaching was always at least satisfactory and in one lesson it was very good. Teaching is satisfactory overall; it is the timetabling that compromises pupils' attainment. Features of very good teaching included very good use of a Big Book and small copies of it, which ensured that all pupils could follow and take full part in the lesson. Very good use was made of questions and pictures, which raised pupils' awareness and encouraged them to think and to reason independently. The teacher managed the class very firmly, and also had very good relations with the pupils, which maintained a quiet, focused atmosphere in which good work was achieved. The lesson's planning included many good features that promoted literacy, but pupils with special educational needs did not receive support right through the session because it was not timetabled as literacy.
141. Geography has had low priority behind literacy and numeracy since the school was opened. It shares space on the timetable with history, and is planned unevenly across the year. There has been no monitoring of teaching. Some lesson plans have been looked at, but not beside samples of work. There is no assessment of pupils' attainment. The leadership and management of the subject are under-developed, and so are unsatisfactory. The subject leader is newly in post and is keen to develop the subject, knowing that there is a lot to do.

HISTORY

142. Pupils throughout the school, including those with special educational needs, enjoy history and many pupils' factual knowledge is at similar levels to nationally expected standards. However, there is a lack of evidence that pupils steadily build the skills required by the National Curriculum and this means that by the end of Key Stage 2 their overall attainment is below national expectations. No lessons were observed and very little written work seen, and so no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. Pupils' learning is, however, unsatisfactory.
143. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of aspects of British history, such as the Great Fire of London, several famous people from the past and seaside holidays now and in Victorian times. They start to understand historical vocabulary such as 'decade', the idea of measuring the passing of time on a time-line and that people in the past lived differently to those today. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have extended their knowledge to include further aspects of British history, such as the invasions by Saxons and Vikings, and they have studied Ancient Greece and Egypt and the Romans. The planning, however, shows limited development of pupils' awareness of changes across time and some of the reasons for these changes. Neither is there evidence that pupils study and understand why people living at the time of an event should report it in different ways.
144. The management of the subject is under-developed and so is unsatisfactory. The subject leader is aware that history has not had priority in the school's development plan, because the school decided to concentrate on literacy and numeracy lessons. The result is that the subject is timetabled very unevenly throughout the school making it hard for teachers to plan to build pupils' historical skills. There is scope to develop pupils' literacy skills within history lessons, because at present the standard of written work is often poor, some work is copied and the overall presentation of work is often untidy. There is limited evidence that pupils use information and communication technology for research and presenting their work, but they do use their mathematical skills when

studying time-lines. Some planning has been monitored, but samples of work have not been looked at and the subject leader has seen no lessons. There is no assessment of how well pupils attain at present. Good use is made of visits to museums, to help bring history to life, and resources in school are generally satisfactory, but would benefit from additional artefacts.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

145. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils achieve standards broadly typical for their age. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils achieve standards below those expected for their age. This is because the status of the subject and levels of equipment were very low, prior to the amalgamation, when teachers and pupils did little, and knew little of, information and communication technology. This practical subject builds upon foundations through practice, and it is plain to see that the new suite, opened last year, is having an increasingly positive impact on standards in both key stages. However, the impact of this has not yet worked right through to the end of Key Stage 2. Very good subject leadership and growing staff awareness and confidence are also having a positive impact on the teaching and learning of information and communication technology to ensure that pupils achieve well. Learning support assistants have also received training and they are providing good support in many classes, to pupils and teachers. This good teamwork leads to good learning by pupils of all abilities.
146. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are very knowledgeable about information and communication technology. Pupils interviewed from Year 2 showed they fully understand the way messages are sent, as well as knowing the work can be changed and saved several times, for instance when one of them said *'if you change something, no one needs to know that it wasn't right before'*. Teachers have provided an appropriate range of opportunities to work within the relevant strands of the subject curriculum, through a variety of different programs, and pupils spoke animatedly about what they had used and why they had used it.
147. Pupils had obviously enjoyed their opportunities to handle data and were quite excited about the different types of graphs they had produced. In a good lesson in Year 2 pupils manipulated text well, highlighting, underlining and adding punctuation successfully, on the whole. A significant number of pupils did not have adequate keyboard skills, but the teacher's clear explanations, easy discipline and good use of the interactive white board, enhanced the pupils' learning and sensitive support helped them to solve their problems and improve their skills. This led to pupils discussing, co-operating and sharing ideas and information, to make choices and explore options, well.
148. In Key Stage 2, pupils have opportunities to work within most of the relevant strands of the curriculum for information and communication technology. For some aspects of control technology, visits outside the school are planned until delivery of the school's own equipment is taken, and staff have had the appropriate training in its use. At present, a whole-school focus has been placed upon data handling, and some good progress is being made in this aspect. The pupils in Year 6 are in the middle of a module on creating a multimedia presentation. They were finding information about hobbies and making slides to share it with others. The lesson observed entailed them adding special effects to make it more exciting for the audience. The teacher was animated and interesting when describing and reminding about the program, and pupils responded with enthusiasm and interest. This good teaching ensures pupils are understanding, and are making up for what they missed before the amalgamation took place.
149. The teaching is good. Teachers plan work well. In both lessons observed in Year 3, with the staff's help, pupils were coming to grips well with the drop-down and type-in nature of the program they were using, co-operating and helping each other well with the concepts involved. Pupils with special educational needs make good, effective use of the computer ably supported by teachers and learning support assistants.
150. Throughout the school, teachers are becoming increasingly proficient in the use of the computer suite and especially with the operation of the interactive white board, which greatly enhances the pupils' learning and understanding. It helps them sort out the intricacies of the various menus and to make better choices when moving around the programs. Generally, the computer suite is reasonably well designed for the purpose and lacks many of the negative features sometimes

seen, as it is light, airy, cool and quiet. The flat screens are better for health and easier to see by anyone sitting to the side, for instance, when sharing.

151. The subject leader gives very good leadership to her colleagues, and has good vision for how the subject should progress. In consultation with the governors she has made very good decisions about the funding and acquisition of hardware for the new suite, especially to buy the more expensive flat screens at all the workstations. Much of the improvement in information and communication technology is because of good management and careful planning by the subject leader. She leads from the front, being competent to deliver relevant training, as well as giving calm advice on a day-to-day basis.
152. There is no system for assessment in use, which would enable teachers to know how well their pupils are learning and what to do next. At present, some are unaware of the level at which their pupils are operating. Whilst the school is playing 'catch-up' due to lack of facility and equipment in the past, it cannot afford to let the assessment process drift any longer. This is acknowledged as an area for development. The subject leader is aware that insufficient work is done of a cross-curricular nature at present. The school is ideally placed to continue to improve having used funding, planning and expertise wisely already.

MUSIC

153. During the period of the inspection few music lessons were taught. Taking into account the evidence from these, discussion with relevant staff and pupils, pupils in Key Stage 1 are judged to reach the expected standards. However, the standards attained at the end of Key Stage 2 are below the national expectations. The school is making good progress towards attaining the nationally expected standards, but it will take a little while for the competent teaching and planning that have raised the standards of younger pupils to work their way through. The disruption during the building and amalgamation process has made progress slower than the school would have liked. There is a choir that enriches the musical life of the school. There are also plans to restart the lunchtime recorder club. Pupils have opportunities to receive instrumental lessons given by tutors from the local education authority music service who come regularly to the school. Choirs from the school have participated in concerts at the Colston Hall. There are visits by musical groups from outside the school, including the Portway Community School band who performs regularly.
154. Overall, the teaching is satisfactory, and, during the inspection, some very good teaching was seen. Some lessons are lively and well planned. Classes respond in a positive manner, although some pupils do not resist the temptation to play instruments at inappropriate moments. Younger pupils respond well to music lessons. Pupils in this age group sing in tune and some have an evident sense of enjoyment in music making. These pupils also learn about pitch and duration and about how sounds can be made in different ways. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils learned about the way that percussion instruments produce sounds that have different durations. Older pupils grasp the difference between different pitches well. In a very good lesson in a Year 4 class, pupils recognised melodic patterns from notated examples and then wrote their own patterns. Groups of pupils then performed the patterns they had written and other groups evaluated what they had done. Pupils recognise different instruments and use appropriate vocabulary to describe the sounds they make. However, pupils in Year 6 who were interviewed during the inspection had great difficulty in naming even one composer or piece of music. Music is used as a stimulus for other artistic areas, and pupils have painted pictures as a response to a piece of music. More use could be made of music to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development. However, the way in which pupils work co-operatively in groups in music makes a good contribution to their social development.
155. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, as both of these teachers who oversee it have expertise in music, as well as great enthusiasm for it. The subject leader is aware of the difficulties experienced by non-specialist teachers of the subject and supports colleagues well. The school uses a commercial scheme of work that satisfactorily covers the National Curriculum programmes of study for music. Planning for the subject is clear, but there is no system for assessing the progress that pupils make in music. The resources are of good quality and there are enough of them for effective teaching. The use of information and communication technology in the subject is underdeveloped and so is unsatisfactory.

156. The school has a music room that is available for class music lessons and instrumental tuition. At certain times of day the lack of blinds in the room causes time to be lost in re-seating the pupils so that they are not dazzled. Pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language have full access to this part of the curriculum and so make the same sort of progress as other pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

157. During the inspection it was possible to observe only a small number of physical education lessons; as a result, the range of judgements and comparisons are limited in scope. However, based on discussion with pupils, records, observations and an interview with the subject leader, standards are judged to be in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages, and progress is satisfactory. The curriculum includes all elements and appropriate records are kept of this. Extra-curricular activities add substantially to the curriculum and to pupils' achievements.
158. In a Key Stage 1 dance lesson pupils were taught well and made good progress in harnessing their enthusiasm for physical activity and acquiring new skills. Pupils showed a good awareness of space and could demonstrate a degree of precision in the control of their movements. They showed creativity in the ways that they found to travel on different parts of their body by using pushing and pulling movements and showed appropriate poise for their age as they held a variety of different positions. They produced simple actions with control and co-ordination. Pupils used a variety of low apparatus with confidence and enthusiasm and were able to develop their floor movements in order to perform a simple sequence of movements on the apparatus. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are beginning to be aware of the need for warming up and cooling down activities and can say why they are necessary. A particularly good feature of these important activities is the way that simple warming-up exercises are performed by the pupils as they proceed from the classroom to the school hall.
159. The standards achieved by pupils in Key Stage 2 are as expected, and the curriculum is both broad and balanced. In the three dance lessons observed in Years 5 and 6, pupils showed widely differing levels of creativity in their ability to develop sequences of dance linked to extracts of music. The more able pupils showed great enthusiasm and demonstrated good skills of improvisation, whilst the least able found this to be a very difficult and challenging activity. All dance lessons ended with an opportunity for groups of pupils to demonstrate their achievements and for the remainder of the class to comment on their performance. Standards of co-operation were generally good and pupils progressed in a satisfactory manner, showing precision, control and fluency in their movements. Most pupils performed well and comments were generally both appreciative and supportive. However, in one Year 6 lesson, a group of pupils performed in a very immature manner and the response of the remainder of the pupils was totally inappropriate. As a result, standards of behaviour became unacceptable and the lesson deteriorated rapidly. Although not observed, the school's records indicate that pupils achieve good standards in swimming and nearly all pupils achieve the national expectations for swimming by the end of Year 6.
160. Most pupils demonstrate positive attitudes in their lessons and during after school club activities. The standard of behaviour reflects directly the standard and quality of teaching. Pupils observed being disruptive or failing to observe safety rules are spoken to immediately or made to sit out for short periods. Good class control has a major impact on lessons. In one Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher was firm in his control but warm in his praise for good performance. As a result, pupils had a very clear understanding of what was expected, responded appropriately and made good progress during the lesson. Most pupils respond well and enjoy their lessons. They co-operate happily in paired and group activities and enjoy the opportunity to perform. For example, pupils in Years 5 worked together well in groups to develop a sequence of dance to represent the movement of a carousel. They showed good awareness of the need to control their movements, demonstrating an appropriate awareness of space, shape and level. They generally concentrated well when others were demonstrating and, in listening carefully to the evaluations of their teacher and other pupils, made good progress in their learning. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress across both key stages and pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by learning assistants. In one Year 6 lesson, for example, a pupil with a physical disability achieved a good level of performance within a dance group.

161. In most of the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was good, although there was one unsatisfactory lesson seen. The teaching is satisfactory overall. Lessons are well planned and well structured. In one particularly good lesson, the teacher planned a series of developmental points throughout the lesson, including the use of a videotape. At each point, he stopped the lesson and demonstrated the techniques that would lead to improvement in performance. As a result of this very good planning and clear structure, all pupils were able to make some progress over the course of the lesson. The teachers set the right tone for lessons by changing into appropriate clothing and through their preparedness to demonstrate. The teachers generally give appropriate attention to health and safety aspects, such as warming up at the start of a lesson and ensuring that pupils wear appropriate footwear. They are very aware of possible dangers, such as in the Key Stage 1 lesson, when the teacher supervised pupils closely as they co-operated very effectively when moving mats and putting apparatus away safely.
162. The management of the subject is good. Although relatively new to his post, the subject leader is very enthusiastic and has already worked hard to improve curricular provision. He has been particularly successful in raising the profile of outdoor education by organising an adventure camp in Exmoor for pupils in Year 6 and has developed strong community links with Portway Sports College. The school swimming team participated recently in the National Swimming Championships and parental links were encouraged when they joined pupils for a visit to Ashton Gate Football Stadium. Cross-curricular links are being improved, such as those with science, in the Key Stage 1 lesson. The school now has access to a football pitch because pupils in Year 6 wrote to the local council to request this facility. The physical education programme is enriched by various additional activities and clubs for football, netball, dance, rugby and cricket are organised as after-school activities. With its hard-surfaced areas, access to a playing field and two halls, the school has good facilities for physical education and resources are satisfactory. The gymnasium is a good additional resource, although it is in urgent need of refurbishment. The subject leader has developed an appropriate action plan for the subject, which includes monitoring curriculum delivery, the development of formal procedures for assessing pupils' skills and the provision of sports clubs for pupils in Key Stage 1.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

163. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have made satisfactory progress and are achieving standards which are broadly in line with those expected for their age. Unsatisfactory progress is made by older pupils, particularly those in Years 5 and 6, so that, at the end of Key Stage 2, standards are well below those expected for their age. This unsatisfactory progress is due to two significant factors, these are: insufficient time being spent on teaching religious education; and lack of some detailed knowledge and understanding of a few teachers.
164. In Key Stage 1 pupils are satisfactorily taught much of their religious education through festivals and by linking Christianity to moral issues. By the end of Year 2, they have learnt appropriate about aspects of the Jewish celebration of Sukkot as well as the Hindu festival of Diwali and have a sound understanding of how Christians celebrate Christmas and Harvest Festival. Photographs and displays of these festivities enhance the corridors and reinforce learning. Pupils' individual work shows that literacy skills are being reinforced by the use of a variety of writing styles. These include narrative writing, selecting the right vocabulary to complete comprehension sheets and carrying out surveys as to how people celebrate Christmas. Speaking, listening and drama skills were an important feature in a good lesson in Year 2, where pupils mimed how they thought people would feel in different situations. The good teaching in this lesson also effectively used stories, Christian and secular, to help pupils think about how they and others react to what people do and say. More able pupils were particularly challenged by a biblical quotation from the Psalms and tried very hard to explain its meaning. The intended links with Christianity, were however, vague and did little to help the majority of pupils, especially those with special educational needs, understand why Christians show respect and are kind to others, as was the intention.
165. Although teaching is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 2, a few teachers are insufficiently well trained to cover all aspects of the subject. The way that religious education is put across is demonstrated by pupils in Year 6, who show a healthy interest in all areas of this subject and were willing and eager to talk about their own and others' beliefs, showing respect and an empathy for the feelings of

others. Through discussion it was evident that they have an appropriate understanding of faith and what religion is, despite having had limited teaching to build up sufficient knowledge and recall of religious stories, artefacts and rituals. Whilst they cannot identify appropriate key beliefs and features of major religions, because of good moral teaching they show respect and understanding towards others' cultural differences and beliefs. This, however, is predominantly personal and social rather than religious education.

166. As a result of the unsatisfactory curriculum pupils in Year 6 have large gaps in what they should know and understand by this stage of their education. They have very basic knowledge of Christianity, such as the Christmas and Easter stories at a level which is expected from much younger pupils, and have very confused snippets of knowledge about other major faiths. For example when asked about other religions one quoted Hebrews and another Buddhists. When questioned further about these they clearly knew very little. One pupil offered Islamic practices as suggestions about how Jews pray, whilst another was able to talk briefly about Buddhist monks that he had discovered at home through the Internet and found interesting. In contrast to the lack of knowledge acquired during Years 5 and 6, pupils from Year 6 recalled, in detail and very enthusiastically, a number of stories from the Bible, which they had performed two years earlier. These included such details as the war between the Israelites and Philistines with David beating Goliath, Noah and the flood and John the Baptist.
167. It is clear from pupils' recorded work that standards are slowly improving as pupils move up through the school, but teachers do not sufficiently reinforce literacy skills. Pupils are making gains in their knowledge and taking greater pride in how their work is presented but spelling and handwriting is rarely corrected. Pupils in Year 5, though still below expectations for their age, have heard a number of different versions of how the world was made; from the Bible, Aboriginal, Chinese and Hindu sources, and are currently considering rules by which people live. However, from the lesson seen, the teacher lacked in-depth knowledge of the subject and pupils made only superficial gains in their learning about the five pillars of Islam. Similarly, in a Year 3 lesson, although the teacher clearly had good knowledge and understanding of Chinese New Year, the pupils were not given the opportunity to research and find out facts for themselves.
168. In the lessons seen, as with those in Year 6, pupils show a genuine interest in learning about other people's customs and beliefs. Most of them are open and willing to talking about their own lives and what they do and believe. In Year 3, through skilled questioning, the teacher helped the pupils to compare their own experiences of celebrating Christmas, with how the Chinese celebrate New Year. This lesson also included good use of a short video. However, in a less successful lesson pupils in Year 5 became restless and disinterested, because of poor recording sheets and lack of challenge. Despite this lack of enthusiasm and unsatisfactory attitudes, teachers establish good relationships with the pupils and behaviour is generally satisfactory.
169. The work for a number of classes in Key Stage 2 is not planned for the required numbers of hours per year, as stated in the locally Agreed Syllabus. Additionally, particularly in Year 6, the spacing of lessons does not ensure that pupils learn continuously. Since September 2002 a number of lessons have been missed and it is the intention to make up the lost time after external tests are completed in May. The overall planning for the subject, which is based on the locally Agreed Syllabus, provides an appropriate framework for half-termly topics. Some teachers, particularly in Key Stage 2, need more help and guidance to systematically help pupils build up knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other major faiths that are studied. Although there are opportunities to promote pupils' social, moral and cultural development, planning for spirituality is not so strong, particularly in Key Stage 2. With the exception of video recordings, the use of information and communication technology is insufficient to enhance pupils' learning. Currently, there are no systems for assessing or recording pupils' progress, and the monitoring of teaching is at an early stage of development. Although the subject leader has begun to make some improvements, because of other priorities in the school, development has been slow and is unsatisfactory overall.